

Leashes or Lemmings? Alliances as Restraining Devices

by

Jeremy Pressman

B.A. Politics and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies
Brandeis University, 1991

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

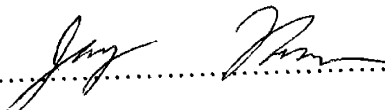
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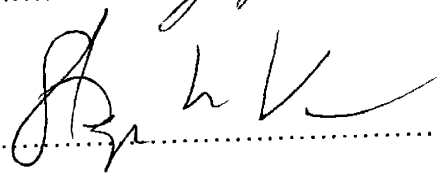
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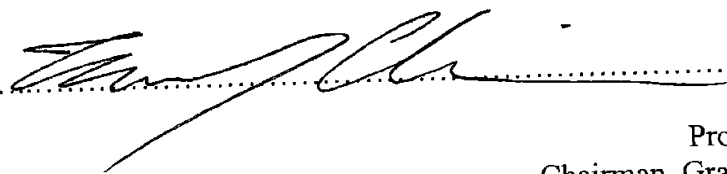
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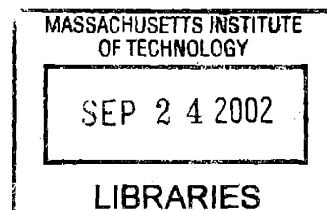
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Signature of author: 
Department of Political Science
July 12, 2002

Certified by: 
Stephen W. Van Evera
Professor of Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: 
Thomas J. Christensen
Professor of Political Science
Chairman, Graduate Program Committee

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ABSTRACT

Does alliance restraint happen in international affairs? What theories explain the success or failure of restraint efforts? Do states ever form alliances in order to restrain?

Alliance restraint – an actual or anticipated diplomatic effort by one ally to influence a second ally not to proceed with a proposed military policy or not to continue an existing military policy – most definitely happens in international affairs, and sometimes it is successful. This study of alliance restraint suggests three central conclusions about alliances:

1) On both a conceptual and empirical level, the alliance restraint dynamic means that alliances can have a stabilizing and peace-promoting effect on the international system. When calculating the net impact of alliances on international peace and stability, scholars should account for restraint, not just chainganging, buckpassing, and other pathological (destabilizing) alliance dynamics described by Waltz, Posen, Snyder & Christensen, and Vasquez.

2) The success or failure of restraint efforts is best explained by rational restraint theory – a combination of capabilities, interests, and communication. Rational restraint theory, analogous to rational deterrence theory, provides a better explanation than ones based on power, alliance norms, or domestic opinion. This is demonstrated in three cases of Anglo-American decisionmaking in the Middle East and Asia in the 1950s: Iran (1951), Indochina (1954), and Egypt (1956 Suez Crisis).

3) Some states form alliances with the express purpose of restraining their new ally. This serves a reminder that the primary reason for a given alliance may be the policies and interactions of the allies themselves rather than those of an adversary. Such *internal* motivations as controlling, restraining, or re-making an ally are better explanations for the origin of some alliances than *external* motivations such as balancing against one's adversary based on considerations of power (Waltz) or threat (Walt). This has important policy implications for those making or analyzing alliances.

Thesis Supervisor: Stephen W. Van Evera
Title: Professor of Political Science

Biographical note

Jeremy Pressman received his B.A. from Brandeis University in Politics and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies in 1991. He worked at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, DC from 1991-1996. He is co-author, with Geoffrey Kemp, of *Point of No Return: the Deadly Struggle for Middle East Peace* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1997). In the spring of 2002, Pressman taught "The Politics of the Middle East" at the Rhode Island School of Design.

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My parents, Elizabeth and Robert Pressman, and grandparents, Lillian and Victor Harris and Goldie and Sam Pressman, provided the intellectual and social environment in which I first grew to love reading, teaching, and the search for knowledge -- and for that I am deeply grateful. My siblings, Aaron and Rachel, joined me in this search and encouraged and challenged me along the way. Aaron's proximity in the last year as I worked to finish this project was a blessing for me and my family. My in-laws, Esther and Bernard Sobel, have been inquisitive and caring throughout.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	5
One: Introduction.....	9
Two: Theories and Predictions.....	39
Three: The United States Restrains Britain in Iran: Why Operation Buccaneer Was Never Implemented (1951).....	73
Four: The United States Restrains Britain at Suez: Intervention, Cease-fire, and Withdrawal (1956).....	125
Five: Role reversal: Britain Restrains the United States in East Asia.....	183
Six: Alliance Formation and Restraint.....	219
Seven: Conclusions.....	255
Appendix.....	273
Bibliography.....	275

List of Tables and Figures

[Tables and figures appear at the end of the chapter.]

Table 1.1 - Case Studies of Alliance Restraint.....	36
Table 1.2 - Cases of Alliance Formation and Restraint (abbreviated).....	37
Figure 2.1 - Tree of Case Types.....	71
Table 4.1 - Polling on the 1956 Suez Crisis.....	181
Table 5.1 - Types of Intervention in Indochina/SE Asia, 1954.....	215
Table 5.2 - 1954 Indochina Polling in the United States.....	216
Table 6.1 - Cases of Alliance Formation and Restraint.....	253

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Chapter One: Introduction

I. Introduction

Though downplayed in scholarly works, alliance restraint is all around us. After September 11, much of the talk in Europe was how the West European powers were going to keep America from going overboard in its response to the terrorist attacks. How could they rein in the likely aggressive and unilateralist U.S. military response?

In March 2002, Vice-President Dick Cheney traveled to the Middle East to build support for a U.S. attack on Iraq. Yet in both public and private, ally after ally sought to restrain the United States with regard to Iraq and the possibility of a U.S. war on Iraq. Did these small Middle Eastern states have any hope of blocking or moderating the policy of the world's only superpower?

Just days later, in late March and then into April 2002, President George W. Bush pressured Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in an effort to slow and halt the Israeli military invasion of Palestinian cities in the West Bank. At first, Israel did not comply with U.S. requests. Later, when Israel offered some partial concessions under U.S. pressure, Bush seemed to accept the Israeli steps as sufficient.

An observer of contemporary international affairs would regularly witness pressures and counter-pressures among allies that are designed to change proposed military policies. The international arena in 2001-2002 provided many important examples of attempted alliance restraint – an actual or anticipated diplomatic effort by one ally to influence a second ally not to proceed with a proposed military policy or not to continue an existing military policy.

Yet if this existing picture of alliances and restraint is accurate, scholars are largely ignorant of it. Much of the discussion of alliances in international relations has been based on the assumption that alliances lead states down the pathway to confrontation and war.¹ In contrast, relatively few sources talk about the possibility of allies reining each other in and thereby blocking proposed military policies and/or averting conflict.² From the literature, one might assume that allies do not try to restrain each other or do so but are unsuccessful. This dissertation addresses this puzzling gap between policymakers and scholars by answering three questions about restraint.

Does alliance restraint happen in international affairs? What theories explain the success or failure of restraint efforts? Do states ever form alliances in order to restrain?

Alliance restraint most definitely happens in international affairs and sometimes it is successful. This dissertation mentions a wide range of cases but focuses on three examples of Anglo-American decisionmaking in the 1950s that suggest how restraint works, what motivates each party, and why this matters for our understanding of international politics. What do we learn from the study of alliance restraint?

¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 167. For work on chainganging and buckpassing, see Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 63; and Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain gangs and passed bucks: predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity," *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137-168. Glenn Snyder uses the terms entrapment and abandonment. Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36 (July 1984), pp. 461-495. For a quantitative indictment of alliances and war, see John Vasquez, "The Steps to War: Toward a Scientific Explanation of Correlates of War Findings," *World Politics* 40, no. 1 (October 1987), pp. 108-145 at 121; and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 159-160.

² The existing literature on some aspects of alliance restraint is limited but includes Paul W. Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1975), pp. 227-263; and Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). Van Evera offers a brief comment on restraint: "The alliances that form under multipolarity can pull states back from war as well as pulling them in." See Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 3 (winter 1990-91), pp. 193-243 at 225. More generally, Morrow wrote that alliances cost member states some freedom of action. See James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, 2000, pp. 63-83 at 65.

First, restraint supports the idea of alliances as a force for international peace. Alliance restraint may block the road to confrontation. It is one dynamic that has been neglected in discussions of international peace and stability.³

Second, the success or failure of alliance restraint efforts is best explained by rational restraint theory. When the restrainer is more capable, more interested, and communicates this clearly to the restrainee, restraint is more likely to succeed. Three common alternative explanations for explaining the outcome of alliance policymaking could explain restraint success and failure, but in practice they are less compelling than rational restraint theory. The alternatives include: the ally with the greatest material power or capabilities prevails (Power); domestic public opinion in the restrainee shapes its decision on whether or not to be restrained (Public opinion); and alliance decisionmaking (or procedural) norms of consultation and consensus determine the outcome of restraint efforts (Alliance norms).

Third, because alliance restraint is the best explanation for the formation of some alliances, we should re-think our emphasis on alliances being formed based on parties **external** to the alliance such as military threats.⁴ In fact, many alliances are formed due to **internal** factors to the alliance such as the desire to restrain or control an ally. In other

³ I define alliances as a formal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states. This is Walt's definition but he also includes informal relationships of security cooperation. My research may apply to informal alliances as well. For a brief discussion of defining alliances and alignments, see Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances, Balance, and Stability," *International Organization* 45, no. 1, winter 1991, pp. 121-142 at 123-124.

⁴ Walt's seminal work on alliance formation, *The Origins of Alliances*, is the most prominent work highlighting the motivations external to the alliance members. Wendt contrasted alliances and collective security arrangements; alliances "are temporary coalitions of self-interested states who come together for instrumental reasons in response to a specific threat." Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *APSR* 88, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 384-396 at 386. Barnett agreed that international "relations scholarship is nearly unanimous in the view...that [alliances] primary motivation is to enhance state security in the face of some immediate or future external threat..." See Michael N. Barnett, "Identity and Alliances in the Middle East," in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms*

words, states may form an alliance as a response to the policies of the members of the very same alliance rather than as a response to a state outside the alliance. On a practical level, restraint deserves consideration along with threat, aid, domestic survival, regime type, and a host of other explanations for alliance formation already on the table.

I first turn to each of these three points, in order. This is followed by a discussion of the research method and case selection. The chapter concludes with a road map of the rest of the dissertation.

II. Alliances as a force for international peace

Does alliance restraint itself help states avert and end wars? Does it result in a more peaceful and stable international system? In all three Anglo-American case studies in this dissertation, alliance restraint helped states avert or end a military confrontation that could have led to superpower conflict with global implications. (see table 1.1) Future research is needed to look at this claim across space and time. But the more alliance restraint helps avert war, the more peace and stability alliances bring to the international system. This contrasts sharply with the emphasis by past scholars on war-promoting and destabilizing alliance dynamics.⁵

In 1951, U.S. pressure stopped Britain from intervening in Iran. Not only did this avert an Anglo-Iranian confrontation, but it also averted a possible cold war confrontation in Iran between British forces entering from the south and Soviet forces entering Iran from the north to counter the Western incursion. The timing might have been particularly

and Identity in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 400-447 at 400-401 (and Barnett's footnote 1).

troubling for the United States which was deeply engaged in the Korean conflict at the time. True, the Iranian government fell in a U.S.-sponsored coup in 1953 just two years after Britain decided against overt military intervention. But when the Western powers toppled the Iranian leadership in 1953, the use of a military coup did not spark the invasion of Iran by any foreign forces. The coup was less public and provocative than a British invasion would have been; there was not direct fighting between Iranian and Western soldiers. So when the conflict actually came, it was more tame and in no way provoked a military confrontation with the Soviet Union.⁶

In 1954, the British refusal to join "United Action," a multilateral alliance proposed by the United States, prevented the formation of this alliance for military intervention in Vietnam (Indochina). Although ultimately, as is well known, this did not prevent unilateral U.S. intervention in Vietnam, it did help prevent West European involvement in the nearly 20-year U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Had Britain consented to join United Action, United Action might have served as a vehicle for pulling Britain and other European allies into the battle for Southeast Asia. In terms of peace promotion, the United Action episode was a partial accomplishment.

In 1956, U.S. pressure forced an end to the Anglo-French attack on Egypt (the Suez War). Due to U.S. pressure, London and Paris agreed to a premature cease-fire and then withdrew their forces from Egypt. This ended the local conflict and prevented the

⁵ See footnote one above. I elaborate on the arguments of past scholars in chapter two.

⁶ In a general sense, if one finds cases of one ally stopping another from launching a military operation, three challenges to the idea of alliances as instruments of peace need to be addressed. First, perhaps the restraint episode only delayed the military conflict and the conflict was the same or even worse when it actually happened. Second, the existence of the alliance may have facilitated the military intervention in the first place so at best successful restraint is just one ally undoing the initial damage of the alliance. In other words, one ally only felt like it could pursue this belligerent approach because it felt secure due to the alliance. Third, the restraining state may have wanted to stop the military policy in question only so it could propose a more belligerent or aggressive policy.

very real possibility of a Western confrontation with Egypt's other defender, the Soviet Union. The Soviets had issued an ultimatum to the invading parties that suggested the possibility of direct Soviet involvement if the conflict was not brought to an end quickly.⁷

Restraint and other alliance dynamics. Even if alliance restraint is peaceful, how do we judge the impact of *all* the alliance dynamics on international peace and stability? In the past, the destabilizing and war-causing aspects of alliances have been emphasized; researchers talk about abandonment, buckpassing, chainganging, and entrapment. The most serious alliance dynamic, as described in similar ways by Waltz, Christensen and Snyder, and Vasquez, is chainganging whereby one ally drags other allies into a war they wanted to avoid. This dissertation makes the argument that this bias toward alliances as pathological institutions needs to be corrected. While these past arguments have highlighted important aspects of alliances, the inclusion of alliance restraint will allow researchers to make a more complete empirical assessment of alliances and war, international stability, or other outcomes of interest.⁸

The entire discussion of alliances and war/peace, however, has a strong subjective element since each of the major alliance dynamics – chainganging, buckpassing, abandonment, entrapment, restraint, and some cases of deterrence – conflates a policy decision (support or not support an ally) with our normative assessment of the outcome of

⁷ Since Suez and the Soviet invasion of Hungary took place during the same period, it might also be worth thinking about how Anglo-French intervention in Egypt may have tied the West's hands vis a vis the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Absent Suez, might the United States have pushed for a more confrontational response to the invasion of Hungary?

⁸ This is not to say that the mere existence of the restraint dynamic means the net effect of alliances is stabilizing and peaceful. Even assuming all restraint is peace-promoting, other destabilizing and conflict-related alliance dynamics may occur more frequently. In a general sense, alliances are not peace-promoting if, for instance, the many cases of alliance restraint are outnumbered by many more significant cases of allies dragging each other into conflict (often called chainganging). A more complete answer to this question will require a broad survey of alliances across modern international history.

the case.⁹ In a larger sense, a basic description of all the alliance dynamics revolves around two factors: a policy decision (the level of support for one's ally) and a normative view of the outcome in each case. With buckpassing, restraint, and abandonment, one ally has limited (or ended) its support of the other's policy. With chainganging and some forms of deterrence (or external balancing), one ally has agreed or felt compelled to support its partner. What may *differ* in all these cases is how we, in retrospect, view the outcome and how the adversary reacted. For instance, if as it played out, the alliance dynamic helped Hitler, it is more likely seen as a destabilizing alliance pattern.

What are the mechanisms of alliance restraint?¹⁰ First, restrainers may seek to raise the costs of unrestrained military policies. A restrainer may take away or threaten to take away some benefit that the restrainee gets from the alliance, such as support needed to implement the contested military policy, support for another alliance policy (which may or may not be related to the military policy proposed by the restrainee), or access to information about the restrainer or other alliance members. The more dependent the restrainee is on the alliance, the more vulnerable it will be to this *quid pro quo*. The most extreme form of this mechanism is the threat to exit the alliance and abandon the restrainee.¹¹ A restrainer could threaten to leave the alliance if the contested military policy is pursued. The restrainer's ability to raise the costs for the restrainee depend, in part, on how dependent the *restrainer* is on the alliance. If the restrainer is more

⁹ With chainganging, states ally and thereby "may chain themselves unconditionally to reckless allies"; it is "unconditional balancing behavior." With buckpassing, states do not ally and instead count "on third parties to bear the costs of stopping a rising hegemon." Buckpassing is a strategy of limited liability. See Christensen and Snyder, "Chain gangs and passed bucks," pp. 138 and 165.

¹⁰ The answers to this question also help address the question of how alliance restraint is different from everyday international diplomacy.

¹¹ In 1950, for instance, Dean Acheson, the U.S. Secretary of State, warned the British that British negotiations to end the Korean conflict were unacceptable; the United States would consider leaving

dependent on the alliance than the restrainee, it may have a hard time calling for either non-support of an alliance policy or abandonment of the restrainee. My Anglo-American cases tend to rely on this first mechanism of restraint.

Second, restrainers may seek to reassure restrainees and reduce the restrainee's motivation to be unrestrained. The alliance and related policies are meant to reduce the restrainee's insecurity. If this insecurity is what is causing or could cause the restrainee to propose certain military policies, the reduction of said insecurity may prevent the proposal of controversial military policies. This mechanism is often at work in U.S. efforts to stop nuclear proliferation in Japan, Germany, South Korea, and elsewhere. One risk when this mechanism is at work is that rather than feeling satiated and well-protected, the restrainee could feel emboldened by the greater security from the alliance and seek to enact aggressive policies.¹²

III. Explaining the success and failure of restraint: Rational Restraint Theory

Although allies often attempt to block each other's military policies, they do not always succeed. What explains restraint success and failure? I find that rational restraint theory, analogous in many ways to rational deterrence theory, provides the best explanation for how capabilities, interests, and communication skills combine to explain

NATO if Britain cut a deal with the Communists. The U.S. public would not stand for a deal with the communists, Acheson said.

¹² I leave aside a third possible restraint mechanism, consultation between allies. Consultation could reduce miscalculations and misperceptions, force a re-weighing of costs and benefits, and promote co-determination of policies. For what can happen when a state fails to consult with its allies or even some of its own officials and agencies, see Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 49-51.

restraint success and failure. When the restrainer is more capable, more interested, and communicates this clearly, restraint is likely to succeed.

Three other potential explanations for explaining the success or failure of alliance restraint do not consistently explain the cases in this dissertation. The first possibility alternative is that the most **powerful** ally always gets its way where power is defined as material capabilities. While in some cases, one can predict whether the restrainee or restrainer will prevail based on which one is more powerful, in other cases the less powerful ally gets its way. The second possible explanation is that mass **public opinion** shapes alliance policy, and thus the restrainee will be restrained or not based on the opinion of its public. Yet public opinion in the cases is not always consistent with the outcome of the restraint dispute, and leaders do not attribute their policy stance to public opinion. The third alternative is that an explicit or implicit commitment to **alliance decisionmaking (procedural) norms** of consultation and consensus determines the outcome of policy disagreements. But the evidence from the cases demonstrates that the success or failure of alliance restraint was not due to internal alliance decisionmaking norms. After defining rational restraint theory and explanations based on material power, domestic public opinion, and alliance decisionmaking norms, I describe what the three cases demonstrated about the four possible explanations.

Rational restraint theory is analogous to rational deterrence theory.¹³ The decision to be restrained is made by weighing the costs and benefits of acceding to restraint as

¹³ The literature on rational deterrence theory is voluminous and includes Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980 [1960]); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: a conceptual analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977); Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Robert Jervis, Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon*:

opposed to proceeding with the proposed military policy. Credible restraint efforts will succeed. By credible, I mean that the restrainee believes the restrainer can impose costs that outweigh the expected benefits of proceeding with the proposed military policy. How does each side judge the credibility of the other's position? What makes a restraint effort credible?¹⁴ Although many factors could be drawn from the deterrence literature, I focus on three factors that shape the allied interaction: capabilities, interests, and communication skills. If the restrainer is more capable, more interested, and communicates clearly, it will usually prevail. Otherwise the restrainee will likely get its way and the contested military policy will be adopted. In general, the costs and benefits are related to the state's position in the international arena. This explanation is supported by the case studies.

The components of rational restraint theory – capabilities, interest, and communication skills – all require greater specification. For all three, it is essential to consider not only what one side has or believes but also how the other ally perceives it. For capabilities, I include material power (population, gross national product, nuclear weapons, military expenditures); specific leverage usually due to some technological or

The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue (London: Croom Helm, 1987); and Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988). See also the heated debate in *World Politics* between Huth/Russett and Lebow/Stein: Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980," *World Politics* 36, no. 4, 1984, pp. 496-526; Lebow and Stein, "Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable," *World Politics* 42, no. 3, 1990, pp. 336-369; and Huth and Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42, no. 4, 1990, pp. 466-501.

¹⁴ By credible, I mean that the restrainer can affect the restrainee's cost-benefit calculations such that the restrainee sees the costs of the proposed military as rising and the benefits declining. In addition, I mean that the restrainee believes the restrainer when the latter says it is serious about restraint and the use of certain instruments to bring about successful restraint.

geographic advantage such as control of a military base or a type of weaponry; and the availability of alternative allies.¹⁵

For interests, I focus not only on how interested the state is in the issue at hand (the issue raised by the proposed military policy) but also the regional and global interests of both allies. Interests may be defined in major public addresses by chief executives or top foreign policy officials or in official national security policy decisions; they may also be demonstrated by military and budgetary resource commitments and past engagements.¹⁶ One would expect the protection of the homeland (territory) and its citizenry to be the highest interest of states. Interests also need to be weighed in relation to the level of governing elite consensus. In other words, a vital interest is not as vital if a significant portion of the state's leadership does not agree that the interest is vital.

How interested the two allies are in part will turn on what motivated the restrainer in the first place. Knowing the source of divergence between the two allies can tell a lot about how much the restrainee cares about proceeding and how much the restrainer cares about blocking the proposed military policy. On the one hand, restraint efforts can be motivated by a clash of strategic visions between the two allies. For instance, in the 1950s, the United States saw defending Vietnam (Indochina) as a vital part of stopping the advance of communism. To the British, the loss of Vietnam did not mean the fall of Asia to communism; Vietnam was expendable. The two allies disagreed about Vietnam's

¹⁵ Often, but not always, a preponderance of raw power leads to control of most specific leverage. But the more interesting cases may be when one ally is greater in raw power, but the other holds the key to an asset essential for carrying out the proposed military policy. For instance, in the U.S. war against Afghanistan (2001-02), the United States was far more powerful in economic and military terms than Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, but all three states controlled military bases to which the United States wanted access so as to better prosecute the war against al-Qaeda and Afghanistan's rulers, the Taliban. The three countries had specific leverage (even if in this case they did not or could not exercise it).

¹⁶ In order to avoid a tautological claim, I avoid using the outcome of the crisis under study (1951, 1954, 1956) to prove that an ally was or was not interested in the issue at hand.

strategic importance and how it fit with the containment of communism. On the other hand, restraint efforts can be linked to competing evaluations of the impact of the proposed policy. What will the effects of the military policy be? Will they be the effects desired by the ally who proposed the military policy? In 1951, Britain wanted to intervene in Iran. The United States thought British military intervention would push Iran into the arms of the Soviet Union. Britain argued the opposite: overt military intervention would prevent the Iranian leadership from bringing Iran into the Soviet camp. Even if two allies share a strategic vision, they may disagree about how best to pursue that vision at the policymaking level. In many cases, the source of the allied divergence is both a clash of strategic visions *and* competing evaluations of the impact of the proposed policy.

Finally, inter-state communication is the conduit by which states send or receive information about a proposed military policy and the policy effort to block it (the restraint effort). For capabilities and interests to matter, allies need to clearly communicate their policies, something that is not easy given complex situations, nuanced policies, the multiple officials involved in conveying policies, and the general prevalence of misperceptions in international communication.¹⁷ In chapter two, I provide greater details on capabilities, interests, and communication skills.

The second explanation for restraint success or failure, a power-based argument, suggests that the most powerful state prevails. By power, I mean material power including population, gross national product, nuclear weapons, military expenditures. If

¹⁷ On misperceptions, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). Some earlier scholars who dealt with alliance decisionmaking focused on bureaucratic and transnational factors to explain outcomes. Such factors could play a role in rational restraint theory as one tries to understand both the breadth of support for a state interest in one ally and the level of clarity of communication between the two sides. See Richard E. Neustadt, *Alliance politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); and Louise Richardson, *When allies differ: Anglo-American relations during the Suez and Falklands crises* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

the restrainer is more powerful, the restraint attempt will likely succeed. If the restrainer is more powerful, the restraint attempt will likely fail. In his *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz is the biggest proponent of power-based explanations for understanding not only the international system but also which ally prevails in intra-alliance decisionmaking. In my restraint cases, the more powerful ally sometimes prevailed. But the fact that it did not always prevail suggests that material capabilities alone are not sufficient for understanding the success or failure of restraint attempts.

The third explanation, a domestic public opinion approach, posits that the leaders of the restrainee act consistent with mass opinion. If the public supports the contested military policy, the leaders resist being restrained. If the public opposes the contested military policy, the leaders are restrained. As Stimson et al wrote, “opinion causes policy.”¹⁸ While in some cases polling data was consistent with the outcome of the restraint dispute, in other cases it was not consistent. Moreover, leaders almost never mentioned public opinion as an impediment in their private, internal discussions.

A fourth possible explanation is that both allies, the restrainer and the restrainee, accept that alliance decisions are governed by norms of consultation and consensus. Such norms were a major element – though not the only element – of Risse-Kappen’s liberal explanation for the analyzing the outcomes of alliance policymaking.¹⁹ More generally, constructivist authors have highlighted the role of norms in shaping outcomes in international affairs.²⁰ In terms of alliance restraint, this explanation means that if at the

¹⁸ James A. Stimson, Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson, “Dynamic Representation,” *APSR* 89, no. 3, September 1995, pp. 543-565.

¹⁹ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among democracies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). I discuss his explanation in greater depth in chapter two.

²⁰ On norms and international relations, see Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). To be accurate, constructivism makes room for both cooperative behavior built on norms and shared interests and the type

end of the day the restrainee cannot convince the restrainer to support the proposed military policy, the policy will not be adopted because the restrainee will drop it out of respect for the lack of consensus. Allies may disagree, but they do so in a manner that leads to consensus policies and avoids intra-alliance deception, policy circumvention, or misunderstandings (when the deception is geared toward evading the restraint effort). Firm opposition by the restrainer will almost always block the proposed military policy. This explanation was not supported by the case studies, though it might have greater relevance in cases where the two allies are roughly equal in terms of capabilities and interests.

In each of my case studies, rational restraint theory provides a strong explanation for the outcome. The outcome, or dependent variable, is the success or failure of the restraint attempt. A successful attempt means that the policy was not implemented or was significantly modified before adoption. For the outcome to matter in terms of alliance restraint, the alliance restraint effort also had to be the reason that the contested military policy was modified or abandoned. Let me turn to each case to discuss, in brief, the outcome and why it occurred.

In 1951, Britain wanted to intervene militarily in Iran, but the United States attempted to restrain Britain and prevent overt intervention. Eventually, the British government decided to abandon the idea of military intervention in the face of U.S. opposition. The United States was more capable, the two parties were equally interested

of self-interested behavior emphasized by realists. As Wendt noted, interactions between states can result in either collective or self-interested results: "Thus, I am *not* suggesting that collective interest replace egoistic ones as exogenously given constants in a rationalist model but, rather, that identities and interests be treated as dependent variables endogenous to interaction." Anarchy, self-help, and confrontation are the result of certain types of inter-state reactions, not a structural given of the international system. See Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *APSR* 88, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 384-396 at 387.

in the future of Iran, and Washington's policy was clearly articulated and correctly received by Britain.²¹ The U.S. threat to withhold support for the proposed British policy was credible. Britain abandoned the proposed military policy despite government perceptions of widespread public support in Britain for a tough response to Iran. In relation to intra-alliance norms, British officials did *not* refer to being restrained because they felt like they owed it to the United States to respect U.S. dissent out of allegiance to the alliance and its decisionmaking process.

In 1954, the U.S. Congress and the Eisenhower administration disagreed about the implementation of a plan called United Action to help save Vietnam (Indochina) from communist rule. Congress insisted that the United States could only go forward with the plan if Britain participated and opposed the plan in the absence of a British involvement. Administration officials would have rather had Congressional support before approaching U.S. allies. Because of this policy disagreement between Congress and the executive branch, the ultimate decision on United Action was made in London, not Washington. The British interest in avoiding entanglement and war in Southeast Asia was the key factor because the U.S. interest in the matter was diminished by Congressional demands.

²¹ In 1951, for instance, Britain had the third highest GNP, seventh highest population, and spent the third most on defense in the world. The United States was higher in all categories: GNP (1), population (3), defense (1). The United States also had 640 nuclear weapons in 1951. A look at 1956 yields similar results. Britain: GNP (3), population (9), defense (4). United States: GNP (1), population (4), defense (1). In 1956, the United States had 4,618 nuclear weapons while Britain had only 15. These figures also demonstrate some of the challenges in defining power since the United States treated Britain like a major power during and after WWII in part based on Britain's previous decades at the top. Purely by the numbers, Britain's standing might have justified a lesser role. Jan Faber, *Annual Data On Nine Economic Military Characteristics Of 78 Nations* (SIRE NATDAT), 1948-1983 [Computer file]. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Europa Institut [producer], 1989. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research and Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive [distributors], 1990. The nuclear data is from Natural Resources Defense Council, "Table of Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-1996," www.nrdc.org/nuclear/nudb/datab19.asp, accessed July 10, 2002. For definitions of power, see chapter nine in Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, fourth edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); and Jeffrey Hart, "Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations," *International Organization* 30, no. 2, spring 1976, pp. 289-305.

As noted earlier, interests need to be weighed in relation to the level of governing elite consensus. With that consensus lacking in Washington, Britain restrained the United States.

The 1954 case also provides ample evidence that the outcome was not the result of an allied commitment to consensus and consultation. In response to Britain's restraint effort, Washington tried to modify the policy and thereby circumvent Britain; Washington also appealed to Moscow probably in order to gain some leverage vis a vis Britain. In addition, in mid-April 1954, the U.S. Secretary of State (John Foster Dulles) and the British Foreign Secretary (Anthony Eden) had an angry disagreement about what they did or did not agree to with regard to United Action. The conduct of this intra-alliance policymaking was full of deception and misunderstanding, not consensus and cooperative decisionmaking.

Discussions about United Action suggest a mixed result for an explanation based on public opinion because in this case the prevailing public sentiment was shared by elite actors – members of Congress. The executive branch was perfectly willing to flaunt public opinion against intervention until Congress stepped in and stipulated that it would only approve U.S. intervention in Vietnam under certain restrictive conditions.²² What made opinion relevant in this case was that it had representation at the highest levels of government. In fact, even after Congress called for intervention only with allied (British) support, Dulles looked for ways to get around British disinterest in intervention. Had Dulles been successful, the effect would have been to go against U.S. public opinion;

²² One unanswered question is the why Congress asked for British participation as a condition for Congressional support of United Action. Was it the result of public opinion against intervention? Were members of Congress consciously taking into account public opposition?

mass-based opposition to intervention was not a decisive element in executive branch thinking.

In 1956, the United States wanted to stop Anglo-French military intervention in Egypt in response to Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal. The United States was more capable and both sides had serious interests at stake. But while Washington repeatedly made clear its opposition to military intervention, it never made clear what it would do to its allies if they ignored U.S. restraint efforts and went ahead and intervened in Egypt. Because the United States failed to communicate the costs it would impose on Britain, British leaders decided to support military intervention. Restraint failed because the United States failed to communicate clearly. Only after the intervention did Washington make clear the economic and political steps it would take to rein in its allies. In this second part of the Suez case, the U.S. succeeded in bringing about British acceptance of a cease-fire and then the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt.

The result of the first part the 1956 case – the British-French attack on Egypt – is itself highly inconsistent with a commitment to alliance norms of consensus and cooperation. Britain totally disregarded American advice. Further, when Britain committed itself to ignore U.S. restraint efforts and intervene in Egypt in the first part of the Suez crisis, British officials did their best to keep Washington in the dark about British policy. When Britain was restrained by the United States in the second part of the Suez crisis in 1956, British officials did not explain their decision with reference to alliance consensus.

While the polling data on Suez is mixed, there is no evidence that public opinion shaped British decisionmaking. While the British government favored intervention and

intervened, the British public opposed military intervention in Egypt. Thus in the first part of the Suez case, the government adopted a policy that was the opposite of what the public majority favored. However, once British troops were in Egypt and Washington pressured London to withdraw them, the British public and governmental view were in harmony. The British leadership acquiesced to withdrawal, and the public thought Britain was right to withdraw. The public was consistent: anti-intervention and, when that failed, pro-withdrawal. Yet in neither case is there much evidence that public opinion was the decisive factor. The British government did not agree to withdrawal because of public pressure, and the most widely cited poll on withdrawal did not come about until after the government had made its decision to withdraw.²³ A correlation based on polling data alone does not demonstrate that opinion shaped policy. One also needs to demonstrate that leaders considered and were influenced by public opinion when they made the policy decision.

In sum, these cases support rational restraint theory, not an explanation based on power, alliance decisionmaking norms, or domestic public opinion. But having been based on US-UK cases, will rational restraint theory travel well?

Rational restraint theory (RRT) will apply to other cases of alliance restraint with three important caveats. The question of how well the theory will apply to other cases is significant given the emphasis in this dissertation on Anglo-American case studies. In general, the components of rational restraint theory – capabilities, interests, communication – are common to all states and alliance relationships. They are, as I have

²³ This does not mean for certain that the British government did not have its own polls or see other polls indicating the public position on withdrawal.

noted elsewhere, also common factors in previous generalizable explanations of foreign policy outcomes (e.g. rational deterrence theory).

But because RRT is based on Anglo-American cases in the 1950s, some elements could complicate comparisons. First, I studied London and Washington at a time when they shared an overall agreement on the central threat to both states, the Soviet Union. Other alliance relationships might not be based on a shared concern for and understanding of the fundamental threat faced by both parties. The existence of a mutual, core threat could affect both the frequency and nature of restraint attempts. Second, none of my case studies involve a direct attack on home territory. If the military policy proposed by one ally is motivated by a direct threat to the homeland, the restraint variable may solely turn on interests and, in particular, the intensity of that variable for one party. If you think you may not exist tomorrow, restraint efforts will seem secondary. States may not even attempt to restrain allies in such a situation for fear of failure. Third, alliances between states with different languages and cultures and/or different regime types might function differently or at least complicate the task of communicating about alliance policies and restraint efforts. The Anglo-American cases are two states with the same regime types, democracies. An alliance between a democracy and a dictatorship or between two dictatorships might fare differently. Whether these three caveats would affect the applicability of RRT to other cases remains to be seen in future empirical research.

IV. Alliance formation

The role of restraint in alliance formation highlights a larger tension in international relations theory that is worthy of re-evaluation. Restraint as an explanation for alliance formation suggests that **internal** factors related most directly to the members of the new alliance are sometimes better explanations for the origin of the alliance than the prevailing emphasis on factors **external** to the alliance. The desire to control the conduct of or restrain a new ally may be a greater motivation for coming together than concern about threats from parties external to the alliance and the ability to change the behavior of parties outside the alliance. States may agree to form an alliance as a way to control another state and avoid being dragged to war.²⁴

Generally, the restrainer fears that it would end up having to defend the restrainee anyway so it may as well use a formal alliance to gain greater control of the decision to go to war or not. Some scholars have used the terms alignment and alliance to define this distinction, where alignment refers to the relationship of common interest that exists prior to signing a formal agreement while alliances covers the period in which the existence of these common interests is codified in a treaty or other agreement.²⁵ In short, then, one

²⁴ In theory, a state may also avoid making an alliance so as to avoid having to restrain another state.

²⁵ Morrow suggested the following distinction: "Alignments are not written down by states because the common interest is obvious to all. Some alignments, such as the United States and Israel, support close relations over a long period of time, whereas others, such as the United States and Syria during the Gulf War, pass with the immediate issue. The key difference is that an alignment does not carry the expectation of a continuing relationship; the shared interest carries the entire relationship, and therefore that relationship need not be negotiated formally. An alliance entails a formal commitment between the parties wherein certain specific obligations are written out. Alliances require specification because the allies need to clarify their degree of shared interests, both to each other and to others outside the alliance." See James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, 2000, pp. 63-83 at 64.

party to an alignment may decide that an alliance will give it greater control over what military policy the two (or more) states do or do not pursue.

But the existence of a threat from an adversary is not irrelevant even in cases where restraint is a priority. The restrainer often wants to form the alliance because it fears that the restrainee will provoke another state. A restrainee may use the possibility of provoking a third state to force the restrainer's hand and thereby get an alliance. Since the ability to provoke usually results from an existing hostile relationship, the threat and the restraint elements are both important. In other words, the desire to restrain an ally and a threat-based explanation for alliance formation may serve to create a triangular relationship between the restrainer (ally one), the restrainee (ally two), and the adversary of the allies.²⁶

In contrast to the Anglo-American case studies discussed earlier, cases of alliance restraint and the formation of alliances tend to rely on a more expansive definition of restraint. Rather than focusing on stopping a specific policy, the restrainer is often concerned about more general provocative behavior, resurgent militarism, and the possibility of a plan to attack in the future rather than a concrete policy that has been proposed.²⁷

Examples of alliances favored by one party so as to restrain another state include Germany-Austria (1879), Britain-Japan (1902), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-West Germany (1949), United States-South Korea (1953), United States-Taiwan (1954), and Egypt-Syria (1964). (see table 1.2 where I also list the adversaries for each alliance)

²⁶ Other possibilities are that only one of the two allies is engaged in an adversarial relationship with the third state or that neither ally is engaged in an adversarial relationship with the third state today, but one ally fears that such a relationship could develop in the future.

In each example, the first party to the alliance was seeking to restrain the second party, though this may not have been the restrainer's only motivation for forming the alliance. The second party to the alliance may have sought the alliance and used provocative behavior to bring about the new agreement. I briefly illustrate restraint and alliance formation with two examples that are dealt with in greater depth in chapter six.

United States-South Korea. In 1953, the United States was hoping to sign an armistice agreement and thereby bring an end to the Korean war. One major obstacle to such a deal was Syngman Rhee, president of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Rhee opposed an armistice unless he received a U.S. security guarantee; U.S. officials feared he would seek to prolong the fighting or to provoke the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and thereby scuttle the armistice talks. A security agreement thus became a mechanism for restraining Rhee and the ROK. The U.S. offer of an alliance was meant to support a diplomatic policy (armistice) and block the ROK's move toward a military one (continued fighting). Even if the United States and ROK had not signed an alliance, Washington would still have had to defend the ROK in continued or renewed fighting.

Egypt-Syria. In late 1963, Egypt worried that Syrian moves might provoke Israel and spark a third Arab-Israeli war. Israel had just announced the completion of the Jordan River water project, and Syria saw this as an opportunity to provoke border incidents. Egypt wanted to avoid war and had stated that the Arab side needed more time before it would be ready for its next military engagement with Israel. Yet Egypt would have been hard-pressed to stand on the sidelines if Israel and Syria began fighting. President Nasser of Egypt used a multilateral Arab alliance, as expressed through annual summits, to rein

²⁷ This same distinction is made between general and specific (immediate) cases in the deterrence literature. For instance, see Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon*, p. 177.

in the Syrians. The alliance was ostensibly directed against Israel, but it allowed Egypt to use the weight of the Arab world to curb Syrian radicalism and tone down Syrian border incursions and rhetoric.

V. Research method and case selection

This dissertation is largely built on case studies. Case studies are suitable for paying careful attention to the motivations and intentions of the actors. This gives the researcher the ability to test unique predictions and draw meaningful distinctions between alternative explanations for outcomes. Case studies are also well-suited for uncovering and understanding causal mechanisms and intervening variables. Given the paucity of previous research on restraint, it would be difficult to delineate a universe of cases for large-N research. But case studies can be used to build toward large-N work as large-N coding would require in-depth research; for the study of restraint, large-N work and case studies are not mutually exclusive.²⁸

In answering questions on restrainers' motivations and the success or failure of restraint efforts, this paper relies heavily on Anglo-American case studies in the Middle East and East Asia. These cases deal with areas of strategic importance during periods of instability and/or confrontation. Both parties have extensive archives that provide rich data for investigating intentions and causality, uncovering more examples of restraint in the historical record, and correctly classifying candidates for restraint cases. By looking

²⁸ For more on case studies, see Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Alexander L. George and Timothy McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making" in *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985), pp. 21-58.

at two sub-regions, one can investigate the United States and Britain playing both the role of restrainer and restrainee. In the Middle East, the United States usually tried to restrain Britain while in East Asia their roles were reversed. By looking at the same parties over several cases, I can control for many background factors, including normative and cultural differences, that might disrupt the study.

Finally, these cases provide variation on two important dimensions. First, I study cases of restraint success and restraint failure. Second, I look at some cases where the restrainer was the more capable party and one case where the restrainee was the more capable party which is important because capabilities are an important component of rational restraint theory.²⁹

VI. Road map

In chapter two, "Theories and Predictions," I look at existing writings on alliances in three areas of alliance restraint. First, I discuss what international relations theorists have written about the effect of alliances on international peace and stability. This includes a brief look at several alliance dynamics such as buckpassing, chainganging, and deterrence. Second, I frame four possible explanations for restraint success or failure: power, rational restraint theory, public opinion in the restrainee, and intra-alliance norms of consultation and consensus. After presenting the competing theories, I spell out some of the predictions that follow from the theories as a guide toward what kinds of evidence

²⁹ One area in which I do not have variation is prior to the question of success and failure. I did not study in-depth a cases where restraint was considered but not attempted. In all of my case studies, restraint was attempted. This type of variation would help address the question of why states choose restraint over other policy options such as abandonment or acquiescence.

would confirm or undermine various explanations. By predictions, I mean the types of evidence one would look for to confirm or negate the theory in question. At the end of chapter two, I discuss some methodological possibilities about case studies and case selection.³⁰

In chapter three, “The United States restrains Britain in Iran: Why Operation Buccaneer Was Never Implemented (1951),” I write about a case of successful restraint. After Iran threatened to nationalize British oil facilities in Iran, the British Government strongly considered preventing the Iranian move through military intervention. Under intense U.S. pressure, Britain decided against intervention. This case is a detailed example of alliance restraint in international affairs and sheds light on the motivations of the restrainee (US).

In chapter four, “The United States restrains Britain at Suez: Intervention, Cease-fire, and Withdrawal (1956),” I analyze a two-part case of restraint failure followed by successful restraint. On July 26, 1956, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. Just a few months later, Britain and France sent armed forces into Egypt to re-capture the canal and topple Egypt’s government in spite of U.S. opposition to Anglo-French military intervention. Alliance restraint failed because the United States failed to communicate to Britain the costs of defying American opposition. Had the United States made clear before the crisis that it would apply this pressure, Britain would likely have avoided intervention. After British and French forces had entered Egypt, the United States applied economic pressure; Britain was forced to accept U.S. demands for a cease-fire and then withdrawal of British forces. This

³⁰ On methodological issues, see also Jeremy Pressman, “Here we go again: Learning from Controversies in the Study of Foreign Policy Influence,” paper presented at the Northeast Political Science Association’s annual conference, November 8, 2001.

case offers an example of restraint failure (intervention) followed by restraint success (cease-fire and withdrawal).

In chapter five, “Role reversal: Britain restrains the United States in East Asia,” I reverse the restrainee/restrainer relationship between London and Washington. During the same period as the United States was restraining Britain in the Middle East, Britain was restraining the United States in East Asia. In 1954, the United States tried to organize a multilateral military coalition to bolster and/or replace French troops in Indochina. U.S. Congressional leaders stipulated that the United States could only join the coalition, called “United Action,” if other allies like Britain also joined. When Britain refused to join, in part because it feared being drawn into an Asian war, Washington abandoned the proposal. In this case, Britain had significant leverage because of the split in the United States between Congressional and Executive leaders.

In chapter six, “Alliance Formation and Restraint,” I turn to a different research question: Does restraint ever explain the origins of alliances? States sometimes *form* alliances in order to restrain their new partners. I examine six cases where restraint was a significant motivation for alliance formation: Germany-Austria (1879), Britain-Japan (1902), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-West Germany (1949), United States-South Korea (1953), United States-Taiwan (1954), and Egypt-Syria (1964).

I conclude in chapter seven by assessing what my findings mean for international relations theory, the study of alliances, and alliance policymaking. In addition to summarizing the evidence on each question, I also suggest further extensions and lines of research.

Explanations and evidence are essential elements of any case study. Thus before turning to my case studies in chapters three through six, I lay out analytical ideas and frameworks in the next chapter, chapter two.

Table 1.1: Case Studies of Alliance Restraint

	Restrainer	Restrainee	Who prevailed?	Restraint Success/Failure
1951: Britain proposed military intervention in Iran	United States	Britain	United States (no intervention)	Success
1954: United States proposed "United Action" for intervention in Vietnam (Indochina)	Britain	United States	Britain (United Action never formed)	Success
1956 (part I): Britain proposed military intervention in Egypt	United States	Britain	Britain (intervention went forward)	Failure
1956 (part II): Britain continued fighting in Egypt (Suez War)	United States	Britain	United States (Britain agreed to cease-fire and withdrawal)	Success

Table 1.2: Cases of Alliance Formation and Restraint

	Restrainer	Restrainee	Adversary
1879	Germany	Austria	Several
1902	Britain	Japan	Russia
1949	NATO	Germany	--
1953	United States	S. Korea	N. Korea+
1954	United States	Taiwan	China (PRC)
1964	Egypt	Syria	Israel

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Chapter Two: Theories and Predictions

I. Introduction

This chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for my study of alliance restraint. As I describe in the next section of this chapter, the conventional wisdom suggests that alliances are destabilizing and war-causing. However, the study of alliance restraint introduces the possibility that alliances may have a moderating or stabilizing impact. A range of alliance dynamics should be considered before making judgments about the impact of alliances and the fate of the international system.

In turning more specifically to alliance restraint, what explains the success or failure of restraint efforts? I outline four possible explanations: pure power, rational restraint theory, public opinion, and alliance norms. In order, they assume the most powerful (capable) ally gets its way on restraint; a combination of capabilities, interests, and communication explains the restraint outcome; the direction of public (mass) opinion on the issue shapes elite decisionmaking; or procedural alliance norms of consultation and consensus determine when allies are restrained or not. For each explanation, I note some of the evidence that might confirm or undermine that explanation.

The next section of this chapter turns to alliance formation. While previous authors have emphasized that two states come together and form an alliance in response to a third hostile state, I suggest that two states may also come together in response to each other's policies and actions. In particular, two states may form an alliance because one wants to restrain or, more generally, control the other and believes forming an alliance is the best way to do so. Whereas traditional thinking such as Walt has emphasized alliance formation as a result of interactions between the soon-to-be allies

and an adversary (an external approach), I highlight interactions between the two allies themselves (an internal approach). This section lists a range of possible explanations for alliance formation, categorizes them as primarily internally or externally motivated, and then focuses on an example from each side of the internal-external divide (alliance restraint and balance of threat).

The final section of the chapter addresses the question of how to select cases given the possibility that some states may make decisions based on anticipated reactions. In cases of anticipated action, allies refrain from even making certain policy proposals because of how they assume their partner will react. States may not bother with proposing a military policy for fear of being restrained, or a state may not restrain for fear of doing so unsuccessfully. These types of cases are more difficult to find in the historical record than those in which states made proposals, but they may have an important bearing on one's understanding of restraint success and failure. In this dissertation, I propose addressing this shortcoming through transparency, an effort to find and inventory cases of anticipated restraint, and a general caveat about the findings.

II. The Conventional Wisdom: Alliances, Instability, and War

Much of the existing literature on alliances claims that alliances are forces for instability and war. But studying alliance restraint suggests that solely focusing on the destabilizing aspects of alliances neglects the possibility of alliances as peace-promoting and stabilizing factors in international relations. In order to situate alliance restraint in the prior discussions of alliances and the international system, the rest of this section briefly

describes the alliance-related findings of work by previous scholars. In the past, both qualitative and quantitative researchers have pointed out the destabilizing effects of alliances; several have highlighted chainganging where one ally drags other allies into war. This section concludes by noting that the entire discussion of alliances has a strong normative element since each of the major alliance dynamics – chainganging, buckpassing, abandonment, entrapment, restraint, and some cases of deterrence – conflates a policy decision (support or not support an ally) with our normative view of the outcome of the case.

International stability is often used to describe both international peace (the absence of conflict) and/or the stability of the great powers or the poles of the international system. I use the term international peace for the former and international stability for the latter.

International relations theorists have conceptualized multiple dynamics that highlight the destabilizing effects of alliances, but the most dangerous is probably chainganging. Waltz claimed that the instability of alliances taints multipolar international systems. He explained the danger of being dragged to war through an alliance: “In a moment of crisis the weaker or the more adventurous party is likely to determine its side’s policy. Its partners can afford neither to let the weaker member go to the wall nor to advertise their disunity by failing to back a venture even while deploring its risks.”¹ The case of World War I is often mentioned as the archetypical example of chainganging: “If Austria-Hungary marched, Germany had to follow; the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would have left Germany alone in the middle of Europe.”²

¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 167.

² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 167.

Christensen and Snyder further developed the idea of chainganging. With chainganging, states ally and thereby "may chain themselves unconditionally to reckless allies"; it is "unconditional balancing behavior."³

Vasquez reviewed the quantitative research of the Singer and Small school and presented a quantitative indictment of alliances but in doing so he too suggested chainganging could explain the war-causing effects of alliances. Since the majority of alliances are followed by war within five years, alliances should no longer be thought of as promoting peace. He explained: "When a war breaks out among states that have alliances with non-belligerents, these non-belligerents are likely to be drawn in. In this way, alliances act as a contagion mechanism by which war spreads and expands."⁴

Vasquez's overall claim that alliances are correlated with war probably points to a spurious cause of war. Alliances may signal war – they may be formed in anticipation of a war caused by other factors. Still, his reliance on the logic of alliances as contagion mechanisms is similar to that of qualitative researchers.

Posen noted an opposite tendency to chainganging, the likelihood in a multipolar system of states passing the buck rather than forming an alliance against a great power

³ Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain gangs and passed bucks: predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity," *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137-168. Glenn Snyder uses the terms entrapment and abandonment. Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36 (July 1984), pp. 461-495.

⁴ John A. Vasquez, "The Steps to War: Toward a Scientific Explanation of Correlates of War Findings," *World Politics* 40, no. 1 (October 1987), pp. 108-145 at 121. See also Vasquez, "Reexamining the Steps to War," in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed, *Handbook of War Studies II* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 371-406. In Bremer's multivariate analysis of the outbreak of war, he rejected the idea that allies go to war, but said this finding was not inconsistent with the idea that alliances facilitate the spread of war. Bremer may also be correct that much of the study of war conflates the study of initial outbreak of war with the study of the spread of the war to involve additional states on each side. Stuart A. Bremer, "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions affecting the likelihood of interstate war, 1816-1965," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36, no. 2, June 1992, pp. 309-341 at 336.

threat.⁵ The possibility of multiple alliance combinations allows each actor to assume someone else will do the dirty work and oppose the threatening state or coalition. With buckpassing, according to Christensen and Snyder, states may decide not to ally and instead count “on third parties to bear the costs of stopping a rising hegemon.” Buckpassing is a strategy of limited liability.⁶ Although the decision to pass the buck is often characterized as deciding not to ally, partners within an alliance may also pass the buck. While non-allies may hope other threatened states will act first, allies may hope their partner will contain the enemy. In the 1930s, Britain and France each hoped the other would take primary responsibility for meeting the German threat, and they designed their military plans accordingly.⁷ Mearsheimer contended that buckpassing is most likely in a multipolar system with a diffusion of capabilities among the great powers. Greater distance to the threatening state and the absence of a hegemonic state make buckpassing more likely in some multipolar international systems. For instance, he contrasted the significant buckpassing by Germany’s adversaries in the 1860s with the small amount of buckpassing in the decade prior to WWI.⁸

According to Bueno de Mesquita, allies are statistically more likely to threaten, intervene, and go to war against *each other* because “close intimate interaction among friends often leads to violence” and “there is also the recognition that the dispute is

⁵ Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 63.

⁶ See Christensen and Snyder, “Chain gangs and passed bucks,” p. 138 and 165. On a related note, does assuming “reckless” allies and “rising hegemons” color the analysis a priori? What would happen to the argument if such prior assumptions were dropped? Passing the buck is related to free riding as detailed by Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁷ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, p. 232. On buckpassing, see also pp. 73-74. On WWII, see also Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 165.

⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 267-333 (chapter eight).

essentially a private affair, unlikely to elicit a serious response by outsiders.”⁹ He does not offer evidence of such thinking in any of the examples he cites, so it remains unclear what about the alliance, if anything, facilitated the intra-alliance dispute.¹⁰ Bueno de Mesquita’s intimacy explanation for alliance confrontations differs from other confrontational alliance dynamics because it asserts that the alliance causes the *same* side to attack each other – the alliance turns on itself. Other dynamics such as buckpassing and chainganging are about how alliances exacerbate and magnify conflicts between an alliance, on the one hand, and its enemies, on the other hand.

More generally, the characterization of most alliance dynamics revolves around two factors: a policy decision (the level of support for one’s ally) and a normative view of the outcome in each case. With buckpassing, restraint, and abandonment, one ally has limited (or ended) its support of the other’s policy. With chainganging and some forms of deterrence, one ally has agreed or felt compelled to support its partner. What may *differ* in all these cases is how we, in retrospect, view the outcome and how the adversary reacted. Not supporting one’s ally is of less consequence if a mutual adversary is unaware of the lack of support or shows no interest in interpreting such alliance differences as a sign of weakness or opening for further probes.

⁹ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 159-160.

¹⁰ In a critique of Bueno de Mesquita, Ray noted that Prussian policy during the Seven Weeks’ War accounts for 8 of the 15 examples of one ally initiating a war against its ally. By counting this and other wars as only one data point, the war proneness of allied dyads “would not be statistically significant.” Ray then constructed a revised data set and offered some support to Bueno de Mesquita’s initial claim. But Ray’s article is full of qualifications and caveats; he noted that coding issues present a substantial problem for clarifying the debate. (p. 88) He also raised the issue of spurious causation and left it as an open challenge to the work on intra-alliance war. The intra-alliance fighting may suggest that states that are more likely to ally are more war-prone already for other reasons. (pp. 86-88) See James Lee Ray, “Friends as Foes: International Conflict and Wars between Formal Allies,” in Charles S. Gochman and Alan Ned Sabrosky, *Prisoners of War? Nation-states in the Modern Era* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), pp. 73-91.

What this brief review of the study of alliances and the international system demonstrates is that previous scholars have emphasized the war-promoting and destabilizing aspects of alliances. This dissertation, however, suggests that another dynamic, alliance restraint, presents a different understanding of how alliances work at least some of the time and may signal that alliances are peace-promoting and stabilizing more often than not.

III. Explanations for Restraint Success and Failure

Why do some restraint effort succeed while others fail? This section outlines four possible answers: pure power, rational restraint theory, public opinion, and alliance norms. For each explanation, I first explain the key terms and variables and then describe the kind of evidence and outcomes one would expect to find if the explanation were applied to empirical cases.

By restraint success, I mean a policy that achieves an objective at a reasonable cost. This definition takes into account both the effectiveness of the policy and the cost-benefit angle. In studying alliance restraint, the restrainer's objective is to stop, reverse, or modify the military policy proposed by or undertaken by the restrainee. In terms of effectiveness, was the restrainee restrained? In terms of cost, what was the price of that restraint? If the restrainee, for instance, dropped the contested military policy but as a result was over-run by the alliance's mutual adversary, the policy of restraint should not be thought of as successful.

Pure Power: The most powerful ally in terms of raw capabilities prevails. When the restrainer is more powerful, restraint is successful. When the restrainee is more powerful, restraint ends in failure.

Power has long been an elusive concept and scholars have long debated how to define it.¹¹ By power I do not mean influence or anything tied to the *outcome* of allied interactions; I seek to avoid the tautological conclusion that we know a state was more powerful because it prevailed and got its way. Instead, I mean something that can be measured a priori. I start with a simple measure of power including gross national product, population, military size and expenditures, and possession of nuclear weapons. I acknowledge, however, that certain qualitative judgments may be necessary to contextualize such statistical measures. History repeatedly demonstrates that states may be more or less powerful than the numbers alone suggest. Britain's role as a great power lasted for a few years after WWII despite the fact that Britain faced serious economic difficulties at home.¹² Mearsheimer also noted that the best measure of economic wealth and thus military potential may vary over time; rather than GNP, for example, he used iron/steel production and energy consumption for any of his cases prior to 1960.¹³

In Waltz's discussion of bipolar systems, he emphasized the importance of power as the central determinant of alliance decisions. While he accepts that some "concessions" to lesser allies will occur, his general position is that the great power (e.g. the US or USSR) will set the tone: "Both superpowers can make long-range plans and

¹¹ For definitions of power, see chapter nine in Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, fourth edition (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); and Jeffrey Hart, "Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations," *International Organization* 30, no. 2, 1976, pp. 289-305. See also chapters three and four of Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. He used GNP and population to measure "latent power" and the size and quality of land armies to measure "military power."

¹² Although one could counter that even a weak post-WWII Britain still was more capable than all but a handful of states.

¹³ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 67.

carry out their policies as best they see fit, for they need not accede to the demands of third parties.”¹⁴ The reason is that each superpower controls so much of their respective alliance’s power that they can act unilaterally without fearing a shortfall of resources: “Because of the vast differences in the *capabilities* of member states, the roughly equal sharing of burdens found in earlier alliance systems is no longer feasible.”¹⁵ Power (capabilities) determines alliance policies.

What does a pure power explanation predict? First, we should always see the position of the more capable (powerful) party prevail. The logic might be that since military policies often involved the projection of military (and economic) power, the ally that controls more of that power has the final say on alliance policy. If the restrainee is more powerful, it can ignore its allies restraint effort and go it alone, if necessary. If the restrainer is more powerful, it can deny the restrainee the support it needs to carry off the proposed military policy. In short, power means that one (less powerful) ally is more dependent on the other (more powerful) ally. However, in some cases the pure power approach results in uncertain predictions such as with allies of equal power, e.g. same GNP, population, military expenditures or, as is more likely in the real world, situations where each ally is stronger in certain areas, e.g. one ally has more people and a larger military while the other ally has a stronger economy and nuclear weapons. In these two scenarios, the pure power explanation does not differentiate between the two parties.

The second type of evidence we should see is the discussion of power issues among policymakers. Policy discussions by the leaders of the less powerful ally, for instance, should acknowledge that power-related factors shaped the final alliance

¹⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 170.

¹⁵ Emphasis added. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 169.

decision on the contested military policy. For example, they might discuss dependence on another ally, the importance of an ally's security umbrella, or the damage that the loss of certain allied capabilities would do to their position.

Finally, based on Waltz, a state that serves as a pole in a bipolar system should not only prevail in its restraint disputes but also should show little interest in the actions and pleadings of its lesser allies. As noted earlier, Waltz argued that lesser allies are largely irrelevant to the two great powers in a bipolar international system. A power-based explanation would be undermined not only if weaker allies do prevail in restraint disputes but also if the more powerful ally (the pole) expresses concern about less powerful allies even when it (the pole) prevails.

Rational Restraint Theory: The more capable, interested, communicative ally is more credible and thus prevails. When the restrainer is more credible, restraint is successful. When the restrainee is more credible, restraint ends in failure.

Rational restraint theory starts with the same foundation as the pure power explanation but then builds in additional elements. In rational restraint theory, the outcome turns on more than who is the biggest, most capable ally; it also matters how much each ally cares about the issue and other objectives that may be affected by the contested military policy. In addition, allies have to communicate; a restraining ally needs to make clear its policy to its ally, the restrainee.¹⁶

This explanation is partly drawn from previous writings on deterrence. The deterrence literature includes many versions of deterrence theory, and rational restraint

¹⁶ Glenn Snyder offers a different but related combination of elements in explaining restraint success; "(1) the credibility of the restrainer's threat, (2) the restrainee's interests in conflict with the adversary, and (3) the restrainee's dependence on the alliance." *Alliance Politics*, p. 326.

theory is based on studying many versions rather than mirroring any one version in particular. Each version of deterrence theory uses different terms – will, credibility, resolve, commitment, dependence – and uses them to mean slightly different things. I tried to simplify in my adaptation of these arguments, because I found that these different terms often added little beyond how they were operationalized in terms of capabilities and interests. “Resolve,” for instance, meant bargaining reputation, interests, or ad-hoc factors.¹⁷ I avoid the seemingly ad-hoc elements in some theories even as they may have significant explanatory power in certain cases. Rational restraint theory includes three factors: capabilities, interests, and communication.¹⁸

In this work, capabilities includes the same elements as the pure power explanation: gross national product, population, military size and expenditures, and possession of nuclear weapons. But I expand the definition to account for two other possible capabilities that may be relevant sources of capabilities in some cases. One is

¹⁷ Huth linked resolve to reputation. For Evron, resolve is the readiness to suffer and “depends to a large extent on intrinsic interests” but also such factors as general societal/elite value, martial traditions, and the need to uphold one’s reputation and prestige. Lebow wrote about the bargaining reputation and “intention” with regard to the commitment; in his cases this includes such elements as domestic opinion and the priority of the issue on the domestic agenda. As I note below, I include some of the domestic scene in my understanding of state interests in an issue. Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 6; Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 179; and Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 89-90 and 94-96.

¹⁸ These factors and others appear in deterrence theory. On military capabilities, see Huth, *Extended Deterrence*; Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon*, pp. 177-179; and Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, pp. 82-97, who wrote about the ability to defend deterrence commitments. On interests, see Huth (p. 5) who used interests to measure will or intentions, and Evron who focused on the interests directly involved (he cites Robert Jervis for the term intrinsic interests). For more citations on interests, see Evron, footnote 5, p. 224. On communication, see Lebow and his list on p. 88 of how states try to communicate clearly. I did not include the issue of reputation or past bargaining history, but future empirical research could lead to its inclusion in restraint cases. According to Jervis, credibility is having a reputation for living up to commitments. Robert Jervis, “Introduction: Approach and Assumptions,” in Jervis, Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 9. See also Huth, pp. 9-10. In general, see also Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980 [1960]); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); and Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: a conceptual analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977).

specific leverage usually due to some technological or geographic advantage such as control of a military base or a type of weaponry or proximity to the battlefield.¹⁹ A second (potential) capability is the availability of alternative allies. Given that alliances can serve the same function as an internal military build-up, a state that can turn to an alternative ally is more capable than one that cannot, *ceteris paribus*. Also, the mere presence of other non-allied states does not mean the alternative exists. The alternative may not be real for a host of reasons such as the lack of any common interests or the inability to conceive of another state as a potential ally.

Interests include how much each party cares about the issue at hand (the contested military policy) as well as broader regional and global interests.²⁰ As I note later in my empirical cases, one ally may care very much about how a policy affects a specific country while the other worries the policy might start World War III. The interest in the specific country is not automatically more relevant to the alliance policy dispute. In theory, the global interest may actually weigh more heavily on the mind of one ally than the specific interest does in the other capital.

¹⁹ A similar explanation is offered (and partially rejected) by Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 23-24. Based on realist bargaining theory, he theorized that small "allies can increase their bargaining leverage if they control material resources that the superpower needs under the circumstances and that cannot be provided otherwise." See also Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 178-179.

²⁰ In addition to those mentioned in note 17, authors who highlight the possible importance of state interests in explaining political outcomes include T. V. Paul, *Asymmetric conflicts: war initiation by weaker powers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 16-17; and Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies*, p. 21. After noting the difficulty in operationalizing this variable in a non-tautological manner, Risse-Kappen tried to control for this factor by including cases where the survival of the smaller ally was not at stake. For a balance of interest explanation for the victory of less powerful states in wars, see Andrew J. R. Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (January 1975), pp. 175-200. This explanation is challenged by Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1, Summer 2001, pp. 93-128. See also Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 4, footnote 9.

Certain types of interests are more vital than others. The protection of one's own territorial integrity and citizenry is usually the most vital, though given limited resources the protection of even these two interests may come into conflict. Especially in cases where the proposed military policy relates to activity in a distant land, one might find certain states that are more concerned with economic interests and national prosperity while others have political or military priorities. Imperial powers deciding policy for colonies probably have more flexibility in ranking their interests than an ally fighting for its survival on its home turf.

The intensity of a state's interest varies based on the level of support among the ruling policy elites. If political and military leaders are unified that a certain interest is paramount or that a certain policy best achieves the state's objectives, the intensity of that state's interest is strong, *ceteris paribus*. In contrast, a divided leadership means the state's interest is watered down. Domestic politics matter for our understanding of state interests.²¹ So in addition to looking for various expressions of the content of a state's interests, one also needs to be aware of how widely shared such views are and how significant a role dissenters play in the process. The importance of the level of support for a given interest opens the door to manipulation and lobbying by foreign or domestic groups.

The third and final component of rational restraint theory is communication. Communication includes conveying a literal understanding of the interests at stake and the policy of opposition. But it is not necessarily enough merely to express opposition to

²¹ I reject the idea that state interests are solely dictated by international structure. Instead, I assume that structural dictats are mediated by domestic actors (elites or society at large). The question of whether elite opinion or public opinion is more important for understanding the reaction to the structural factors is an open question.

a policy. The restraining ally also has to convey the costs of ignoring its opposition to the contested military policy. In other words, what will the restrainer do if the restrainee refuses to set aside the proposed military policy? Communication could also serve as a way for a restrainer to signal that it is serious about stopping the proposed military policy.

What kind of evidence would confirm rational restraint theory? First, the more capable, interested, communicative party should prevail in the restraint disputes.²²

The second type of evidence we should see is the discussion of interests and capabilities issues among policymakers. When making decisions about the contested military policy, leaders should consider some or all of the factors mentioned above: components of raw power, specific tools of leverage, alternative allies, the stakes for both allies, and the level of domestic unity on the given policy and related issues.

Third, the quality of the communication between the parties should affect outcomes. When policies are poorly communicated, the outcome should be different than when they are clearly communicated and include a sense of the costs of defiance.

²² Rational Restraint Theory contains the seeds of an alternative, *irrational* explanation for restraint success or failure. States may misperceive capabilities, interests, and communication. If allies regularly misperceive capabilities and interests or mis-communicate, the misperception may be more important than the reality. For more on irrational approaches, see Lebow, *Between Peace and War*; Robert Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," in Jervis et al, *Psychology and Deterrence*, pp. 13-33 (especially pp. 24-33); and Janice Gross Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation and Conventional Deterrence I: The View from Cairo," in Jervis et al, *Psychology and Deterrence*, pp. 34-59. Stein's work strongly suggests that there is no rigid formula for judging the variables of rational deterrence theory; the combination and weight of factors like interests and military capabilities will vary. She also noted the importance of considering what other policy options the state had as alternatives.

Restraint success or failure is determined by the restrainee's public opinion. If the public in the restrainee supports the proposed military policy, restraint efforts end in failure. If the public in the restrainee opposes the proposed military policy, restraint efforts succeed.

This explanation posits that governmental (elite) policy decisions are shaped by public (mass) preferences. Within alliance restraint, how much does public opinion affect the restrainee's decision either to go forward with the contested military policy and defy its ally or to abandon the policy and be restrained?

The public's perspective on two aspects of the policy debate could affect the policy decisions. First, public opinion on the contested policy and the issue category into which it falls could shape the policy outcome. For instance, the British public might oppose military intervention in Iran even though the British government has proposed such intervention. Second, the public view on relations with the ally who is seeking to restrain may shape the policy outcome. Using the same example, the British public may not be concerned with intervention in Iran, but may be opposed to acting without U.S. support on intervention; if the United States is restraining, the public might believe, Britain should drop the proposed policy regardless of the import of intervention in Iran.

In this work, public opinion on issues is measured using polls taken at the time of the cases under study. By public opinion, I do not mean to measure the opinion of elites, media organizations, organized interest groups, or only the interested segments of the public (attentive public)²³ but rather the broad-based perspective of the citizenry that is captured by a random survey.

²³ On the distinction between the mass public and the attentive public, see Gabriel A. Almond, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20, no. 2, summer 1956, pp. 371-378 at

For public opinion to explain restraint success/failure, one needs to find evidence to support two claims. One needs to demonstrate that the public favored a particular policy outcome in order to answer the question of whether the policy decision and public preference are consistent or not. If the public opposed being restrained and the government was restrained, the inconsistency alone suggests the explanation was not applicable. In study of a wide range of policy issues, for instance, Monroe found the greatest consistency between public preferences and government policy on issues of foreign policy.²⁴ In addition, one needs to look for evidence that the public's position influenced policymakers and that it was not some alternative factor that better explains the outcome. If the first claim demonstrates a correlation between public opinion and a policy outcome, the second one suggests a causal relationship.²⁵

This two-part test assumes a strong version of the relationship between public preferences and government decisions. A weaker version might be that public opinion reflects or is consistent with government policy decisions on restraint. In that case,

377; James N. Rosenau, *Public opinion and foreign policy: an operational formulation* (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 30-31, 33ff; and V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 9-10 and 543ff. Almond defines the attentive public as "a stratum of public opinion which is more analytically oriented to problems of public affairs, which is regularly informed on these issues, and which constitutes a critical audience for the discussion of public issues."

²⁴ Mass preferences and elite policy decisions were consistent 92% of the time with foreign policy (n=22), 71% on Vietnam (n=28), and 64% on all issues (n=222). Monroe speculated as to why this might be the case: 1) The foreign policy area allows for rapid decisionmaking by the executive, so the executive can rapidly respond to the public view. 2) There is less general interest in foreign policy matters and less interest group lobbying. 3) "[I]t may well be the case that public attitudes on foreign policy topics are particularly susceptible to manipulation by political elites." Alan D. Monroe, "Consistency Between public preferences and national policy decisions," *American Politics Quarterly* 7, January 1979, pp. 3-19 as reprinted in Norman R. Luttbeg, *Public Opinion and Public Policy: Models of Political Linkage*, third edition (Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. 400-409 at 404.

²⁵ For instance, Stimson et al proposed a theory of dynamic representation: "Public sentiment shifts. Political actors sense the shift. And then they alter their policy behavior at the margin." In other words, "opinion causes policy." (543) They assumed politicians who feel safe in the next election are more willing to favor policy at odds with public opinion. (544) They used a global issue measure of opinion (liberal or conservative) to test their explanation and concluded: "the main story is that large-scale shifts in public opinion yield corresponding large-scale shifts in government action [policy]." (559) The shift takes place

support for the first part of the two-part test - the public favored a particular policy outcome – would be sufficient to demonstrate a correlation between public views and government policy.

This approach to public opinion and government (elite) policymaking is one of at least four possible linkages.²⁶ The explanation presented thus far assumes mass opinion shapes elite opinion (elite decisionmaking). Other alternatives are that elites shapes mass (public) opinion; mass and elite opinion are inter-dependent or interactive; and elites

without much hesitation or delay. (560) See James A. Stimson, Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," *APSR* 89, no. 3, September 1995, pp. 543-565.

²⁶ For instance, Russett and Graham posit four possible relationships on (elite) war policy and public opinion that roughly correspond with the above: 1) "controlling" – "policy obeys the dictates of popular opinion" 2) "controlled" – "policymakers basically shape and manipulate opinion" 3) interactive – "each influences the other" and 4) "mutually irrelevant" – "leaders neither obey nor control public opinion; policy and opinion go their separate ways." (239) They, along with Cunningham and Moore, favor the interactive approach: "Leaders in a real sense interact with public opinion, both responding to it and manipulating it." (245) See Bruce Russett and Thomas W. Graham, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy: Relationships and Impacts," in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 239-257; and Jennifer Cunningham and Michael K. Moore, "Elite and Mass Foreign Policy Opinions: Who is Leading this Parade?" *Social Science Quarterly* 78, no. 3, September 1997, pp. 641-656. Key also outlined several options: "Governments may be compelled toward action or inaction by such [public] opinion; in other instances they may ignore it, perhaps at their peril; they may attempt to alter it; or they may divert or pacify it." See Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, p. 14; see also 537 and 555. On the Korean war period, Page and Shapiro offered some support for a mixed result: "Our foreign policy data include a complex mixture of cases in which opinion was led, or was manipulated, or moved independently of (sometimes in opposition to) efforts at persuasion." (214) On greater support for United Nations among the public than among US policymakers, they noted "public opinion can sometimes be quite resistant to elite persuasion." (219) See Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Cohen saw weaker linkage, if at all: "Apparently the President, like a city councilman, finds it very easy most of the time to ignore public preferences when he cannot otherwise mobilize or neutralize them." (186) In other cases, "What we have, then, in our foreign policy process is a slight amount of [elite] responsiveness, in the form mostly of individual exposures to public preferences and of some occasional linking of these preferences to policy (leading to reinforcement as well as to adaptation)." (191-192) See Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973). Almond presented the image of elite-led foreign policy initiated by the executive branch. Gabriel A. Almond, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20, no. 2, summer 1956, pp. 371-378 at 373. Jentleson mentioned the role of "presidential cues," but he saw limits to elite manipulation. Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1, March 1992, pp. 49-73 at 51-52 and 71. See also Kim Quaile Hill, "The Policy Agendas of the President and the Mass Public: A Research Validation and Extension," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 4, October 1998, pp. 1328-1334; and Kim Quaile Hill and Angela Hinton-Anderson, "Pathways of Representation: A Causal Analysis of Public Opinion-Policy Linkages," *American Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 4, November 1995, pp. 924-935. On mass-elite influence, Hill and Hinton-Anderson favor a "shared-preferences, reciprocal influence process."

ignores mass opinion when making policy. Although each of these four alternatives has received some support, many writers tend to focus on the complex and mixed picture that emerges from studying the history of public opinion and elite policymaking. Nonetheless, focusing on the explanation as I do allows for a reference point from which to consider other possible linkages as well. My concern is less about declaring one type of elite-mass opinion linkage as universally superior and more about suggesting the conditions in the realm of foreign policy under which the linkage is strong or weak.

If public preferences do influence elite policymaking, by what mechanisms does it work? Almond suggested the interplay between Congress and the Executive branch.²⁷ The public may speak through Congress, political parties, letters, and newspaper comments.²⁸ The search for a mechanism or conduit for public opinion could yield more nuanced explanations.

If in fact public opinion limits or determines government policy options, why might a government propose a policy that the public opposes? One could argue that a rational politician would anticipate the opposition and therefore not propose the policy in the first place. But this assumes the policymaker possesses perfect information about public opinion as well as fixed public preferences, neither of which are often the case. Even if many in the public have fixed preferences on a given issue, many others are open to persuasion. Political leaders may not know of public opposition until the public learns of the specific policy proposal, especially in times of less frequent polling. Polling results may be ambiguous and open to interpretation. Leaders may think they can convince the public to change its mind, or may believe that the external (foreign) threat is so great that

²⁷ Almond, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy," p. 373.

²⁸ Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, pp. 417-418.

the leadership has little choice. A leader may be popular enough that he/she is willing to expend political capital to implement an unpopular policy. Elites may assume an issue has little import to public (low issue salience) so the public will not really care much if the government ignores mass opinion on the issue in question. The government may have been influenced by lobbying by a narrow interest group or foreign power.

Finally, elites may believe that a specific policy decision can be justified to the public in terms of larger issues that the public does support even if public did not support this particular policy. Key argued that opinion forms the context in which decisionmakers operate but does not compel action by government. He described a “permissive consensus” – a “widespread, if not unanimous, sentiment prevails that supports action toward some general objective, such as the care of the ill or the mitigation of the economic hazards of the individual.”²⁹ This would leave room for politicians to try to fit a policy under a larger, more accepted rubric. He went on to describe elite manipulation on both sides of an issue: “Those who advocate a new policy exert their ingenuity to phrase it in terms that will make it consistent with values widely accepted. Those who are in opposition attempt to picture the action as one that diverges markedly from all that is regarded as good and holy by the populace.” For instance, Americans oppose socialism but “support specific measures that may be in principle socialistic.”³⁰ This opens the door to political spin.

Thus far, I have framed this explanation in terms most amenable to studying democratic regimes. But opinion and consensus are not absent from many non-democratic regimes. In the absence of some polling, qualitative judgments play a larger

²⁹ Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, p. 552. See also pp. 413-414 and 423-424.

³⁰ Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, p. 425.

role in trying to ascertain public views of those living in authoritarian states. This could range from the proverbial comments of taxi drivers to nuanced readings of the state press over time to information from military and political elites.

Alliance norms: Restraint is more likely to be successful when the restrainee feels bound to consult its ally and incorporate any objections to the military policy into its final decision.

A fourth possible explanation is that less powerful states sometimes prevail in restraint disputes because of procedural commitments to intra-alliance norms. A restrainee may feel normatively bound to consider and sometimes accept the advice of the restrainers independent of power, interest, or other factors. This holds true even if this sometimes results in abandoning a proposed military policy and thereby being restrained. Alternatively, a restrainer may feel normatively bound to abandon its restraint effort and accept the implementation of the contested military policy favored by its ally independent of the relative alliance balance of power, interest, or other factors.

The alliance norms explanation suggests a particular vision for how crucial alliance decisions are made. Allies consult, share information, maintain contact, and respect each other's views. In particular, I focus on two aspects of alliance norms: 1) Norms of habitual **consultation** which assume allies regularly consult and expect to be consulted. 2) Norms of **consensus** meaning that one ally will not go forward with a policy if another ally opposes the policy.

Risse-Kappen's work emphasized a liberal vision of alliance decisionmaking, but it included a wider array of elements than I include here in the alliance norms explanation. His study of NATO highlighted four liberal factors: a sense of community

and shared futures among alliance members (a sense of 'us'), norms of habitual consultation, reference to domestic pressures to strengthen intra-alliance bargaining positions, and transnational and transgovernmental coalitions.³¹ The alliance norms explanation offered in this chapter only subsumes the first two of Risse-Kappen's factors; the alliance norms explanation is not meant to broadly test liberal variants as Risse-Kappen did in his work. As I frame the explanations in this chapter, both domestic pressures to strengthen intra-alliance bargaining positions and transnational and transgovernmental coalitions could be elements of rational restraint theory as well; they are not unique to an alliance norms explanation.

What kind of evidence would confirm an alliance norms explanation for the success of restraint efforts? First, alliance communications would tend to be transparent intra-alliance discussions, not deceptive or cloaked. This does not include all deception but rather deception that is specifically intended to avoid being restrained. Allies would be expected to lean towards sharing information rather than withholding or hiding it. Second, alliance decisions would look more like final resolutions of issues; the alliance norms explanation would be undermined if one ally tried to circumvent the 'final' decisions or wanted to repeatedly re-visit an issue touched up with some cosmetic changes. Third, either one ally would concede at the end of a debate or the allies would arrive at some compromise or modified policy. In terms of one side conceding, the restrainer might acquiesce to the policy, or the restrainee might accept the objections and drop the policy. The explanation makes no prediction about which ally will concede. One should not see unresolved debates because that suggests that neither ally wants to

³¹ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among democracies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 204-210.

incorporate any of its allies position into its own thinking about the contested military policy; a stalemate suggests the absence of or breakdown of the alliance norm. Unilateral implementation of the contested military policy also strongly cuts against the alliance norms explanation.

Fourth, policymakers should offer evidence, possibly explicitly but also in the way they talk about alliance decisions, that the reason for the policy outcome was the alliance norm, not an alternative explanation. They may talk about the need to respect alliance dissent and to look for a mutually acceptable outcome for the allies. But it is not certain that policymakers will speak about an alliance norm; the norm may be embedded in the relationship but not consciously identified by the leaders.

In studying alliance norms, one needs to distinguish between the absence of a norm and the breakdown of a norm. If one case undermines the alliance norms explanation, the norm may exist but have failed in the particular case. The question is then why it failed in that case. But the repeated absence of alliance norms would suggest more than a breakdown. Instead, it would suggest that the norm is not present at all or is very weak. This might be thought of as a continuum between the absence of a norm, the partial presence, and the dominance of alliance norms with occasional lapses.

IV. Alliance formation: external to alliance vs. internal to alliance (or threat vs. control)

Scholars have offered a myriad of reasons why states form alliances. Although I briefly list those reasons here, I focus my attention on two explanations in particular: balance of (external) threat theory and alliance restraint. Walt's balance of threat theory is

probably the most common explanation for alliance formation and provides a clear alternative to the idea that states form alliances so as to restrain their new partners.

More generally, many of the reasons for the formation of alliances can be sorted into two categories: alliances primarily formed to affect the conduct of actors external to the alliance (external) and alliances primarily formed to influence the conduct of those joining or inside the alliance (internal). While a threat-based explanation would be included in the former group, restraint falls into the latter. The emphasis on international relations literature has been on the external explanations. If restraint is an important explanation for alliance formation, perhaps the spotlight should be shared by both external and internal motivations for alliance formation.

In this section, the dependent variable is the decision by two (or more) states to form an alliance. After listing a wide range of possible explanations, I briefly turn to two main causal variables: the threat those two allies perceived and the desire on the part of at least one state to restrain the other.

There are many explanations for the formation of alliances. These explanations address one or both of the two central questions about alliance formation: Why do states ally? With whom do states ally? A state may have one reason for seeking an ally and a different reason for choosing a particular state to be its ally. In reality, states may have a mix of reasons for allying and they may not be in agreement on that mix. Each party to the same alliance may have different reasons for joining.

There are at least fourteen explanations for the formation of alliances, organized below in terms of whether they are predominately external, internal, or other explanations:

External (alliances primarily formed to affect actors external to the alliance)

1. States balance against the stronger power.³²
2. States balance against an external threat.³³
3. States form an external alliance to help combat internal foes (or to help with some other aspect of domestic life.)³⁴
4. States form an alliance for opportunistic gain such as when they join the winning alliance near the end of a war.³⁵

Internal (alliances primarily formed to influence those joining or inside the alliance)

5. States form an alliance so as to restrain their new ally.³⁶
6. States ally with a threatening state by bandwagoning or tethering.³⁷
7. States form an alliance after being influenced by ethnic lobbies or agents of their new ally.³⁸

³² Forming alliances is one possible form of balancing in a multipolar system. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979); and Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 45. On power and capabilities and the irrelevance of other factors, see Waltz, pp. 98-99. See also Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), pp. 4-5 and propositions A11, A15, A18, and A19 on pp. 250-251.

³³ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). See Holsti et al for prior writings on threats and alliance formation. For instance, see George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 13 and 213; or Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 52. See also Holsti's propositions F7 and F10, pp. 253-254.

³⁴ "Elites bandwagon...to preserve their rule." Deborah Welch Larson, "Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?" in Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, editors, *Dominoes and Bandwagons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 85-111 at p. 87. See Holsti et al, p. 37. Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics* 43, no. 2, January 1991, pp. 233-256, especially pp. 245-251. David seems to suggest that Ethiopia hoped for both aid to combat the Eritrean threat and a Soviet effort to quiet or cut off aid from the Eritreans. (pp. 247-248) Egypt faced domestic dissent by groups that called for an end to the Egyptian-Israeli stalemate and the return of the Sinai desert. Egypt sided with the United States in the hope that U.S. pressure on Israel would force Israel out of the Sinai (and thus appease the Egyptian opposition). Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-1973," *International Organization* 45, no. 3, summer 1991, pp. 369-395.

³⁵ Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," *International Security* 19, no. 1, summer 1994, pp. 72-107 at 93. See also Larson, "Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?"; George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 27; and Robert Jervis, "Systems Theory and Diplomatic History," in Paul Gordon Lauren, editor, *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), p. 220.

³⁶ See Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 320-328.

³⁷ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*; and Patricia A. Weitsman, "Intimate Enemies: The Politics of Peacetime Alliances," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1, autumn 1997, pp. 156-192.

³⁸ Walt (p. 242) defines this idea as "the manipulation of the target state's domestic political system to promote alignment." Walt claims that "if penetration were an effective instrument of alliance formation, we would expect clients to be fairly compliant with the superpower patron's wishes." (p. 244) This may not be a correct prediction: penetration could explain alliance formation even if the new ally does not turn out to be compliant. Must allies be compliant to be allies? Walt sees penetration as a limited factor in alliance formation: "In short, penetration is not an especially common or powerful cause of alignment. It may reinforce commitments that are made for other reasons, but it rarely leads to such commitments in the

8. States form an alliance with similar regime types (e.g. democracies, capitalists, communists).³⁹
9. States form an alliance to re-make the internal traits (e.g. regime type) of their new ally.⁴⁰
10. States form an alliance based on ethnic or religious ties.⁴¹
11. States form an alliance for economic aid, trade, or market access.⁴²
12. States form alliances based on historic commitments or prior interactions with the other state.⁴³

absence of other motives.” (p. 260-261) Walt does not distinguish between a foreign power lobbying on its own and one lobbying along with members of a related ethnic/religious group who live in the prospective ally. How, for instance, would the pro-Israel lobby be different without American Jews? What would it look like without Israeli lobbying efforts in the United States? He does claim that “[p]enetration is more effective when foreign powers seek to influence policy through a cohesive domestic constituency, thus appearing more legitimate.” (p. 260)

³⁹ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 181. See also Holsti et al, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances*, pp. 12-14 and, in Appendix C, propositions P14, P16, P23, P24, P30, P31, P54, and P56 on pp. 264-267.

⁴⁰ For a related idea, see Holsti et al, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances*, p. 40.

⁴¹ For this explanation I have come across only case examples. Nationalist solidarity led to Arab cooperation against Israel, but Walt (204-206) highlights that the alliance has “been neither especially cohesive nor effective, unless direct material incentives reinforce the general ideological line.” (p. 206) Australia and Canada fought with Britain in WWI and WWII. According to Walt, the alliances were based on the “ethnic solidarity” of the British Commonwealth. See his footnote 115, p. 215. Austria allied with Germany before WWII. See Larson, “Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?”, p. 92.

⁴² One-sided benefits are ‘bribery’ while two-way benefits are cooperation or common economic interests. I find Walt’s argument on aid and alliance formation problematic on several levels. A) Walt concedes that states often prefer to ally, in general terms, in order get aid: “Although the desire to obtain economic and military aid has been a common motive for establishing close relations with a wealthy and powerful ally, the choice of which potential patron to prefer is determined by other factors.” (p. 221) The importance of Walt’s research on aid turns on the question one wants to answer: why do states ally (at all) as opposed to why do states choose a particular patron? B) Walt also does not make a distinction between aid offered in a general effort to build friendly relations and aid offered as part of an explicit package that also entails security cooperation (often called an alliance) and/or outlines a specific quid pro quo at the time the aid is offered (e.g. French preparation for Dutch War). For instance, the American offer to fund Egypt’s Aswan Dam is an example of the former, though the United States may have hoped it would lead to security relations. This does not stop Walt from claiming that “efforts to attract allies by offering aid will fail in the absence of compatible political goals.” (p. 241) C) In addition, Walt claims that “both the willingness to provide aid and the desire to obtain it are the result of more basic causes” such as the emergence of a common threat or ideological affinities. (pp. 223-224) But in some cases, this seems to reverse Walt’s earlier claim that the need for aid does not determine the specific ally chosen. Here, it seems, the threat creates the need to ally with someone, but the availability of a specific type of aid determines which patron is appropriate. If the Soviet Union was the only one offering Egypt arms after the Gaza raid – an example Walt lists in his Table 14 (pp. 222-223) – then the Israel threat (as demonstrated in the Gaza raid) created the need for aid and the Soviet offer of aid determined Egypt’s selection of the specific patron, the Soviet Union. D) Finally, Walt concludes that aid does not create “effective” or “durable” alliances. (p. 224) In other words, states abandoned the alliances when other interests were more pressing. However, an explanation for a so-called ineffective alliance is still an explanation for alliance formation, a related but distinct issue from alliance persistence.

⁴³ See propositions P23 and P53 in Holsti et al, p. 265 and 267. For instance: “Thus the historical experiences of both leftist and conservative [Arab] regimes have conditioned their attitudes and policies toward both superpowers.” Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 201.

Mixed or Other

13. States form an alliance to preclude their new ally from allying elsewhere.⁴⁴
14. States form alliances when hiding or not allying is not an option.
15. States form alliances because they accept the norm that states (or great powers) should have allies. Alliances may act as signal of great power status. Alternatively, forming alliances is part of what it means to be a sovereign, territorial unit; exercising one's prerogatives is a way of building authority.

It is beyond the scope of this project to examine all the possible theories. Instead, I contrast two of particular interest: balance of (external) threat theory and alliance restraint. The emphasis on examining alliance restraint is natural given the larger focus of this dissertation. I chose to contrast it with balance of threat theory because of the widespread acceptance of Walt's work and the universal application which he claims for his theory. Balance of threat should apply to any case in which two or more states come together to form an alliance.

Walt's work on alliances remains the primary explanation for alliance formation: "states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat."⁴⁵ Walt explains that threat is composed of four elements: aggregate power, offensive power, geographic proximity, and aggressive intentions. States judge threats based on some combination of these four factors; Walt does not claim to explain the exact combination.⁴⁶

What kind of evidence would one expect to support a threat-based explanation for alliance formation? When discussing the formation of the alliance, leaders in state A and B (the soon-to-be allies) privately discuss forming it in response to the threat from state

⁴⁴ Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 44. Schweller mentions the possibility of alliance aimed at "blocking" the formation of an opposing alliance. See Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," p. 94.

⁴⁵ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 21.

C. One should also see that state C threatens state A and/or state B, although the threat may be explicit or implicit. In addition, this threat by state C should pose a greater threat to state A than state B poses to state A (and greater to state B than state A poses to state B). In terms of timing, if state C has posed a threat to state A and/or state B for an extended period of time, the threat from state C should have increased in the period prior to the formation of the A-B alliance. One uncertain prediction is whether the text of the alliance between states A and B mentions a specific threat; it may or may not mention such a threat.

Alliance restraint may also serve as a motivation for the origin of alliances. States form an alliance so as to restrain their new ally. In terms of evidence, one would expect that before the formation of the alliance, leaders in state A express concern that state B (a soon-to-be ally) is provoking a mutual adversary and/or proposing a provocative military policy. One should see that before the formation of the alliance, state B was proposing or implementing a policy that might spark a confrontation with state C, a mutual adversary of states A and B. When policymakers are discussing the formation of the alliance, leaders in state A discuss forming it so as to restrain state B. In addition, in the absence of the alliance, state A would still be expected to come to the aid of state B during a war or confrontation. Uncertain predictions include the idea that prior to the formation of the alliance, state B felt insecure or suggested that state A form an alliance in exchange for a less aggressive military policy (or vice-versa). Another uncertain prediction is that the text of the alliance between states A and B mentions restraint.

One intriguing possibility is a potential inter-relationship of threat and restraint explanations for alliance formation. A restrainer who is motivated by fear of being drawn

⁴⁶ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 26.

into a conflict by its ally may be most afraid when the confrontation between that ally and their mutual adversary is most intense. When the threat from the other side is greater, the risk of alliance entanglement grows and thereby makes a policy of restraint more attractive.

V. Case selection: Anticipated restraint

Are scholars able to capture a representative universe of cases when they study alliance restraint?⁴⁷ One important form of selection bias is anticipated cases where states took decisions *in anticipation of* how another state would react. What if the restrainer, state A, thought the attempt to restrain state B would fail so the restrainer never even tried to restrain state B? Is that a failed restraint attempt? What if the restrainee feared it would be targeted so it never proposed the military policy? Is that a successful restraint attempt even though state A never threatened or implemented a policy to affect state B? Anticipated cases involve behavioral changes based on feared reactions. These are actions not taken, dogs that did not bark.⁴⁸ I situate these types of cases in the decision tree in figure 2.1.

For instance, is it a successful case of one ally restraining another if the restrained party acted in anticipation of being reined in by its partner? After the Bulgarian victory in

⁴⁷ For a look at this same question in the context of all studies of foreign policy instruments, see Jeremy Pressman, "Here we go again: Learning from Controversies in the study of Foreign Policy Influence," paper presented at the Northeast Political Science Association's annual conference, November 8, 2001, Philadelphia, PA.

⁴⁸ Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41, no. 2, 1989, pp. 143-169 at 161. See also George W. Downs, "The Rational Deterrence Debate," *World Politics* 41, no. 2, 1989, pp. 225-237 at 228. Hart drew a similar distinction between intentional and unintentional (or silent) influence. Jeffrey Hart, "Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations," *International Organization* 30, no. 2, 1976, pp. 289-305 at 292.

the Serbian-Bulgarian war of 1885, Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf and others “were convinced that in the end the Austro-Russian antagonism could only be settled by war.” But Count Gustav Kalnoky, Austrian Foreign Minister, rejected the idea of war with Russia in part because Germany might not support Austria in such a war.⁴⁹ Austria anticipated a German effort to prevent a war with Russia, and Austria, partly as a result of that fear, decided not even to pursue the option of war. Austria did not want to be the target of a German policy aimed at preventing war.

The search for evidence in such cases may be elusive. While a decision to initiate conflict or the announcement of a policy or threat leaves an obvious historical mark, the trail of policies that were not pursued often runs cold. Yet, such cases may not be entirely absent from the record. Cabinet minutes sometimes include a discussion of ideas or policies that were ultimately rejected. Lower-level officials may have been asked to flesh out the risks of pursuing such policies in policy reports and memoranda to top leaders.

The existence of cases in which the key decisions were made prior to the strategic interaction between states A and B may skew the kinds of cases that occur during the strategic interaction. In other words, targets that *do* propose provocative policies and senders that *do* try to restrain target states may be of a certain type that does not reflect all such decisions. For instance, it may be that only a state A that believes it will be successful will go forward with efforts to restrain state B. The sample of attempted restraint efforts might thus include an over-representation of success stories.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ William L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*, second edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1950 [1931]), p. 355.

⁵⁰ Dixon proposed another example of selection bias in his study of conflict management techniques: “Suppose, for example, that adversaries acquiesce to third-party mediation only when they already are predisposed to some pacific resolution of their differences.” See William J. Dixon, “Third-party Techniques for Preventing Escalation and Promoting Peaceful Settlement,” *International Organization* 50, no. 4, 1996, pp. 653-681 at 678.

Fearon argues that such a selection effect was at work in Huth and Russett's study of extended immediate deterrence. Fearon offers several pathways. For instance, if a challenger knows ex-ante that the defender is highly interested in protecting its protégé, there will be fewer challenges (general deterrence success) but immediate extended deterrence will usually fail. Why? Only tough and highly-motivated challengers will challenge knowing that defender interest in its protégé is high. These challengers favor war over concessions from the start; otherwise they would not bother challenging given that this is an issue (protégé) of significant importance to the defender. Press rightly notes that such selection effects may vary greatly based on the variability of domestic audience costs, the abundance or paucity of highly-motivated challengers in the international system, and difficulties with the logic and definition of power and interests. In many situations, Press concludes, it is plausible that Fearon's selection effect will be weak.⁵¹

In general, how do we know that the cases 'under the light' are representative of the universe of cases? What if cases with a researchable paper trail (under the light) fail to represent a cross-section of cases in the world of foreign policy influence? To avoid selection bias, researchers need outcomes of all different types where the variation is based on 1) the amount of evidence one would expect to find (e.g. a lot, a little, none) and 2) anticipated action and explicit strategic policy reactions (e.g. need cases of both types).

⁵¹ Fearon assumed such domestic costs are high and thus deter states from challenging in some situations. Why pursue a provocative or controversial policy if you know you will probably back down and in doing so suffer domestic political pain? Press countered that such costs may be low or non-existent, and, if so, states will feel more free to challenge. To Press, Fearon's assumption about high audience costs is an empirical question. See James D. Fearon, "Signaling versus the Balance of Power and Interests," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2, 1994, pp. 236-269; and Daryl G. Press, "Measuring Credibility: Overcoming Selection Effects in Studies of Military Deterrence and Economic Sanctions," Paper presented at the 92nd Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August, 1994, San Francisco [?]. [version 2.1]

Cases in the shadows may be a vital part of the representative spectrum.⁵² Of course, this itself is difficult to know absent an effort to explore the cases lurking among the shadows. As a result, studies of restraint and other foreign policy instruments are susceptible to non-random samples of cases which are missing certain outcomes and are thus of limited use in discussing the success or frequency of the instrument in question.

I address the problem of anticipated cases in three ways. First, I am transparent about the difficulty in finding such cases in my case studies. Second, I note two examples in my case studies that are suggestive with regard to anticipated restraint. In 1954, did the United States drop the idea of using nuclear weapons in Indochina for fear of British opposition to such a proposal? In late October 1956, did London keep Washington in the dark regarding plans for the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in order to avoid American pressure to drop or modify the planned intervention? While I do not provide definitive evidence, these questions suggest the possibility of a state refraining from proposing a policy so as not to be restrained.

Third, I follow Dorussen's idea that scholars could provide a brief "inventory of influence attempts" even if they end up conducting case studies on only a handful.⁵³ The appendix lists a number of cases of restraint, a few of which may qualify as cases of anticipated restraint. Fourth, I accept that my findings should come with the following caveat: Given an attempt by state A to restrain state B,....

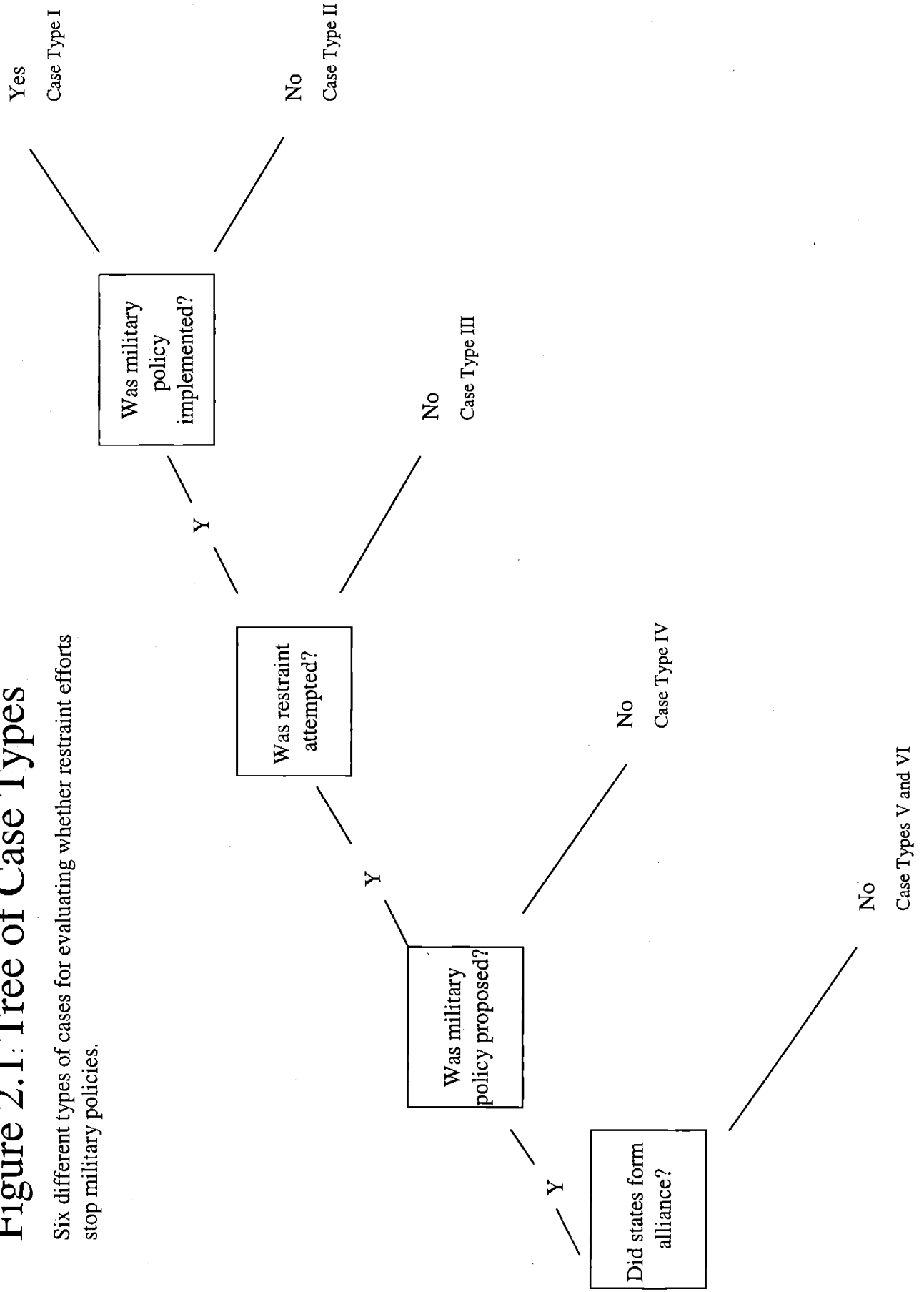
⁵² This need for variation on the dependent variable or outcome is parallel to the problem with King, Keohane and Verba's (pp. 91ff, 109ff) claims about the independent variable. They assert that systematic variables subject to study will explain outcomes of interest to researchers, but this is nothing more than an assumption. Although it may be that non-systematic (or accidental or unobservable) variables dictate some outcomes, they endorse looking under the light and using concrete variables. See Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁵³ Han Dorussen, "Mixing Carrots with Sticks: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Positive Incentives," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 2, pp. 251-262 at 255.

With these theoretical questions in place, let me now turn to the empirical study of alliance restraint in chapters three through six. Chapter three, looking at the U.S. restraint of Britain in Iran in 1951, starts off the effort to sort between the many possible issues and explanations outlined in this chapter.

Figure 2.1: Tree of Case Types

Six different types of cases for evaluating whether restraint efforts stop military policies.



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Chapter Three

The United States Restrains Britain in Iran: Why Operation Buccaneer Was Never Implemented (1951)

I. Introduction: The United States made the difference

By 1951, nationalist pressure and political change in Iran had not only pushed the leadership of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and the Iranian government into a confrontation over the Anglo-Iranian oil concession, but it had also drawn in two other interested parties, the British and U.S. governments. As it became clear in 1951 that Iran and the AIOC would be unable to reach an agreement – or at least would have great difficulty doing so – London and Washington became heavily involved. The Iranians, led from April 29, 1951, by Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, pushed forward step-by-step with the nationalization of the oil industry, and the potential for conflict with Britain increased.

For decades, the AIOC, a British company, had controlled Iran's oil industry, including the oil fields in southwest Iran and the largest oil refinery in the world on Abadan island. In the 1930s and 1940s, Iranians became increasingly interested in gaining greater control and reducing or eliminating the role of the AIOC; this movement culminated in the nationalization of the oil industry in 1951. Despite Iran's nationalization efforts, Britain's Labour government hoped to achieve a negotiated settlement well short of full Iranian nationalization. But in case the talks failed, the British military developed and refined plans for evacuating British nationals, seizing the giant refinery, and occupying the oil fields. By July, the military focused on Operation Buccaneer, a military plan to seize and hold the refinery at Abadan.¹ The plan was based on the assumption that if Britain controlled Abadan but was unable to get oil from the fields in

¹ This initial name of this British plan for military intervention in Iran was Operation Dandruff. This was one of several plans considered in 1951. See James Cable, *Intervention at Abadan* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: 1991), p. 58.

southwest Iran, it could import Kuwaiti oil for refining at Abadan.

Washington was deeply concerned that events in Iran could spin out of control and that the major culprit for such a disaster could be its close ally, the United Kingdom. As Britain considered military intervention to protect its oil interests, the United States repeatedly warned the British that the United States would not support such intervention. Through direct pleas for restraint and diplomatic efforts to re-start Anglo-Iranian negotiations, the United States was twice able to prevent British intervention. In July, U.S. diplomatic efforts and the Harriman mission re-opened Britain's favored policy alternative, negotiations, and pushed talk of military intervention onto the back burner. As Anglo-Iranian tensions peaked in late September 1951, Britain decided against intervention in Iran explicitly because of the American restraining efforts: "We could not afford to break with the United States on an issue of this kind."²

This example of alliance restraint is particularly significant given that British intervention could have led to a massive East-West confrontation. "Tehran might be the Sarajevo of the Third World War," the *New Statesman* warned.³ British and American officials were aware that British intervention could provoke Soviet counter-intervention in northern Iran. Moscow could have claimed that the British move violated the 1921 Soviet-Iranian treaty and therefore justified Soviet intervention on Iran's behalf. In response to British attacks, the Iranian government might have invited Soviet troops in to help expel the British forces. While U.S. policymakers hoped to localize such a conflict, they recognized it could lead to global war.⁴ It is not difficult to imagine that with British forces invading from the south and Soviets from the north, a clash between the two powers and their respective allies could have taken place and brought the Cold War onto

² CAB 128/20, CM 60 (51) 6, September 27, 1951, Public Record Office (PRO).

³ As cited in Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 25.

highly destabilized ground. More generally, this supports the contentions that restraint happens in international affairs and can result in a more stable and peaceful international system.

Why did the U.S. restraint effort succeed in July and again in September 1951? Why, despite heavy domestic and strategic pressure favoring military intervention, did Britain hold off on military intervention? I found that the United States clearly was more capable and was as interested in non-intervention as Britain was in intervention. The United States communicated its opposition to intervention and its unwillingness to support such British adventurism. This supports rational restraint theory.

How did this power/interests combination manifest itself in this case? The cabinet minutes of September only note that Britain could not break with the United States on such an issue as intervention in Iran. I argue that Britain's reluctance to cross the United States was a reflection of the fundamental need London felt for American support in defending British intervention at the United Nations and in fighting the Soviet Union both in the particular case of Iran and in general. The United States had unique leverage with Britain in terms of the Soviet Union and the United Nations. In Iran, the British had to consider that without U.S. support, Britain might have to face U.N. hostility or Soviet counter-intervention (from the north) alone. London was particularly concerned about U.N. opposition. Britain was willing to disagree and challenge U.S. policy, but it was not willing to go at it alone. In 1946, British leaders had needed American help to get the Soviets to withdraw from northern Iran, and in 1951 they recognized that they would need that same support if the Soviets came back in response to British intervention in the south. Yet U.S. policy was not supportive of intervention.

⁴ See NSC 107/2 (paragraph 7) in John P. Glennon, editor in chief, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, volume 10 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989), p. 75; and NSC 107 (approved March 24, 1951) in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 21-23.

More generally, Britain attached great strategic significance to the Middle East, but Britain, exhausted from World War II, could not face the Soviet Union and tame Islamic/Arab nationalism on its own. Thus, the Middle East was one of the key areas where Britain felt Anglo-American security cooperation was essential; furthermore, 1951 was an especially delicate time in the evolving Anglo-American relationship in the region. In general, while Britain was willing to disagree with the United States, it did not want to risk a major break over policy disagreements in strategic areas.

Other explanations for the success of U.S. restraint are possible, but a power-based explanation is the only alternative that fits the details of this case. The most powerful ally, the United States, did prevail so a **power**-based explanation for this case is equally plausible. The government was aware of significant public support for intervention, but polling data is limited so an explanation based on **domestic opinion** is hard to evaluate. Still, none of the top British policymakers mentioned domestic opinion as a reason to avoid intervention (as would have been the case if it had been a major factor). Finally, I saw no evidence that British policymakers felt duty-bound – or really norm-bound – to drop the idea of intervention due to the lack of consensus between the two allies. Britain heeded the United States because it needed Washington's power and support, not because London conformed to an **intra-alliance norm** of consensus decisionmaking on military policy.

Strong evidence supports the contention that the United States restrained Britain. This evidence includes the sequence in which events unfolded, statements by U.S. officials that Washington did not like intervention and would consider breaking with Britain on the issue, and testimony by British figures that London was restrained. The British military was ready to intervene as of July 9 and top British officials were already poised to act as is clear from Prime

Minister Clement Attlee's summary of the June 4 Defence Committee meeting. But as was noted in the minutes of the September 27 cabinet meeting, London could not afford to break with the United States. The timing of events also highlights the occurrence of restraint: Britain's mid-July move toward military intervention was slowed by the U.S. diplomatic drive to bring Iran and Britain back to the bargaining table. As Hugh Gaitskell, Chancellor of the Exchequer, noted in his diary in early August, "President Truman decided to send Harriman and we had to hold our hand."

Rational restraint theory is also well-supported by the evidence. Britain understood the U.S. message: Washington opposed overt military intervention in Iran. Moreover, Britain needed U.S. support: "As you know, we have throughout recognised the importance, in our common interests, of keeping in step with the Americans in this, as in all major issues..." But the United States, much more powerful than Britain, told British officials that British intervention was a matter of "grave concern." The National Security Council, in NSC 107/2, concluded that the United States would not automatically support British intervention largely because it might push Iran into the Soviet camp. The possibility of facing Soviet forces and international public opinion without U.S. support was probably too much of a risk for British officials. As the British cabinet noted on May 10, given the likelihood of significant international opposition to British military intervention "[i]t was essential that we should secure the support of the United States Government for any decision to send military forces into Persia."

In addition to this larger question of restraint success or failure, I also address one mechanism by which the United States restrained Britain in July 1951: re-invigorating a stalled diplomatic route. The United States re-opened a seemingly foreclosed policy option and thereby diverted the British from their military plans. Britain was, at that time, still interested in further

negotiations, but when the additional talks seemed unlikely, London turned to very serious consideration of military intervention. Through intensive diplomatic activity, culminating in the Harriman mission, the United States brought England and Iran back to the bargaining table and temporarily pushed talk of British military intervention to the back burner. This illustrates one minor type of restraint where the restrainer re-opens or introduces non-military options to divert attention from the military ones.

The chapter also looks at why the United States attempted to restrain Britain. This look at U.S. motivations is a necessary step in order to understand the balance of interest between Britain and the United States. Why did Washington risk angering London? Are not allies expected to offer each other support? After all, Washington had given Britain the primary responsibility for the Middle East since the end of WWII. But Washington feared intervention would undermine the international security position of the Western alliance. If Britain entered Iran, the United States feared that the Iranian government would turn to the Soviets for help, the Soviets would sponsor a coup led by Iran's Tudeh Party, or the Soviet military would enter the country as well. To Washington, British oil interests were not worth protecting if it meant risking the loss of Iran to the Soviet Union. Still, the United States recognized that restraining Britain was not a risk-free policy. Possible disadvantages included being blamed for failures in Iran, harming future alliance relations, or bolstering adversaries who witnessed the alliance squabbles.

Finally, this chapter also challenges two historical claims about British policy in Iran in 1951. First, I reject the idea that Britain did not intervene because the military was not ready.⁵ As of July 9, 1951, the British military was ready to intervene. Second, Clement Attlee, British

⁵ Herbert Morrison, *Herbert Morrison: An Autobiography by Lord Morrison of Lambeth* (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1960), p. 282; and Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 666.

Prime Minister, was not opposed in principle to use of force; he did not become fully opposed to British intervention until September 1951 and even then his opposition was rather soft.⁶

In the next section, I describe the domestic and strategic pressure that very easily could have pushed Britain to military intervention; this section gives a sense of the British interests at stake in the confrontation with Iran. In section three, I outline American and British policy and explain the two examples of restraint in July and September; restraint happens in international affairs. In section four, I look at U.S. motivations for restraint; these motivations give a sense of the U.S. interests at stake. In section five, I explain why restraint succeeded by looking at British needs vis a vis the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations. In section six, I consider and reject two other, case-specific explanations for British actions: the British military was ready to act and Attlee was not opposed in principle to the use of force. In section seven, I summarize the implications of this chapter for my broader study of restraint.

II. The Pressure to Intervene

The success of U.S. restraint in this case is particularly surprising given the strong domestic and strategic pressures favoring British military intervention. Although the international community and the Soviet bloc would likely have been skeptical, it would have been easy for Britain to justify intervention on these grounds to the British public. Because polling data, my measure for domestic opinion, is lacking in this case, I draw on a wider array of evidence to consider domestic opinion.⁷

Domestic Pressure. At home, the British government was feeling significant pressure to

⁶ Dalton claims – quoting *A Prime Minister Remembers* – that Attlee was opposed in principle to the use of force by a great power against a small one. See Dalton, *High Tide and After: Memoirs, 1945-1960* (London: F. Muller Limited, 1962), p. 378. On the same point, Cable cites Francis Williams, *Twilight of Empire: Memoirs of Prime Minister Clement Attlee* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 255.

act as the Tory opposition, some newspapers, and the Chiefs of Staff all strongly supported military intervention. The pressure was especially intense in late September 1951 when the cabinet decided once and for all not to intervene. Furthermore, Attlee's own pledge to the House of Commons on July 30, 1951, seemingly limited the options for his government to climb down from a policy of confrontation. In short, significant domestic pressures could have pushed the Attlee government *toward* intervention.⁸

The Attlee government confronted this challenge at a time of relative political weakness. Although it won the 1950 election, Labour emerged with a bare parliamentary majority, much reduced from the previous election in 1945. It was the "most precarious of victories." To many voters, the incumbent administration was composed of aging ministers who had lost their vision for rejuvenating post-war Britain. This was true in foreign affairs when Ernest Bevin, the first post-war Foreign Secretary, stepped down due to ill-health in March 1951 and died the following month. According to one historian, Bevin's "rock-like figure had held the Cabinet together in so many difficult passages."⁹ His successor, Herbert Morrison, was widely seen as far less competent for the job.

Attlee's pledge to the parliament that Britain would not evacuate Abadan came as an after-thought to a long debate about British policy in the Middle East. On July 30, 1951, in the final question of the debate, Harold Macmillan (a top Conservative MP) asked Attlee to say something about the evacuation. Attlee complied: "There may have to be a withdrawal from the oil wells and there may have to be a withdrawal from some part of Abadan, but our intention is

⁷ But this chapter is not a strong test of the ideas on mass opinion that I set out in chapter two (opinion shapes policy).

⁸ Without offering any evidence, Monroe claims the opposite: Britain decided against intervention due to domestic opinion. Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1971*, new and rev. edition (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), p. 172.

not to evacuate entirely.”¹⁰ The next day in the House of Lords, the Lord Chancellor reaffirmed the government’s stance when challenged about Abadan by the Marquess of Salisbury: “I maintain that we have the right to protect the lives of our citizens. Whatever it is necessary to do, that we shall do.”¹¹

British officials discussed their fears of domestic political pressure that was coming from the public, opposition, or other sources. On April 23, G. W. Furlonge, head of the Eastern Department at the Foreign Office, said the Foreign Office was mostly against the show or use of force. But if lives were endangered, he expected pressure in the House of Commons and among the public to use force.¹² Herbert Morrison, the Foreign Secretary, wrote Attlee he worried about British prestige in the Mideast and feared inaction would spark domestic attacks: “We open ourselves to sharp attack for weakness which it will not be easy to repel....Indeed, [Anthony] Eden made this clear to me yesterday.”¹³ In a memo to Attlee on September 8, Sir William Strang, British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, noted that *The Times* favored military action to protect the staff.¹⁴

The only poll of the British public that I have uncovered thus far is ambiguous regarding support or opposition to military intervention. In August 1951, Gallup asked, “Do you agree or disagree with the Government’s handling of the Persian situation?” The results were almost

⁹ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour in Power 1945-1951* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 406, 442. See also Henry Pelling, *The Labour Governments, 1945-1951* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), pp. 229-231. Pelling’s chapter on the 1950-1951 Labour government is entitled “On the Defensive, 1950-51.”

¹⁰ Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), fifth series, vol. 491, July 30, 1951, p. 1072.

¹¹ Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), House of Lords, fifth series, vol. 173, July 31, 1951, p. 151. See also Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 87.

¹² FO 371/91457, EP 1015/168, April 21-25, 1951, PRO. Dixon and Bowker agreed with Furlonge’s analysis.

¹³ FO 800/653, PM/51/29, May 1, 1951, PRO. On September 10, 1951, the United States again cautioned Britain about using force. Morrison told Acheson and other U.S. officials that “[t]here was the additional difficulty of having to answer Parliamentary questions with regard to allowing this country [Iran] to take unprecedented actions against U.K. persons and property.” See “Meeting of the U.S.-U.K. Foreign Ministers – Minutes of the First Meetings,” U.S.-U.K. MIN-1, September 10, 1951, RG 43, Lot No. M-88, Box 63, NARA.

¹⁴ Strang to Attlee, FO 800/653, PM/WS/83/51, September 8, 1951.

evenly split among agree (37%), disagree (32%), and don't know (31%).¹⁵ The question was not directly about military intervention. The source for the poll does not indicate the exact days on which it was taken so the researcher is unable to know exactly what was occurring in British-Iranian-U.S. relations at the time that the poll was taken.

In parliament, the Conservative opposition supported the withdrawal of AIOC personnel as long as it was done in a way that did not preclude military intervention later. On the evening of July 18, Attlee, Morrison, and Hugh Gaitskell (Chancellor of the Exchequer) informed Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, leaders of the opposition, of their intention to withdraw the AIOC personnel. Churchill pressed Attlee to keep at least a nucleus of workers in Abadan because "[i]f all British staff left Abadan, there would be no personnel left for us to protect and we should have the less excuse to send troops in." If the government announced that it would keep a nucleus, Churchill said there would be no difference of opinion between the two parties.¹⁶ On July 30, Winston Churchill, leader of the opposition, told the House of Commons that "the Conservative Party will oppose and censure by every means in their power the total evacuation of Abadan....If violence is offered to them [the refinery staff], we must not hesitate to intervene."¹⁷ The *Daily Telegraph*, a conservative British newspaper, also favored a tough line with Iran.¹⁸

The British Chiefs of Staff also favored military intervention. On May 9, the Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff told the Ministerial Group on Persia that "in view of the grave threat to our whole strategic position in the Middle East the Chiefs of Staff favoured large-scale

¹⁵ George H. Gallup, general editor, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, volume one (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 254.

¹⁶ FO 800/653, PE/51/17, July 18 (19), 1951, PRO.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), fifth series, vol. 491, July 30, 1951, pp. 994-995. See also Macmillan's comments at pp. 1058-1060.

¹⁸ Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 69.

operations if these were the only alternative to surrendering the oilfields.”¹⁹ At a Chiefs meeting on July 17, Lord Fraser, First Sea Lord, wanted it made clear to the ministers that a military occupation of Abadan was feasible. He acknowledged the United States might not support the occupation of Abadan by force “but we should not be diverted from our purpose by this.” He opposed withdrawal: “withdrawal would lead to a great outcry from the British public who were tired of being pushed around by Persian pip-squeaks.”²⁰

In bilateral settings, British officials made sure the United States was aware of the pressure they were under to intervene, and U.S. officials acknowledged that the British government was under strong domestic pressure to intervene. After meeting with the British Ambassador on May 11, top U.S. officials wrote the U.S. Ambassador in Tehran: “Dept will continue to restrain Brit from so-called ‘strong’ methods, although it must be recognized as pointed out by [British] Amb [Franks] that Brit public opinion combined with delicate Parliamentary situation may result in Brit taking rash course of action.”²¹ Morrison also told Gifford, the U.S. Ambassador to London, of the domestic pressure he faced:

Morrison went on to emphasize difficult Parliamentary sitn which he faces on this question. Tories are consistently pressing him to use force and it was sometimes tempting to tell Mossadeq that “either he stops or we’ll come after him.” Such a course wld be effective way of dealing with sitn, but present govt realizes it can’t resort to this course of action for purposes other than evacuation.²²

¹⁹ This meeting was attended by Attlee, Morrison, Shinwell, Gaitskell, Noel-Baker, Lord Fraser, and Bowker. CAB 130/67, GEN 363/3rd, May 9, 1951, PRO.

²⁰ DEFE 4/45, COS 117 (51) 8, July 17, 1951, PRO. Sir John Slessor expressed agreement with Lord Fraser. Sir William Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, also saw the occupation of Abadan as the best course of action. Slessor saw a window of opportunity in which to mount Operation Buccaneer, a window that would close on about August 6 or 7. British commanders in the region also felt that the clock was ticking. See CIC/18245 and 476/CCL (July 16) which were circulated in GEN 363/9, July 17, 1951, for consideration at CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 14th meeting, July 18, 1951.

²¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 53-54.

²² *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 70.

On August 27, W. Averill Harriman²³ met in London with Attlee and others: "Prime Minister and others were concerned that inaction by British for protracted period is embarrassing politically in UK and indicates sign of weakness abroad. They are acutely aware of possible approaching elections." Harriman added: "...[They said] continued provision of dollars under financial agreement with Iran and shipment of goods in very short supply here [in UK], such as steel and sugar, wld be most difficult to justify to British public while Iranians are 'kicking Britain around.' It was also mentioned that there is considerable pressure for Brit to take military action, although this was being resisted."²⁴

At the crucial moment in British decisionmaking in late September, the U.S. Embassy warned Washington that Attlee's government was under tremendous domestic pressure to intervene and maintain control of Abadan by force. On September 25, Attlee asked President Harry S. Truman to appreciate that despite the serious risks of armed intervention, "public opinion in this country will find it difficult to understand why decision of ICJ [International Court of Justice] cannot be enforced and its violation by Persian Govt prevented."²⁵ The same day, Julian C. Holmes, U.S. Minister in London, described the situation to officials in Washington after meeting with Roger M. Makins, British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

It is extremely difficult for Emb to predict at this point which [course of action] Cabinet wld feel compelled to take. As [Attlee's] msg to Pres makes clear, [British] govt is faced with very far-reaching dilemma, which, we wish emphasize, is made even more difficult

²³ Harriman was a Special Assistant to the President. Truman sent him to try to bring Iran and Britain back to the bargaining table.

²⁴ The Digital National Security Archive version of this document is more complete. The "It was also mentioned..." sentence is excised from the version in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 151. For a more detailed assessment of Morrison, public opinion, and the upcoming elections, see the Charge in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State, August 25, 1951 in Fredrick Aandahl, general editor, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, volume 3 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 1180-1184.

²⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 168. See also Oliver S. Crosby, *Account of the Iranian Oil Controversy* (volume one of three), 888.2553/7-1452, RG 59, NARA, p. 63 (hereinafter the Crosby report). Crosby's report is mentioned in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 67 (note 3).

by imminence of genl election [October 25]. Expulsion order is alarming new factor which govt must confront squarely and urgently. Iranians have now forced showdown and hardcore Abadan, whatever its practical usefulness, has acquired tremendous symbolic significance. As Dept knows, Labor Govt has in recent months been more vulnerable from attack on ME than on any other phase of its foreign policy and it is not to be expected that conservatives will neglect any opportunity to drive home to electorate that already familiar allegation that Labor's hesitancy and weakness have been instrumental in decline of Brit influence, prestige and material stake in this critical area. It is our estimate furthermore, that this will strike responsible note among electorate. Today's press contains ample confirmation that genl tenor of feeling here is that UK can not supinely stand by in face this latest provocation.²⁶

Thus at one of the most important times in the Labour government's decisionmaking, the domestic political stakes were very high.²⁷

Strategic Pressure. Britain also had strong strategic reasons for wanting to intervene. First, Britain feared that inaction would damage Britain's prestige in the region and beyond. If London decided not to defend its interests in Iran, British leaders feared domino-like challenges from third world nationalists bent on eliminating Britain's military and political presence around the globe. Second, Britain thought intervention was the best way to protect British and Western access to Iranian oil and thereby prevent communist control of a major petroleum producing country. The loss of Iranian oil could hurt the British economy as well as prompt other third world states to challenge contracts they had previously signed with Britain, the United States, and others in the industrialized world.

Britain recognized the possibility of a Soviet counter-move but wanted to preserve Britain's political position in the Middle East and British commercial interests. It rejected the U.S. assertion that doing so would inevitably lead to Iran falling into Soviet hands. Washington

²⁶ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 171-173. One report by a U.S. official portrayed the British press as divided. While the *Manchester Guardian* editorialized against the use of force, the *Daily Telegraph* favored military intervention. London to Secretary of State, telegram #1549, September 27, 1951, RG 59, NARA.

²⁷ British officials described their appeal to the U.N. Security Council as a response to domestic political pressure. After rejecting the use of force, the government wanted to appear to be taking some action. See *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 191, 199.

and London came to the opposite conclusion as to which would be more damaging to Western interests, intervention or non-intervention.

British officials talked about the damage inaction would do to its prestige and regional security. At the Chiefs of Staff meeting on May 23, Emanuel Shinwell, Minister of Defense, told them that the most likely objective of an operation against Iran would be to maintain the production and export of oil and lamented that a failure to act could have a regional, domino-like effect.²⁸ While it was not official government policy to intervene in such a situation, Strang characterized the inter-departmental working party as concerned about “the serious blow to British prestige throughout the Middle East if we acquiesce in a piecemeal eviction of the British staff.”²⁹

Attlee also tried to convince Truman that Western control of the Iranian oil industry had strong anti-Communist implications. On June 5, Attlee replied to an earlier letter from Truman and highlighted the dangers of an Iranian takeover of the oil industry. Attlee’s explanation contained a mix of anti-Communism and concerns about oil. An Iranian takeover would have “serious repercussions on the whole free world”; affect the UK economy; might jeopardize all US and UK contracts anywhere for any product (not just oil); and could cause economic chaos in Iran and thereby create an opening for the Soviets.³⁰ Although Attlee did not mention the possible use of force, his justifications are consistent not only with what the United States would consider justifiable reasons for intervention but also with a way of framing the conflict with Iran

²⁸ DEFE 4/43, COS 86 (51) 2, May 23, 1951, PRO. See also the Crosby report, p. 63.

²⁹ Strang to Attlee, FO 800/653, PM/WS/83/51, September 8, 1951. The Ministerial Group on Persia included Attlee and other top officials. There was also an inter-agency working group that met at a lower level and was sometimes called the Persian (Oil) Working Group (or Party). It dealt more with sanctions and other economic issues and included representatives from the Treasury, Foreign Office, Ministry of Fuel & Power, and the AIOC. The working groups records are located at T 236/3451, PRO.

³⁰ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 63.

so it did not appear to be a clash between a capitalist, imperialist power (Britain) and a nationalist one (Iran).

On September 25, Attlee wrote Truman that the eviction would have the “gravest consequences” for the United Kingdom and the United States in Iran and throughout the Mideast. This blow would hit the Western allies in “a weak spot in our containment wall.” The Soviet Union “would be bound to try and fill” the power vacuum that would follow from British expulsion. Still, Attlee wrote, armed intervention “would clearly run serious risks” though Attlee suggested British public opinion was in favor of such a policy.³¹

III. U.S. and British Policy: Restraint Happens

Despite all the pressure on the British government to intervene militarily in Iran, this case demonstrates that restraint among alliance partners happens. The United States had an explicit policy of restraining Britain from overt military intervention in Iran and used diplomatic pressure to try to avoid an Anglo-Iranian clash. During the summer, as the possibility of a clash between Britain and Iran became more likely, the United States stepped up its diplomatic activity in an effort to restrain London. Britain was in favor of military intervention but cared about the American perspective. In both July and September, Britain was restrained by the United States.

In this section, I first discuss U.S. policy and then turn to the British perspective. I close by detailing the mechanics of restraint in July and September 1951.

American Policy. The United States repeatedly sought to dissuade Britain from using force to resolve its dispute with Iran. On May 11, U.S. officials advised Oliver Franks, British Ambassador to Washington:

³¹ Foreign Office to Washington, No. 4572, FO 371/91590, September 25 [and received on the 26th], 1951, PRO. Also printed in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 167-169.

With respect to implied threat in proposed Brit note of serious consequences in event Iranian refusal to negotiate, which instruction to Amb interprets as involving possible eventual use of force, US would recognize right of Brit to evacuate Brit citizens whose lives were in danger. Open Soviet intervention in Iran or seizure of power in Tehran by Communist Govt, would, of course, also create situation where use of force must be considered. US would, however, have grave misgivings with respect to use of force in absence above conditions or, in case of danger to Brit citizens, to extension of use of force beyond evacuation. Dept noted that Brit Govt has made no firm decision in this matter and would expect Brit Govt, as they offer, to discuss matter with US Govt before any such decision is made.³²

In Washington on both May 16 and 17, U.S. officials cautioned the British against using armed force to resolve the oil dispute.³³ On May 18, Dean Acheson, U.S. Secretary of State, warned the British not to use force to resolve the oil dispute and "he stated flatly that we would not support such a course."³⁴ On June 28, Truman approved NSC 107/2, an updated statement of policy toward Iran:

Although assurances have been received, the United States should continue to urge the United Kingdom to avoid the use of military force in settling the oil controversy. The entry of British troops into Iran without the consent of the Iranian Government would place British forces in opposition to the military forces of Iran, might split the free world, would produce a chaotic situation in Iran, and might cause the Iranian Government to turn to the Soviet Union for help. However, should the lives of British subjects in Iran be placed in immediate jeopardy by mob violence, the United States would not oppose the entry of British forces into the danger area for the sole purpose of evacuating British nationals on the clear understanding that this would be undertaken only as a last resort and that the British forces so introduced would be withdrawn immediately after the evacuation was completed. In the event of a British decision to use force against the advice of the United States, the situation would be so critical that the position of the United States would have to be determined in the light of the world situation at the time.³⁵

Not only was restraint the official U.S. policy, but the United States also considered the possibility of not backing a unilateral British decision to use force. This is a crucial point because

³² Secretary of State to Embassy in Iran, telegram # 2088, May 11, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 52. Amb. Franks called on Acheson, H. Freeman Matthews (Deputy Under Secretary of State) and McGhee to discuss the new British note to Iran. See also *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 35-36 and the PRO version, FO 371/91471, EP 1023/49, April 19, 1951 (which includes text excised from *FRUS*).

³³ Mentioned in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 56, footnote 4.

³⁴ The Crosby report, p. 69 which cites State to London, telegram #5310, May 18, 1951.

³⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 74. NSC 107 (approved March 24, 1951) called for an update by July 1, 1951.

it left open the possibility that Britain would not have U.S. backing at either the United Nations or against the Soviet Union. This policy differs from pre-Mossadeq U.S. policy that promised the British "benevolent neutrality."³⁶ On August 27, Harriman met with Attlee, Shinwell, Richard R. Stokes (Lord Privy Seal), and others: "I emphasized danger of disastrous consequences of military action beyond that absolutely necessary in landing forces solely to evacuate British personnel, and found that there appeared to be general agreement on this."³⁷

In September, the United States continued to argue against British intervention. On September 10³⁸, Acheson, Harriman, and Morrison discussed Iran. Acheson told Morrison:

It was the hope of the United States Government that His Majesty's Government would not proceed to any military measures except (i) to save British lives which were in danger; (ii) in the event of a communist government taking over; The United States Government would view with grave concern the taking of military measures against an Iranian Government which still was under the Shah and which was not communist.³⁹

The United States had consistently supported only these two types of intervention, repeatedly objecting to British options that were designed to safeguard British oil interests in Iran.

According to U.S. minutes of the same meeting, Acheson warned Morrison that although Washington would "render general support to the British," the retention of a non-communist Iran "would best be achieved if the U.S. retained its freedom of action and did not become associated in the Iranian mind too closely with British policy."⁴⁰ On September 25, as the crisis peaked for

³⁶ This involved Anglo-American disagreement about the details of proposed Anglo-Iranian settlements. *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 10, pp. 39-40.

³⁷ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 10, p. 151.

³⁸ A British document says September 11 (No. 929, FO 371/91472, September 11, 1951, PRO) but *FRUS*, 1951, v. 3, pp. 1228-1249, contains the minutes of U.S.-British meetings on both days. According to the minutes in *FRUS*, the two parties discussed the Middle East on the 10th and the Far East on the 11th.

³⁹ No. 929, FO 371/91472, September 11, 1951, PRO.

⁴⁰ "Meeting of the U.S.-U.K. Foreign Ministers – Minutes of the First Meetings," U.S.-U.K. MIN-1, September 10, 1951, RG 43, Lot No. M-88, Box 63, NARA. In the position paper prepared for the bilateral talks on September 10, Washington ruled out providing support for British intervention: "The United States could not support the introduction of British troops into Iran in connection with the oil controversy for any purpose other than the evacuation of British nationals whose lives were in immediate danger from mob violence." This was point number three under "Position to Be Presented." See "Washington Foreign Ministers Meetings, British Talks: Iran," WFM-B-2/2c, September 6, 1951, NARA. Support could be understood to have both diplomatic and military elements, as a

the final time, the United States told Britain it expected to be consulted before a decision was made to use force outside existing understandings.⁴¹ When Air Chief Sir William Elliot, Chairman of the British Joint Services Mission (Washington), called on Robert Lovett, U.S. Secretary of Defense, Amb. Franks reported to his superiors that the meeting went well, but according to Lovett, he sharply disagreed with Elliot and British plans for armed intervention. Lovett told Elliot that he “did not see that the British had any extra-territorial rights in this matter if the Iranians maintain order and simply ask the British technicians to hand in their passports.”⁴²

Truman’s response to Attlee’s letter of September 25 reinforced U.S. opposition to the possible use of force in response to Iran’s issuance of the eviction order for the few hundred remaining British technicians at Abadan. On September 27, British officials read what by then must have been familiar American language: “I am glad to note from your communication that you recognise the very grave consequences of using force to maintain the British staff at Abadan because, as you know, this Government could not consider support of any such action.”⁴³

Truman suggested that a more detailed response to Attlee would follow, but the most important

member of the Foreign Office explained in April: the United States “should be asked to what extent they might be prepared to support us in either of these eventualities, either diplomatically or, in the last resort, by active measures.” Bowker’s draft brief for Anglo-American talks in Washington, FO 371/91470, April 6, 1951. In 1956, John Foster Dulles, U.S. Secretary of State, also talked about the meaning of support when he warned Dmitri T. Shepilov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, about a Soviet confrontation with Britain and France: “even though the US might disagree with certain views of the British and French, should those countries become engaged in the long run they could count on US moral support and possibly more than moral support.” See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957: Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, vol. 16 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 226.

⁴¹ Franks to Foreign Office, no. 3097, FO 371/91472, September 25, 1951, PRO. This was received in London on September 26. Another memo, from Roger Makins to Attlee, is suggestive but cryptic. The paper to which it refers and was originally attached is no longer attached. The paper covered the Persian working group’s evaluation of British options in the face of Iran’s expulsion order. See FO 800/653, PM/RM/51/95, September 26, 1951, PRO (with a notation that Attlee had seen and noted on September 26).

⁴² Acheson-Lovett Memorandum of Conversation, September 26, 1951, Digital National Security Archive. For Frank’s characterization of the Elliot-Lovett meeting, see Washington to Foreign Office, No. 3117, FO 371/91591, September 26 [and received early in the morning on the 27th], 1951, PRO.

⁴³ Washington to Foreign Office, No. 3115, FO 371/91591, September 26 [and received early in the morning on the 27th], 1951, PRO. FRUS refers to but does not print Truman’s reply to Attlee. See *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 169.

message had been delivered. Though circumstances on the ground were shifting, the United States remained firmly opposed to military intervention as a means of reversing Iranian policy.

Re-starting Negotiations. Often, in order to block the British drive to use force against Iran, the United States tried bringing Iran and Britain back to the bargaining table.⁴⁴ After talks between Iran and the AIOC failed in June, British officials believed that a negotiated settlement was unlikely. Even before that time, they discussed and planned for military intervention. But in July, Truman, Acheson, and Harriman were able to re-open Anglo-Iranian talks and shift attention away from an invasion and back to the bargaining table. This case typifies a type of restraint policy where the restrainer seeks to (re)introduce diplomatic options in order to prevent a military policy such as intervention from gathering too much steam. Mediation can work and may provide an ally with a low-cost alternative to abandoning its partner over a contested military policy. An ally that seeks to restrain its partner without damaging the strength of the alliance may first turn to diplomacy.

There are a number of instances of the United States trying to build momentum toward a negotiated settlement. On the last day of May, Truman urged Britain to take advantage of an Iranian offer to re-open negotiations. In a letter to Attlee, Truman asked Attlee to accept the Iranian invitation:

The United States Government has expressed to His Majesty's Government in recent days its firm conviction that an opportunity is now presented by the Iranian Government for negotiations which should be entered into at once. We earnestly hope that His Majesty's Government can despatch [sic] to Tehran without delay qualified negotiators possessed of full powers to reach a settlement with the Government of Iran, and who are prepared to put forward in an appropriate way a specific proposal consistent with the principle of nationalization...⁴⁵

⁴⁴ For more examples, see the the Crosby report, pp. 25-26, 66, 71, 132.

⁴⁵ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 10, p. 60.

Britain did support sending AIOC representatives to meet with the Iranian government and the talks began (and failed) in June.⁴⁶ According to a note from George McGhee, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, to Acheson, Truman's memo to Attlee was "designed to persuade the British to pursue a course of action in the present Iranian crisis which we feel has a good chance of success in bringing about a negotiated settlement."⁴⁷ U.S. policy, as defined by NSC 107/2, called on the United States to "[b]ring its influence to bear in an effort to effect an early settlement of the oil controversy..."⁴⁸ On June 21, McGhee wrote Acheson that "the United States is continuing its efforts to avoid a complete breakdown in negotiation."⁴⁹ In late June, in an effort to jump-start Anglo-Iranian talks and avert a confrontation, the United States proposed an approach to the Iranian government via the U.S. Ambassador in Tehran.⁵⁰ In early July, the United States continued to push for Britain and Iran to resume negotiations.⁵¹ On August 27, Harriman met in London with Attlee, Shinwell, Stokes, and others and "pointed out explosive situation," and "urged caution in next moves and suggested Brit let situation simmer for a time..."⁵²

British Policy. Although Britain was open to the idea of a negotiated settlement, Britain frequently considered using force to re-gain control of Iranian oil. Morrison told the House of Commons on May 1 that Britain would negotiate and reject unilateral Iranian solutions: "We are still most anxious to settle this matter by negotiation; but we cannot negotiate under duress."⁵³ On May 10, the cabinet discussed a proposed note for the Iranian government as well as the

⁴⁶ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 63 (footnote 4) and p. 64 (footnote 2). The British delegation was led by Basil Jackson, Vice-Chairman of the AIOC board and is thus often referred to as the Jackson Mission.

⁴⁷ McGhee to Acheson, May 30, 1951, RG 59, NARA.

⁴⁸ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 73.

⁴⁹ McGhee to the Secretary, June 21, 1951, 888.2553/6-2151, RG 59, NARA.

⁵⁰ The Crosby report, pp. 91 and 93.

⁵¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 80-83. On July 5, the British cabinet discussed Truman's idea of appointing a personal representative to facilitate Anglo-Iranian talks. See CAB 128/19, CM 49 (51) 7, July 5, 1951, PRO.

⁵² *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 150.

possible need to use force. Although they favored a negotiated settlement, “[i]t might in the end be necessary to take military action.” Ministers accepted the idea of intervening to protect British lives, but worried that efforts to protect British property would require larger forces and “might have serious political repercussions.” This account is consistent with Gaitskell’s diary; though he and Philip Noel-Baker preferred a negotiated settlement, “In the last resort however even we agree that force might become necessary. The P.M. [Attlee] more or less shares our view.”⁵⁴

Top British officials met in the Defence Committee on June 4 and considered military intervention in Iran. Although the record of the meeting is still closed, subsequent references strongly indicate that the committee favored military intervention to protect British property if that military move could be cast in the right light and thereby avoid U.S. objections. Attlee’s crucial summary of the meeting appears in another document:

We must at all costs avoid getting into the position where we could be represented as a capitalist power attacking a nationalist Persia. Rather we should endeavour to arrange things so that our apparent position was one of supporting a legitimate Persian government against either Russian invasion or communist provoked civil war. The larger military plan (Plan Y) should therefore be revised and its object should be to assist the Persian government against communist insurrection and incidentally to safe-guard our oil interests.⁵⁵

This excerpt provides definitive evidence that the British government, including Attlee, favored the use of force. When the Foreign Office sought to clarify the new (post-June 4) British policy, it told the British Ambassadors in the United States, Iran, and Iraq that Plan Y “should be revised on the assumption that it might be required to assist a legitimate Persian Government against Communist-provoked civil war.” Yet the next point echoed Attlee’s summary: the British “should avoid getting into a position where they could be represented as a capitalist power

⁵³ Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), fifth series, vol. 487, May 1, 1951, p. 1012.

⁵⁴ Entry for May 11, 1951 in Philip Williams, editor, *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell 1945-1960* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983). (hereinafter HG Diary)

attacking a Nationalist Persia.”⁵⁶ On June 15, the Chiefs told their Middle East commanders that, “We should rather so arrange that we should appear to be supporting a legitimate Persian government against Communism.”⁵⁷

By redefining the objective as combating Communism in Iran, the British believed they could win U.S. support for intervention or at least circumvent U.S. opposition.⁵⁸ We do not know if this was explicitly discussed at the Defence Committee meeting, but the Chiefs characterized the committee’s decision in suggestive language: “The Defence Committee have decided that there can be no question of carrying out Plan ‘Y’ with the present object against the existing Persian Government.”⁵⁹ Knowing for certain why the committee felt there could be no question of carrying it out is a lingering puzzle. Did they explicitly discuss U.S. objections?

British officials cared about the American viewpoint; it was not something they thought they could disregard. At the third meeting of the Ministerial Group on Persia on May 9, they noted that “We must clearly discuss the situation with the United States Government before reaching any decision which would result in large-scale military action.”⁶⁰ On May 16, U.S. Ambassador Walter S. Gifford wrote to the State Department that “[i]t is our estimate that ultimate UK decision whether or not to use force will be in last analysis determined by extent to which US prepared support.”⁶¹ As was noted in a general cabinet discussion on June 28, “We should need their help if the [British] position deteriorated, and their [diplomatic] intervention at

⁵⁵ Excerpt in report “Military Action in Persia,” June 19, 1951, DEFE 4/44, JP (51) 109, which was considered at DEFE 4/44, COS 101 (51) 5, June 22, 1951, PRO.

⁵⁶ FO 371/91459, no. 2415, June 8, 1951, PRO. See also DEFE 5/31, COS (51) 361, June 12, 1951, PRO.

⁵⁷ Telegram from Chiefs to GHQ Middle East Land Forces, COS (ME) 484, FO 371/91460, June 15, 1951, PRO.

⁵⁸ See FO 371/91459, no. 2415, June 8, 1951, PRO. See also “Conversation between the [British] Secretary of State and the United States Ambassador,” FO 800/653, EP 1531/484, June 1, 1951.

⁵⁹ “Plan ‘Y’,” DEFE 5/31, COS (51) 361, June 12, 1951, PRO.

⁶⁰ CAB 130/67, GEN 363/3rd, May 9, 1951, PRO. On May 3, Attlee told the cabinet he was forming a Ministerial Group on Persia to deal with the situation on a more regular basis. The group included the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary (Morrison), Chancellor of the Exchequer (Gaitskell), Minister of Defense (Shinwell), and Minister of Fuel and Power (Noel-Baker).

this stage would greatly increase the prospect of our obtaining this help later on.”⁶² Hugh Dalton, Minister of Local Government and Planning and former Chancellor of the Exchequer (1945-47), wrote in his diary that Attlee’s aims were limited: “I said [to Attlee] we couldn’t have Morrison trying to be Pam [a Palmerston-style gunboat diplomatist]. He said he agreed, and we must certainly keep close touch with U.S. Government.”⁶³ Julian C. Holmes, U.S. Minister in London, told officials in Washington that “In final analysis, however, decision re use force will probably be largely influenced by US attitude.”⁶⁴ Even in late September, Britain reached out to the United States: “As you know, we have throughout recognised the importance, in our common interests, of keeping in step with the Americans in this, as in all major issues and are in fact consulting them in regard to the present situation.”⁶⁵

However, while the Foreign Office told Franks that they were “most anxious” to reach an agreement with the United States on the problems in Iran, London was not ready to capitulate: “We are glad to exchange views with them and will try to reach a common outlook, but in the last resort the line we take with the Persians and method of presentation and conduct of negotiations must be for us to decide.” Still the next (and concluding) sentence recognized the importance of the U.S. view: “In coming to a conclusion on this, Ministers will naturally wish to take into account results of your exchanges with the Americans.”⁶⁶

In Attlee’s letter to Truman on September 25, the Prime Minister asked for U.S. support in urging the Shah of Iran to block Mossadeq’s expulsion order (and possibly to move Mossadeq

⁶¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 54-56. See also London to Secretary of State, telegram #6040, May 21, 1951, 888.2553/5-2151, RG 59, NARA.

⁶² CAB 128/19, CM 47 (51) 3, June 28, 1951, PRO. See also Cab 130/67, GEN 363, 12th Meeting, June 29, 1951, PRO.

⁶³ Entry for July 2, 1951 in Ben Pimlott, *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-1940, 1945-1960* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986).

⁶⁴ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 171-173.

⁶⁵ Foreign Office to Washington, No. 4579, FO 371/91472, September 26, 1951, PRO.

⁶⁶ Telegram no. 1470, Foreign Office to Washington, FO 371/91470, April 12, 1951, PRO.

aside as well). Britain, Attlee wrote, hoped the Shah would remedy the situation after hearing a warning from the British Ambassador that eviction would create “a most serious situation” between Tehran and London. But Attlee also seemed to be trying to set the stage for U.S. support for British military intervention if the Shah refused to help Britain. Attlee concluded by noting that on this matter the United States and Britain “march together.” Only “firm joint action” would prevent “grave damage” to Western interests.⁶⁷ In fact, Sir Francis M. Shepherd, British Ambassador in Iran, was told to tell the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs that Britain “reserves full liberty of action.”⁶⁸ A different source described these contacts with the United States as “urgent” consultations “with a view to their [U.S.] supporting these [Ministerial] recommendations and in regard to the action to be taken if they fail.”⁶⁹

The British understood the United States was opposed to British military intervention. For instance, Furlonge, of the Foreign Office, told representatives of commonwealth countries that Britain could count on U.S. support to protect British lives. But “the United States were opposed to us taking military action merely to protect the oilfields against the Persians.”⁷⁰

July Restraint. The United States restrained Britain in both July and September. In July, just at the time that the British military was able to mount an operation to protect British property in Iran, U.S. diplomatic efforts brought Britain and Iran back to the bargaining table. Previously, Britain had favored a negotiated resolution over the use of force but thought that the former alternative was no longer possible.⁷¹ As Cable noted, this seems to have been “the straw that

⁶⁷ Foreign Office to Washington, No. 4572, FO 371/91590, September 25 [and received on the 26th], 1951, PRO. Also printed in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 167-169.

⁶⁸ Foreign Office to Tehran, No. 1262, FO 371/91590, September 25 [and received on the 26th], 1951, PRO.

⁶⁹ Foreign Office to Khorramshahr, Iran, No. 410, FO 371/91590, September 26, 1951, PRO.

⁷⁰ “Persia: Record of Meeting Between Mr. Furlonge and Representatives of Commonwealth High Commissioners’ Offices,” FO 371/91459, May 30, 1951, PRO. The meeting took place on May 28.

⁷¹ See CAB 128/19, CM 35 (51) 7, May 10, 1951, PRO; also HG Diary, May 11, 1951. See “United States Position in Iranian Oil Controversy,” June 12, 1951, Lot file 57D 155, NARA.

broke Buccaneer's back."⁷² Restrainers may succeed if they re-open doors that formerly appeared closed.

In late June, a failed round of negotiations and a hostile Iranian legislative proposal renewed the possibility of an Anglo-Iranian confrontation. The United States, fearing a clash, offered the services of a U.S. mediator. Still, in fits and starts, Britain moved toward the use of force with tension peaking around July 19-20. But in the end the U.S. effort was successful, and Britain was diverted from launching its military forces.

By late June, U.S. officials began to feel a sense of urgency about Anglo-Iranian differences. The Jackson mission left Tehran on June 21, thereby ending talks between British and Iranian parties.⁷³ The same day, the Sabotage bill was presented to the Majlis (Iranian parliament); it called for the death penalty for anyone who obstructed Iranian control of the former AIOC. Britain decided to begin the evacuation of British dependents; use force if necessary to resolve the dispute; and make provisions for military cover for the evacuation of British personnel (the United States learned of these decisions that day as well). On June 24, tankers stopped loading oil at Abadan. Although there was some on-site storage capacity, this still meant that the giant refinery would have to shut down within a matter of weeks.⁷⁴ More importantly, Britain told the United States that if the refinery shut down, the evacuation of British personnel "would probably be inevitable."⁷⁵ On July 1, the U.S. Ambassador in Tehran predicted the tanks would fill up in about ten more days leading to the "catastrophe" of closing

⁷² Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 80. See also pp. 113-114.

⁷³ The mission, led by Basil Jackson, Vice-Chairman of the AIOC board, was in Iran from June 11-21. On June 3, the AIOC had told Iran it would send a representative to Tehran for talks. See the Crosby report, p. 75.

⁷⁴ London to Secretary of State, Telegram #125, July 6, 1951, 888.2553/7-651, RG 59, NARA. See also the Crosby report, p. 88.

⁷⁵ Communication relayed from the Foreign Office through the British Embassy, Washington, DC, dated June 25, 1951 as cited in the Crosby report, pp. 88-89.

the refinery.⁷⁶ By July 5, the refinery was producing at only one-third capacity.⁷⁷ Although Mossadeq agreed to delay the Sabotage bill on June 29, Britain continued to pursue a firm policy: "There was a note of exasperation in the British actions during this period, and it was apparent that the United Kingdom was relying on its 'firm' policy to force Mossadeq out or necessitate a revision of the Iranian position."⁷⁸

The United States responded to the growing push toward confrontation with a flurry of diplomatic activity aimed at avoiding provocative steps and re-starting talks between the two sides. The United States tried and failed to prevent the Jackson mission from departing Iran.⁷⁹ On June 22, U.S. officials urged London to maintain the flow of oil and not to withdraw personnel from Iran.⁸⁰ A few days later, Gifford repeated U.S. concerns about the withdrawal of personnel and the ceasing of oil exports, but Morrison told the U.S. Ambassador that he saw no prospect for "productive" negotiations -- "UK had attempted explore every avenue."⁸¹ In early July, Truman and Acheson proposed sending a U.S. representative to try and bring the parties back to the table:

The [State] Department viewed the British attitude with misgivings and expressed the conviction that the only solution lay in further negotiations. It was suggested that President Truman might send Mr. [Averill] Harriman or a Cabinet member to talk with officials in London and Tehran in order to explore bases for resumption of negotiations.⁸²

Although Morrison was reluctant to endorse this approach, Acheson and others met with Amb. Franks on July 4 and 7 and Britain accepted the idea on July 8.⁸³ Iran also accepted and on July

⁷⁶ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 79-81.

⁷⁷ The Crosby report, p. 95.

⁷⁸ The Crosby report, p. 91.

⁷⁹ The Crosby report, pp. 83-84.

⁸⁰ The Crosby report, p. 87. See Acheson's note to Holmes, June 22, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 67-68.

⁸¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 69.

⁸² The Crosby report, p. 91. Crosby cites T-72 to London, July 4, 1951 (9 pm). Truman and Dean Acheson, the U.S. Secretary of State, discussed the idea on July 2. The memcon is in RG 59. See also Amb. Grady's comments from Tehran, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 79-81.

⁸³ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 81-84.

13, Harriman headed to Tehran.⁸⁴ The day before, Washington re-affirmed its reservations about the proposed phased withdrawal of British technicians from Iran.⁸⁵ In Crosby's later report on the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute, he called Harriman's mission "a significant departure in American policy, opening the way for an all-out American attempt to bring about a settlement." It was, he added, "a maximum effort in the direction of negotiated settlement."⁸⁶

On July 12, the British cabinet considered the Foreign Secretary's report on the Iranian situation and rejected the idea of military intervention in order to protect British property. Prior to the discussion of military intervention, Morrison informed the cabinet of Harriman's impending mission. In his report, Morrison noted the arguments for (paragraph 2) and against (paragraph 3) intervention but explained that he and the Prime Minister had concluded "that force had better be ruled out." Given that the attorney general had concluded intervention was not justified under international law, Morrison wrote that the use of force would most probably "not only alienate American and world opinion generally..., but should run the risk of an eventual resolution in the United Nations calling on us to withdraw."⁸⁷ The cabinet was "impressed" by the arguments in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the report and "agreed that military action in excess of that required for the protection of British lives should not be contemplated unless there were some far-reaching change in the general situation, such as the fall of the present Government and the establishment of a Communist regime in Persia."⁸⁸ This took place with the full knowledge that as of July 9, the British military were fully prepared to intervene in Iran.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See editorial note, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 92.

⁸⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 89-90. See also the Crosby report, p. 97.

⁸⁶ The Crosby report, p. 94.

⁸⁷ CAB 129 (46), CP (51) 200, July 11, 1951, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

⁸⁸ CAB 128/20, CM 51 (51) 2, July 12, 1951, PRO. [Midget and Plan X become Buccaneer Phases I and II; see DEFE 4/45, COS 115 (51) 6, July 13, 1951, PRO]

⁸⁹ CAB 131/10, DO 19 (51) 5, July 9, 1951, PRO. See also DEFE 4/45, COS 117 (51) 8, July 17, 1951, PRO.

However, as quickly became clear, this was not a final renunciation of the military option, and by July 19-20, it appeared as if Britain might intervene. But U.S. pressure and Harriman's success at orchestrating new Anglo-Iranian talks stopped the momentum toward military intervention. The United States feared that the withdrawal of AIOC personnel would lead to a clash with Iranian forces and result in British military intervention in Iran. Thus U.S. diplomacy that aimed to delay the withdrawal was intimately related to the larger objective of avoiding British military intervention.

In mid-July, then, Britain wrestled with its policy toward Iran as the United States sought to guide London away from intervention. On July 14, Britain delayed the decision as to whether AIOC personnel would start withdrawing from the oilfields "in deference to a plea from Mr. Acheson."⁹⁰ Morrison reminded the cabinet on July 16 that "there was to be no announcement of a phased withdrawal of the staff of the [AIOC] from Persia until the results of Mr. Harriman's mission could be judged."⁹¹ However, at the Persia Committee meeting on July 18, top British officials agreed the AIOC personnel should be withdrawn from the oilfields and assumed that the cabinet would consider the issue of military intervention at the cabinet meeting on July 23; by July 23, the cabinet would have the initial Iranian reaction to the withdrawal as well as a report from the Foreign Secretary on the advantages and disadvantages of using Operation Buccaneer to secure British property.⁹² The same day, the Chiefs of Staff told the Commanders in Chief, Middle East, "that the question of whether Buccaneer should be launched for any other purpose than protecting lives was still under discussion." They also noted military steps authorized by the

⁹⁰ "Note by the Foreign Office," Annex to CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 14th meeting, July 18, 1951, PRO.

⁹¹ CAB 128/20, CM 52 (51) 1, July 16, 1951, PRO.

⁹² CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 14th meeting, July 18, 1951, PRO.

Persia Committee, such as moving more troops to Shaiba, Iraq, in the event Britain launched *Buccaneer*.⁹³

On July 19, military intervention was again on the agenda at the cabinet meeting. The Prime Minister told his colleagues that the Persia Committee had called for the withdrawal of the AIOC staff in the oilfields. Since withdrawal could spark an Anglo-Iranian clash that would require military intervention, Britain might have to intervene, and thus the cabinet might have to consider whether the British objective should go beyond just protecting British lives to include the protection of British property.⁹⁴

But the announcement of the withdrawal of AIOC personnel from the oil fields never came about. In the days following the cabinet meeting of July 19, the British Ambassador to Tehran, the U.S. State Department, and Harriman all called on British leaders to postpone the withdrawal. The United States feared an announcement about withdrawal would prove “fatal” to Harriman’s mission.⁹⁵

With a new paper from Morrison on the advantages and disadvantages of intervention, the British cabinet met again on July 23. Morrison said that in light of Shepherd’s request, he had postponed the withdrawal announcement until July 23 (after the cabinet meeting). He also reported Harriman’s request for further delay. The cabinet agreed to postpone announcing a withdrawal of personnel and to defer action on intervention to take control of the refinery.⁹⁶ On July 26, the cabinet acknowledged that if it sent a mission to Iran, it would have to postpone the withdrawal of the AIOC staff from the oilfields. When over the next few days Harriman

⁹³ DEFE 4/45, addendum to COS 117th meeting (51), July 17, 1951 [though the addendum could not have been written until July 19], PRO.

⁹⁴ CAB 128/20, CM 53 (51) 4, July 19, 1951, PRO. For more on the link between the withdrawal of the AIOC staff and the need for British military intervention, see Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 77 and 79n20.

⁹⁵ The Crosby report, p. 105. Morrison mentioned Shepherd’s concerns at the cabinet meeting on July 23. See also DEFE 4/45, addendum to COS 117th meeting (51), July 17, 1951 [though the addendum could not have been written until July 19], PRO. On July 19, Shepherd asked for a 24-hour delay in the withdrawal announcement.

successfully arranged for a government-led British mission (the Stokes Mission) to negotiate with Tehran, the issue of AIOC withdrawal and British military intervention was set aside until late August.⁹⁷ Gaitskell recorded the impact of Harriman's mission: "President Truman decided to send Harriman and we had to hold our hand."⁹⁸

September Restraint. U.S. pressure also led to British non-intervention in September. At 10 am on September 27, the British cabinet convened and formally rejected the possibility of military intervention in Iran. American opposition to British armed intervention was the decisive factor mentioned at the meeting attended by Attlee, Morrison, Gaitskell, Shinwell, and others. Attlee outlined Truman's letter (of September 26) and "said that, in view of the attitude of the United States Government, he did not think it would be expedient to use force to maintain the British staff in Abadan." In addition, the occupation of Abadan might cause Iranian refinery workers to abandon their jobs and thereby render British control of the refinery useless. The United Nations, in part due to U.S. opposition, would also be hostile toward an interventionist policy. Morrison then argued strongly that preventing the expulsion of British workers, by force if necessary, was the only option. The cabinet explained its decision against intervention:

It was, however, the general view of the Cabinet that, in light of the United States attitude as revealed in the President's reply and as previously outlined by [Acheson] in a discussion with the Foreign Secretary on 13th September, force could not be used to hold the refinery and maintain the British employees of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Abadan. We could not afford to break with the United States on an issue of this kind.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ See CAB 128/20, CM 54 (51) 1, July 23, 1951, PRO. On Morrison's paper, CP 51 (212), see Cable, p. 78.

⁹⁷ For instance, the focus of the next few cabinet meetings had already shifted to the possibility of renewed negotiations. In CAB 128/20, see CM 55 (51) 3, July 26, 1951; CM 56 (51) 5, July 30, 1951; and CM 57 (51) 9, August 1, 1951. The Stokes mission lasted from August 4-23 but did not produce a settlement.

⁹⁸ HG Diary, August 8, 1951.

⁹⁹ CAB 128/20, CM 60 (51) 6, September 27, 1951, PRO. British leaders quickly began to couch their decision in different terms, acting as if the resort to the UNSC was their favored choice in order to uphold the rule of law and the U.N. charter. For public relations, the U.N. charter, not American opposition, precluded the use of force. See Foreign Office to Washington, No. 4638, FO 371/91592, September 28, 1951, PRO.

These cabinet minutes are the clearest and most important evidence that British decisionmaking was shaped by the U.S. policy of restraint. American pressure was not the only factor, but it was clearly the most important one.¹⁰⁰ The cabinet concluded the discussion by agreeing to refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council.

The Economist agreed that U.S. pressure was the key factor. In an editorial entitled "Middle East Munich," the editors pointed the finger at Washington: "What the British Government could or could not do in Persia was, in the last analysis, dictated by Washington." The policy was "imposed" on Britain by the United States, "since it was America that vetoed the alternative" – military intervention.¹⁰¹

IV. Why did the United States restrain Britain?

The main American motivation for restraining Britain reflected a disagreement about the priority of different security objectives. While Britain believed that intervention was needed to protect access to Iranian oil and bolster Western prestige in Iran and the Middle East, the United States feared that military intervention would drive Iran into Soviet hands. Under one scenario, Washington also believed the British approach could lead to a spreading East-West conflict. Still, U.S. officials were aware that pursuing a policy of restraint could harm the Anglo-American alliance by causing arguments over who would be blamed for setbacks and failed policies, harming the domestic standing of the British Labour government, and emboldening Iran. I consider in turn each aspect of the American debate over whether to restrain Britain: clashing priorities, the fear of escalation, and possible disadvantages to a policy of restraint.

¹⁰⁰ On October 4, Attlee told the Ministerial Group on Persia "that the position adopted by the United States Government had embarrassed us throughout the course of the dispute..." CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 24th meeting, October 4, 1951, PRO.

Priorities. The United States restrained Britain because the two allies had different military/political priorities. The United States was concerned lest Iran fall into Soviet hands and protecting Britain's commercial interests was less important than the Cold War battle. A position paper prepared for talks with Britain was clear: "The maintenance of Iran as an independent country aligned with the free world is our primary objective."¹⁰² British leaders not only cared more about protecting British access to and control of Iranian oil, but also viewed differently the effect of military intervention on Soviet power in Iran and the Middle East. While Washington argued that British military intervention would increase Soviet influence, London contended that the use of force would preserve the British position in Iran and thereby block the possibility of Soviet expansion.

While the United States was sympathetic to Britain's concerns about Iranian oil, Washington was unwilling to allow the oil issue to serve as an opening for Soviet control of Iran. After meeting with Franks on May 11, U.S. officials told the U.S. Embassy in Iran that the Abadan refinery was of great value to Britain and "is worth considerable calculated risk on our part even to extent of jeopardizing our own position in Iran, in assisting Brit and Iranians in coming to satisfactory terms." However, "it is not worth risk of complete break between Iran and West or setting into motion chain of events which could lead to communist seizure of Iran Govt or Russian intervention."¹⁰³ During late September, as Britain decided how to respond to Iran's expulsion order, Air Chief Sir William Elliot, Chairman of the British Joint Services Mission (Washington), called on Robert Lovett, U.S. Secretary of Defense. Lovett challenged Elliot,

¹⁰¹ "Middle East Munich," *Economist*, October 6, 1951, pp. 779-780. Cable (*Intervention at Abadan*, p. 117) agrees that U.S. policy was decisive.

¹⁰² "Washington Foreign Ministers Meetings, British Talks: Iran," WFM-B-2/2c, September 6, 1951, NARA.

¹⁰³ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 10, p. 54.

noting "what better tool could be put into the hands of the Kremlin than for the British to put troops in;..."¹⁰⁴

In his May 31 letter, Truman warned Attlee about the dangers:

I am also acutely aware that it is essential to maintain the independence of Iran and the flow of Iranian oil into the economy of the free world....I know that you are fully aware of the serious implications of this explosive situation. I am sure you can understand my deep concern that no action should be taken in connection with this dispute which would result in disagreement between Iran and the free world. I am confident that a solution acceptable both to Great Britain and Iran can be found.¹⁰⁵

U.S. Ambassador to Iran, Henry F. Grady, expressed similar concerns to the State Department.

U.S. and U.K. policies are different, he wrote to McGhee, and British policy may lead to a "disaster" in Iran. Grady explained:

I make this personal appeal to you and through you to Secretary in hopes that we keep in mind overall problem of Iran, remembering that altho oil question is basic, it is not everything. We must make every possible effort to keep this country from slipping behind Iron Curtain. To do this at least one of the great western democracies must maintain a position of basic friendliness for Iran. Otherwise, it will have no place to look for friendship and assistance except Russia.¹⁰⁶

Although oil was important, the United States should not lose sight of its higher objective.

These American concerns were codified in U.S. policy by the National Security Council.

The first policy statement (NSC 107), approved by the president on March 24, noted that a non-communist Iran was important to U.S. security, but it did not contain an explicit call for Britain to refrain from the use of force to resolve the oil dispute.¹⁰⁷ The updated and expanded version

(NSC 107/2), approved by the president on June 28, explained the U.S. interest in a non-communist Iran in greater detail. The loss of Iran would threaten Western security in the Middle

¹⁰⁴ Acheson-Lovett Memorandum of Conversation, September 26, 1951, Digital National Security Archive. For Frank's characterization of the Elliot-Lovett meeting, see Washington to Foreign Office, No. 3117, FO 371/91591, September 26 [and received early in the morning on the 27th], 1951, PRO.

¹⁰⁵ FRUS, 1952-1954, v. 10, pp. 60-61 - also at PRO. See also McGhee's comments to Franks, FRUS, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS, 1952-1954, v. 10, pp. 149-150.

¹⁰⁷ FRUS, 1952-1954, v. 10, pp. 21-23. Some sections of the document have been removed. See also the editorial note, pp. 23-24.

East and South Asia; deny access to Iranian and possibly Middle Eastern oil; make Western lines of communication more vulnerable to Soviet threats; weaken the prestige of the United States in the area; and be “one in a series of military, political, and economic developments, the consequences of which would seriously endanger the security interests of the United States.” British intervention could push Iran into the Soviet camp.¹⁰⁸

Standing against aggression was also mentioned by one U.S. official in late September. After all the United States had done in opposing aggression around the world, if the United States now supported British military intervention, “we shall stand before world stripped of all pretense to idealism and obviously guilty of grossest hypocrisy.” As a result of the principled American stand, “we have thus far been able to rally most nations of world.” The Department of State replied that in substance, this cable represented U.S. views.¹⁰⁹

Early on in the Anglo-Iranian crisis, Morrison, the British Foreign Secretary, understood correctly the American concerns. He explained: “[t]he Americans, who have been for some time critical of our policy in Persia and are obsessed with the danger of Persia falling under Communist domination, would be likely to oppose any suggestions of coercive action, or the threat of it, on our part.”¹¹⁰

Escalation. The U.S. position implicitly embraced fears of war escalation as well. One scenario for the loss of Iran to the Soviet camp was that British military intervention would spark a Soviet counter-intervention that might then lead to global war if the United States was unable to “localize” the war (as called for by secret NSC policy statements). Thus the United States not

¹⁰⁸ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 73-76. Some sections of the document have been removed. See also the Crosby report, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁹ The telegram was written by Loy Henderson, U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Iran. *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, September 28, 1951, p. 178.

¹¹⁰ FO 800/653, PM/51/29, May 1, 1951, PRO. For an example of Anglo-American differences on Iran and communism, see *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, October 8, 1951, p. 209.

only feared the outcome of Britain's favored course of action – Iran going communist – but also the dangers stemming from how that negative outcome could come about.

The Risks of Restraint. Despite strong reasons to hold back London, some U.S. officials also noted the downside of a policy of restraint. The issue of blame and alliance tensions often surfaced. Holmes, the number two in the U.S. Embassy in London, feared that not supporting London would lead London to blame the United States:

I wld like to add a final note of caution. There is a strong feeling in [British] govt circles at the present time that the issue in Iran has been finally joined and, under these circumstances, that their friendliest and staunchest ally shld show its hand firmly and unequivocally in support of them. I fear very much that if the feeling becomes prevalent in Labor circles that we have failed them in their hour of need, some Laborites will, in order to explain their own failure, feel compelled to place blame on US. To my mind it wld be most unfortunate if any US-UK divergency [sic] on this issue were publicly aired in this pre-election period. I am not citing this as the principal reason why I feel we shld support the UK at this time, but I think it has an important bearing on the situation and should be kept constantly in mind.¹¹¹

His message implied that an Anglo-American split would also be bad for the Labor government in relation to the October general elections. When Acheson sent Holmes instructions for speaking to the British Foreign Secretary, Acheson noted the tone was “designed to avoid unnecessary irritation” to Britain.¹¹² As a result of differences over Iran, Loy W. Henderson, U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Iran, worried about a “wide divergence” between the United States and Britain on “our approach towards present world problems.”¹¹³ Franks, the British Ambassador, told U.S. officials that “the impression had been created in London that the more the U.K. gives the more she will requested to give by” the United States. Franks “felt Anglo-U.S. relations had reached a dangerous posture.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, September 26, 1951, p. 173.

¹¹² June 22, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 67. For comments on the British belief that the United States might be motivated to act contrary to British interests in order to help American companies, see *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 53.

¹¹³ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 178.

¹¹⁴ October 8, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 208-210. See also Morrison's comments in *FRUS*, p. 69.

The British displeasure was also connected to their belief that the U.S restraint efforts represented a failure to reciprocate support – support allies were justified in expecting. Morrison wrote Acheson that they had worked together to resolve a number of difficult issues:

In several of these a settlement has been reached by our going a considerable way to accept the American view. In dealing with this question of Persian oil, where we find ourselves in grave difficulties, we need your wholehearted support.¹¹⁵

With the failure of U.S.-orchestrated negotiations between Britain and Iran in August (on top of the failure in June), the British felt they had earned U.S. support: “[T]hey expect the United States to give its full and unqualified support to a ‘strong’ British policy in Iran.”¹¹⁶ Britain had twice done what the United States had requested and now it was time for the Americans to follow the British lead. In early October, after Britain rejected the use of force due to U.S. restraint, London expected the United States to offer full support for the British appeal to the UNSC. When the United States failed to do so, the U.S. Ambassador summarized the British view: “They are hurt and bewildered at this attitude of their main ally.”¹¹⁷

Both sides were aware of the possible impact of an Anglo-American split on domestic politics in Britain, especially with British parliamentary elections scheduled for October 25, 1951. Gifford, like Holmes above, warned his superiors at the State Department:

I feel confident that the Dept appreciates domestic significance of this problem in this pre-election period. This is no time for Anglo-Amer divergencies to become apparent on a question to which so much moral importance is attached here. Nor is it any time to risk weakening confidence of those who believe in workability of Anglo-Amer alliance.¹¹⁸

He suggested the United States give Britain stronger backing at the UNSC. A few days later, the British Foreign Secretary told the U.S. Ambassador to London that he “expected 100 percent

¹¹⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 82-83.

¹¹⁶ Study Paper, Appendix to WFM B-2/2b, “The Position of the United States in Iran,” September 6, 1951, p. 7 as cited in Crosby Report, p. 124. WFM-B were U.S. papers prepared for the Washington Foreign Ministers’ talks between Britain, France, and the United States. The B refers to the bilateral Anglo-American element of the talks. See *FRUS, 1951*, v. 3, p. 1196.

¹¹⁷ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 188-190 at 189. See also *FRUS*, pp. 205-208.

cooperation and was only getting 20 percent" from Washington. The domestic implications weighed on Morrison:

[Morrison] was afraid there might be public reaction against US during course polit campaign for our actions. He had felt constrained in his statement at Scarborough to make ref to fact that US had inveighed against use of force. He did not know whether it wld be necessary to make public other aspects of our attitude on Iran question. He expressed intense concern at continued US pressure in this matter and said he hoped US Govt was not by its actions trying to bring about defeat of Labor Govt.¹¹⁹

Gifford assured Morrison that this was not the case. In general this thinking suggests what Gourevitch has called the second-image reversed where international issues such as fallout from a troubled international alliance come to shape domestic elements such as elections or public opinion about a particular international ally.¹²⁰

In addition to the domestic fallout of Anglo-American differences, the British also felt that such a split would embolden Britain's adversary, Iran. Morrison wrote Acheson:

...one of our main difficulties in dealing with this intractable problem has arisen from a belief persistently held by many Persians that there is a difference of opinion between the Americans and the British over the oil question and that America in order to prevent Persia being lost to Russia, will be ready to help Persia out of any difficulties which she may encounter as a result of the oil dispute. Influential and friendly Persians themselves have told us this, and stressed that it is an important factor in encouraging Dr. Mossdaegh's present intransigence.¹²¹

A similar viewpoint was expressed by the British after U.S. involvement in the dispute in mid-1950.¹²²

Although in 1951 the United States favored restraint, in 1953 the United States sponsored a coup that toppled Mossadegh. Why did the United States support intervention in 1953 but not 1951? One possibility is that U.S. officials anticipated different reactions to the overt military

¹¹⁸ October 1, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 189.

¹¹⁹ October 5, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 205.

¹²⁰ Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: the International Sources of Domestic Politics," *International Organization*, v. 32, n. 4 (autumn 1978), pp. 881-912.

¹²¹ July 7, 1951, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, p. 83. In this particular instance, Morrison relented and accepted Truman's idea of sending Harriman to try to re-start talks between Iran and Britain.

intervention proposed by Britain in 1951 and the covert intervention that occurred in 1953. Covert intervention, for instance, could more easily avoid a dramatic and destabilizing Soviet counter-move in Iran. In addition, in both Washington and London, different administrations were in power in 1953. James Bill suggested at least four reasons for the U.S. interest in sponsoring a coup in 1953: the growing communist threat and increasing tendency to see events through the prism of hostile communism; the need for oil and lobbying by U.S. oil companies; increasing annoyance with Mossadeq; and British lobbying to get rid of Mossadeq.¹²³ The direction of all four trends favored a growing U.S. interest in intervention in Iran from 1951 to 1953.

V. Why did restraint succeed?

The U.S. effort to restrain Britain succeeded because the United States had unique leverage on political and military issues for which the British had no alternative supporter; Washington was more powerful *and* very much cared about stopping British intervention. Although it is possible that Britain could have cobbled together international support at the United Nations in the face of Soviet hostility and U.S. indifference to military intervention in Iran, only the United States could both offer specific protection against the Soviet Union in the event of British military intervention in Iran and serve as a capable partner in Britain's Middle East. This section covers the three reasons Britain did not intervene in the absence of U.S. support despite the fact that Britain had strong domestic and strategic reasons to intervene (as noted above in section two): opposition at the United Nations, the possibility a Soviet military

¹²² The Crosby report, p. 35.

¹²³ James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 79ff.

response to British intervention, and Anglo-American partnership in the Middle East. How did U.S. policy manifest itself in this case?

United Nations. As they did at the cabinet meeting on September 27, British leaders often expressed concern about the danger of intervening in the absence of support from the United States and other key countries because of how it would affect Britain's position at the United Nations. Without American or Commonwealth support, Britain feared being isolated and condemned at the United Nations.¹²⁴ Thus Britain's need for the United States was not only a general concern about the strength of their strategic partnership against the Soviet Union but also a very specific fear about the effect U.N. opposition could have on Britain's ability to carry out and maintain the occupation of the oil refinery at Abadan and possibly the oil fields in Southwest Iran.

Even before the 1951 crisis, Britain recognized the import of international support for (or at least acquiescence to) intervention. At the Anglo-American military talks in Washington in October 1950, the two parties discussed the possibility of military intervention in Iran in response to a Soviet-sponsored coup. At these talks, Britain suggested four conditions for intervention, including prior consultation with the United States if at all possible and a "reasonable assurance" of U.N. support.¹²⁵ Just before Mossadeq came to power, Fry (of the Foreign Office) reviewed possible military responses to nationalization, including landing troops to cover an evacuation. Although this option might be the only course open to London in order to

¹²⁴ For instance, see "Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and the South African Minister of Labour on the 24th July, 1951," FO 800/649, July 24, 1951.

¹²⁵ See the copy of a letter from L.A.C. Fry (Foreign Office) to the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, DEFE 5/31, COS (51) 335, June 4, 1951, PRO. See also the Chiefs of Staff report on those meetings, CAB 131/9, DO (50) 97, November 21, 1950. The other two conditions were little hope that Iran could restore order on its own, an appeal for aid or consent from Iran. Britain later disavowed these limitations.

save British lives, Fry predicted it would be problematic at the United Nations.¹²⁶

On May 10, the cabinet met to discuss a proposed note for the Iranian government as well as the possible need for military intervention. Given the likelihood of significant international opposition to British military intervention “[i]t was essential that we should secure the support of the United States Government for any decision to send military forces into Persia.” But some ministers felt that under certain circumstances, the United Kingdom would have to intervene regardless of the level of international opposition. The ministers agreed to consult the United States immediately.¹²⁷ In a cabinet discussion on June 21, the ministers noted that the United States would not support intervention for the protection of British property. If Britain intervened anyway and the matter came before the U.N. Security Council, “we should find it difficult to defend our action and were likely to have few supporters.”¹²⁸

When the cabinet met on July 2, it considered a report from the Chiefs on the military costs of the plan to seize and hold Abadan; although some ministers had discussed the idea, this was the first full cabinet discussion of seizing Abadan indefinitely. Such a plan, it came out in discussion, would involve “very grave political risks” and Britain might not have support from the Commonwealth governments or the United States. In the end, the cabinet approved only those military preparations for a larger operation that were not likely to become publicly known.¹²⁹ In light of the cabinet meeting on July 2, Attlee asked Morrison (on July 4) to prepare a summary statement of the advantages and disadvantages of a military operation to safeguard British property in Iran. Attlee wrote: “I think it is clear that, before any overt steps are taken in

¹²⁶ FO 371/91457, EP 1015/168, April 21-25, 1951, PRO. The other two options Fry mentioned were showing force without violating Persian sovereignty or using a cruiser to evacuate nationals.

¹²⁷ CAB 128/19, CM 35 (51) 7, May 10, 1951, PRO.

¹²⁸ CAB 128/19, CM 45 (51) 4, June 21, 1951, PRO.

¹²⁹ CAB 128/19, CM 48 (51) 1, July 2, 1951, PRO.

preparation for a major military operation in Persia, the Cabinet must weigh the political and international difficulties to which such an operation might give rise.”¹³⁰

At the July 12 cabinet meeting, British ministers rejected military intervention in what turned out to be a short-lived rejection. As noted above, they were impressed by Morrison’s report in which he warned that intervention was not sanctioned by international law. As a result, he concluded, intervention would likely alienate U.S. and world opinion and spark a resolution calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Iran.¹³¹

The Ministerial Group on Persia agreed that the cabinet would need to discuss using Buccaneer to safeguard British property at Abadan even though a military incursion “would raise strong criticism in the United Nations and the United States.”¹³² At the cabinet meeting on July 23, Morrison told the ministers that the British Ambassadors to Iran, the United Nations, and the United States “all saw difficulties in taking action on these lines.”¹³³ When Iran issued the expulsion order to the few hundred British technicians still at Abadan,¹³⁴ the Ministerial Group on Persia said “the attitude of the United States might well be of decisive importance” not only because they hoped the United States would pressure Iran to rescind the expulsion order but also because they realized U.S. support would be “essential” if Britain later brought this issues to the

¹³⁰ FO 800/653, M. 78/51, July 4, 1951, PRO. The cabinet seconded Attlee’s request on July 9. See CAB 128/19, CM 50 (51) 2, July 9, 1951, PRO.

¹³¹ The recommendation of the report (anti-intervention) was based on discussions between Morrison and Attlee. CAB 129 (46), CP (51) 200, July 11, 1951, Lamont Library, Harvard University; and CAB 128/20, CM 51 (51) 2, July 12, 1951, PRO.

¹³² Attendees included Attlee, Morrison, Shinwell, Gaitskell, Noel-Baker, Slim, Slessor, Bowker, Fraser (AIOC), and others. CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 14th meeting, July 18, 1951, PRO.

¹³³ See CAB 128/20, CM 54 (51) 1, July 23, 1951, PRO.

¹³⁴ Mossadeq instructed the Temporary (or Provisional) Board of Directors of the National Iranian Oil Company (Iran’s nationalized successor to the AIOC) to serve notice to all British staff. The notice was to be served on September 27, and the staff were to be given seven days from the 27 (to leave by October 4). The Crosby report (p. 133) says September 24.

U.N. Security Council.¹³⁵ The United Nations, in part due to U.S. opposition, would also be hostile toward an interventionist policy.¹³⁶

The Soviet Union. The British discussed the possibility of Soviet counter-intervention but were less explicit about the need for U.S. support to protect Britain from such a Soviet move. The evidence I present here confirms that British officials were talking about the issue, but it does not prove that they assumed or hoped for U.S. cover. British military leaders were concerned about Soviet moves, but perhaps for political leaders this was an unstated assumption.

In mid-March, Furlonge reported to the Chiefs of Staff that Iran might nationalize the oil industry in less than two months.¹³⁷ Furlonge asked them to “examine forthwith the practical possibilities” of using force in two contingencies: Iranian-fomented disturbances in the oil installations that prevented the operation of the industry and Iranian nationalization of the industry. Bearing in mind the Russo-Iranian Treaty of 1921, he further urged them to pay careful attention to the possibility of Russian intervention as a response to British troops entering Iran.¹³⁸

The military response to Furlonge fleshed out the possible contingencies but took a very pessimistic approach to British seizure of the oilfields and Abadan refinery. After presenting two less intrusive options, the report noted that protecting the refinery and oilfields from the Iranian government or a local mob would only come at very high costs. It would require a significant amount of British troops (a division or more plus air and naval support) and equipment; might prejudice Britain’s security position in the Middle East and Europe; and “would be almost bound to result in” Russian intervention, the “considerable risk” of Russian-British contact, and thus a “greatly increased risk” of global war. In short, the protection of the oilfields “would call for the

¹³⁵ CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 22nd meeting, September 25, 1951, PRO. The attendees included Attlee, Gaitskell, Noel-Baker, Stokes, Slim, Creasy, Sanders, and Bowker.

¹³⁶ CAB 128/20, CM 60 (51) 6, September 27, 1951, PRO.

¹³⁷ This was just after the Majlis voted to approve the Iranian Oil Commission’s resolution accepting nationalization.

use of troops on a scale which could only be provided at the most serious cost to our global strategy in peace and war.”¹³⁹

The next month, L.A.C. Fry began an exchange among Foreign Office officials by noting that there was an existing plan to evacuate British nationals from Iran and repeating that the United States was opposed to the use of force because it feared Soviet intervention. On April 23, Furlonge said the Foreign Office was mostly against the show or use of force, and he was doubtful the Soviets would send in troops. Sir Pierson Dixon, British Deputy Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Sir Reginald James Bowker, British Assistant Under-Secretary of State, agreed with Furlonge’s analysis.¹⁴⁰ In May, the British talked about an “anticipatory” use of force to pre-empt Soviet or Tudeh control in Iran, but Gifford warned the British that such a plan could provoke U.N. disapproval and Soviet counter-intervention.¹⁴¹ Sir Nevil Brownjohn noted on May 8 in the discussion of a telegram from the Middle East commanders that large-scale operations in Iran would require partial mobilization at home, undermine Britain’s ability to meet its NATO commitments, and possibly spark Soviet intervention in Iran.¹⁴² The next day, the Vice CIGS noted the connection between a large-scale British intervention and the need for U.S. support:

Military action, therefore, must be taken on a large-scale if at all. In this event Soviet forces would enter Persia from the north, and we must face the possibility of the partitioning of the whole country between Soviet and Western forces. We must clearly discuss the situation with the United States Government before reaching any decision

¹³⁸ Letter from the Foreign Office (G. W. Furlonge) to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, March 20, 1951 as copied in DEFE 5/29, COS (51) 156, March 21, 1951, PRO.

¹³⁹ The report considered as feasible both an off-shore show of force and intervention for the purpose of protecting British lives and Abadan (but not the oilfields), although military officials reported that there might be some difficulties if British troops could not count on access to Iraq as a staging area. An operation to protect British lives was already dealt with in Operation ACCLETON. “Implications of Military Action in Persia,” DEFE 5/29, COS (51) 173, March 27, 1951, PRO. The Chiefs of Staff amended and approved this report at DEFE 4/41, COS 53rd meeting (51), item 1, March 27, 1951, PRO. On March 27, 1951, the Chiefs of Staff agreed to forward the report to the Foreign Office for presentation to ministers.

¹⁴⁰ FO 371/91457, EP 1015/168, April 21-25, 1951, PRO.

¹⁴¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 54-56.

¹⁴² DEFE 4/42, COS 79 (51) 2, May 8, 1951, PRO.

which would result in large-scale military action, and such a decision would have to be taken by the cabinet.¹⁴³

On May 16, the Russia Committee concluded that British intervention was unlikely to affect Soviet decisionmaking, but it is unclear whether this conclusion influenced any British leaders.¹⁴⁴

The United States would not commit to defending Britain from the Soviet Union in the event of British intervention in Iran. The NSC's statement of policy toward Iran was clear: "In the event of a British decision to use force against the advice of the United States, the situation would be so critical that the position of the United States would have to be determined in the light of the world situation at the time."¹⁴⁵

The Middle East. Not surprisingly, Britain was particularly concerned about avoiding a sharp policy disagreement with the United States over the Middle East in 1951. During the same months that the crisis with Iran grew and receded, British and American officials were discussing the evolving nature of their relationship in the Middle East. The United States – which just after WWII talked about leaving the Middle East to the British – was gradually becoming more involved, and the British were wary of Anglo-American disagreements that could throw this partnership off course.

Different schools of thought in Whitehall still came to the same conclusion that Britain should avoid a significant Mideast policy rupture with the United States. Some British officials worried that the United States was moving into the Middle East but was afraid of being too closely associated with Britain, a former colonial power in the region. A split over Iran would both encourage the development of divergent policies in the region and strengthen the American

¹⁴³ CAB 130/67, GEN 363/3rd, May 9, 1951, PRO.

¹⁴⁴ Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁵ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 10, p. 74.

argument that Britain was tainted in Arab/Islamic eyes. Arab states might attack the United States for "associating closely with older imperialistic powers."¹⁴⁶ A split over Iran in which imperial Britain appeared to be trampling on nationalist rights might encourage the United States to further keep its distance from the British by reinforcing both American and Islamic views of Britain's colonial image.

Other British officials, who accepted that neither power could operate effectively in the Middle East without the other, also feared that a policy rupture would be detrimental to Western interests in the region. On July 6, 1951, Sir Thomas Cecil Rapp, head of the British Middle East Office in Cairo, in a minute widely praised by other Foreign Office officials, explained:

It is clear that neither of us can in the future act effectively in isolation; our need of each other is mutual.... Unless and until we and the Americans make up our minds what are our agreed objectives and how we are to attain them, the general situation in the Middle East is likely to deteriorate and we shall have to face further major crises.¹⁴⁷

Bowker agreed with the "vital necessity" of finding common ground with the United States. On July 26, John Hughes Wardle-Smith, a Foreign Service Officer, also concurred:

I question whether it is possible any longer to talk about British spheres of influence in the world. We are no longer strong enough. This surely has been proved in the Middle East region. I think there is every advantage to us to make use of American strength and possibly direct it to our own benefit, let alone to our mutual benefit.¹⁴⁸

Given the British need for American support in order to maintain a strong presence in the Middle East, the unwillingness to break with Washington on intervention in Iran becomes more

¹⁴⁶ See Franks to Morrison, no. 323, FO 371/91185, May 19, 1951, PRO.

¹⁴⁷ Rapp (British Middle East Office in Cairo) to Bowker, FO 141/1442, 107/3/5, July 6, 1951.

¹⁴⁸ Minutes appended to Rapp to Bowker, FO 141/1442, 107/3/5, July 6, 1951. Ralph S. Stevenson, British Ambassador to Egypt, agreed: "It is clear that we no longer possess sufficient economic and military strength to consider the Middle East as a purely British sphere of influence and that we shall have to rely on the Americans for help in these two vital matters. It is therefore only reasonable that our future Middle East policy should, as far as possible, be devised in conjunction with the Americans..." Stevenson was also writing in support of Rapp's minute. FO 141/1442, 107/24/51G, July 31, 1951.

comprehensible. In short, such intervention and the disagreement that would follow risked undermining Britain's stated goal of working with the United States in the Middle East.

VI. Case-specific Alternatives Explanations for British non-intervention

Two common alternative explanations for why Britain refrained from using force against Iran do not explain the British decisions. First, the military was ready to act, and thus the decision not to intervene turned on political factors. Second, Attlee was not opposed in principle to the use of force and for much of the summer he was supportive of the possibility of military intervention. Only in September does it appear Attlee began to waver about military intervention.

Military was ready. While in the early stages of the Anglo-Iranian crisis there was some confusion about the likely objective of a British military operation against Iran, British forces were ready to act at crucial moments in July and September 1951. From the beginning it was clear that Britain had sufficient resources and the ability to reach Abadan (and southwest Iran). Throughout May and much of June, British political and military leaders discussed a range of military objectives and operations, and during this period intervention might have been difficult. But once the objective of seizing and holding Abadan was settled upon in late June, the British military acted swiftly and was ready to act as of July 9.¹⁴⁹

On July 9, the Defence Committee was told that British forces were now ready – with some caveats – to hold Abadan indefinitely. Although previous discussions in a variety of venues suggested that more preparatory steps would be needed to both ensure success and cut down the lag between ministerial authorization and military execution, the Chief of the Air Staff told the committee “it had now been possible to expand the size and the object of Operation MIDGET.”

¹⁴⁹ See Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, pp. 28, 57-58, 109, 110. See also DEFE 5/31, COS (51) 361, June 12, 1951, PRO.

The Commanders-in-Chief (Middle East), he said, believed Britain's assembled forces could occupy Abadan island.¹⁵⁰ There were three caveats: this assumed the force successfully seized the island; arrangements for supply and maintenance were made; and British civilians were evacuated from the oilfields in a "timely" fashion.¹⁵¹

The military was also available in September. At the September 25 meeting of the Ministerial Group on Persia, at Slim's recommendation, the ministers agreed to bring the force for Operation Buccaneer to the shortest possible notice; the Chief of the Imperial General Staff said nothing about any inability to mount the operation or a lack of preparedness.¹⁵²

Attlee not opposed in principle. In the early months of the crisis, Attlee was not opposed to the use of force even if he may have been more hesitant to use it than some of his colleagues.¹⁵³ As noted above, at the critical Defence Committee meeting of June 4, Attlee summarized the committee's decision as using the fight against communism in Iran as a cover for protecting British oil interest in Iran. Later in the month, at the a meeting of the British Chiefs of Staff on June 29, Sir John C. Slessor, Chief of the British Air Staff, described a ministerial meeting held in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons on June 28 at 5 p.m. Slessor claimed that Attlee outlined circumstances under which British forces would stay on in Abadan even if they were introduced as part of Operation Midget. Slessor characterized the

¹⁵⁰ Operation Midget originally was designed to evacuate British personnel but not to hold Abadan and protect British property.

¹⁵¹ CAB 131/10, DO 19 (51) 5, July 9, 1951, PRO. See also DEFE 4/45, COS 117 (51) 8, July 17, 1951, PRO.

¹⁵² CAB 130/67, GEN 363, 22nd meeting, September 25, 1951, PRO. Several of these points are confirmed in Foreign Office to Khorramshahr, Iran, No. 410, FO 371/91590, September 26, 1951, PRO: "No final decision on the course to adopted if the Persian Government persist in demanding the expulsion of British staff is likely to be taken before Thursday [September 27]."

¹⁵³ As noted above, Hugh Dalton implied in his diary that Attlee's aims were limited. James Bill also wrote that Attlee was opposed. See Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, p. 74.

circumstances outlined by Attlee as “most unlikely circumstances but nevertheless possible.”¹⁵⁴ Slessor did not explain the circumstances as described by Attlee.

By September, Attlee showed more signs that his position might be shifting. When the British Ambassador to Tehran wanted approval of strong language to use with the Shah, Strang (acting as Foreign Minister in Morrison’s absence) and Prime Minister Attlee toned down his instructions. Attlee was clear: “We should not threaten to use force unless we mean to do so and we do not.”¹⁵⁵ On September 7, Shepherd was told not to use the language he proposed: “As you know HMG have not repeat not come to such a decision...”¹⁵⁶ Attlee reinforced his hesitance to use force in a discussion with Dalton. After noting, with Dalton, Morrison’s pro-use of force stance, Attlee said, “I am handling Persia; I’ve made it quite clear that troops are to go in only to save lives.”¹⁵⁷

Still, in late September, Attlee either had not ruled out the use of force or was willing to be over-ruled by his cabinet. The U.S. Embassy did not believe Attlee would block the use of force in principle. An American description of the days of decision in September suggested not only that Britain was considering military intervention in response to Iran’s expulsion order but also that intervention was likely if an appeal to the Shah failed to lead to a change in Iranian policy.¹⁵⁸ The U.S. embassy may have been unaware of Attlee’s true disposition toward the use of force. Also, Attlee was willing to press Truman to support British policy, even if that meant supporting military intervention, in his September 25 letter to Truman. If Attlee was opposed to the use of force at this point, it is possible that he hoped Truman would rule out the use of force,

¹⁵⁴ DEFE 4/44, COS 108 (51) 1, June 29, 1951, PRO.

¹⁵⁵ Furlonge to Strang, FO 371/91463, EP1015/308, September 6, 1951, PRO; Strang to Attlee, FO 800/653, M/WS/51/80, September 6, 1951, PRO; Attlee to Strang, FO 371/91462, EP 1015/298, September 7, 1951, PRO. Morrison was in San Francisco.

¹⁵⁶ Foreign Office to Tehran, no. 1160, FO 248/1514, G10101/287/51, September 7, 1951, PRO.

¹⁵⁷ Entry for September 16, 1951 in Ben Pimlott, *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton*.

¹⁵⁸ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 10, pp. 171-173.

and Attlee could turn to the cabinet with his hands tied by Washington. Even so, Attlee's appeal to the president does not have a pro-forma ring to it. If Truman had given a green light, Attlee would have been hard pressed to stop intervention.

What is also apparent throughout this crisis is that the U.S. position against intervention could have been a major factor influencing Attlee. Perhaps Attlee became more opposed to military intervention as he realized the United States was not going to change its policy and support the British use of force. He was not opposed to military intervention in principle; he was opposed to it without the backing of the United States.

The Election. The British parliamentary election scheduled for October 25, 1951 was not a major factor deterring the Labour government from military intervention.¹⁵⁹ Attlee had thought about calling elections for much of 1951 and was focused on October as a date. While he consistently planned to hold the election in October, his support for the use of force varied (if one assumes that by September he was opposed to using force).

VII. Conclusions: What does this case demonstrate?

What broader lessons can we learn from the successful American restraint of Britain in Iran in 1951? First, restraint happens in international affairs. Restraint is attempted, and restraint policies sometimes succeed. This chapter documents a start-to-finish case of successful restraint.

Second, a larger ally can use its material power advantage to restrain. In this case, the British needed U.S. support vis a vis the Soviets. Britain also worried about facing the United Nations without U.S. support. This may be harder to comprehend today but makes some sense at a time of the U.N.-supported war in Korea. I grant that an example of restraint where the larger ally prevails is what many people would expect. But I think this case sets the stage for cases

where the weaker ally prevails such as where Britain sometimes successfully restrained the United States in East Asia. While in some cases a less powerful ally might gain some advantage because it cared more about the contested issue, in this case both Britain and the United States cared very much about the outcome, though for different reasons.

Third, the domestic opinion and intra-alliance norms explanations for restraint success and failure are not as compelling in this case. On domestic opinion, the polling data is limited, but British decisionmakers did not attribute the British policy decision in July or September to mass opinion. Despite public pressure for intervention, the British government rejected intervention. The outcome of a restraint attempt does not always turn on whether the restrainee's domestic audience is for or against restraint. On intra-alliance norms, London and Washington frequently consulted each other about British policy toward Iran. But at the end of the day, I found little evidence that Britain felt compelled to submit to U.S. opposition to intervention solely (or largely) out of fidelity to alliance consensus.

Fourth, even though Britain ultimately did not intervene, Attlee, a Labour prime minister, favored military intervention in Iran for much of 1951. As noted earlier, some previous writers have claimed Attlee opposed intervention in principle.

Finally, the case also sheds light on what motivates restrainers to restrain. The United States was concerned that British action would push Iran into the Soviet camp, either directly through Soviet counter-intervention in Iran or indirectly through a communist takeover of the Iranian government. Washington and London disagreed on what was the most pressing security objective in this case as well as how Britain's favored policy of intervention would affect the competing objectives of ensuring Western (British) access to Iranian oil and keeping Iran in the free world.

¹⁵⁹ See Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*, 99 and 103.

What happens if the most powerful (capable) ally does not get its way in a restraint dispute? In chapter four, I turn to the 1956 Suez war where Britain ignored the United States and, along with France, intervened militarily in Egypt.

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Chapter Four
The United States Restrains Britain at Suez:
Intervention, Cease-fire, and Withdrawal (1956)

I. Introduction

On October 31, 1956, Anglo-French air forces began attacking Egypt. Despite U.S. efforts to block Anglo-French intervention in Egypt, the two Western powers moved to re-gain control of the Suez Canal and topple Egypt's leader, Gamel Abdel Nasser. Just days later, despite intense U.S. and international pressure, Anglo-French ground forces entered Egypt as well. What had compelled them to use force? Why did Britain defy U.S. warnings about intervention? Why had the United States tried to prevent British intervention in the first place? Wasn't the United States afraid that a restraint attempt would split the Western alliance in the face of the hostile Soviet Union?

With the intervention in full swing, the United States pressed Britain to accept a cease-fire and then withdrawal of its forces from Egypt. This time, under heavy U.S. economic pressure, Britain agreed to a pre-mature cease-fire and then withdrawal of its forces from Egypt. Having failed to stop British intervention in the first place, why was U.S. restraint now successful?

In explaining the failure and then success of the U.S. restraint effort, I find that rational restraint theory provides a strong explanation of both parts of the Suez case. In part one, when the United States tried to *prevent* British military intervention, the United States was more powerful and had significant leverage specific to the possibility of British intervention in Egypt. The British had major interests at stake, but Washington also had serious concerns about how intervention might affect larger regional and global issues. But the key factor was the failure of

American communication. Washington did not send a clear signal to London that the United States would use the leverage it had; Washington said nothing about the economic penalties it would impose on Britain if London ignored U.S. opposition to intervention.

In part two of the Suez case, when the United States successfully brought about a cease-fire and then the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt. Washington was more powerful, equally interested, and communicated clearly and thus restraint succeeded. The powerful American position left the United States with the ability to pressure London by refusing to support the ailing British pound either through direct U.S. action or through international financial institutions. Furthermore, Washington blocked much-needed alternative supplies of petroleum from reaching Britain and Western Europe in November 1956.¹ Washington communicated the penalties by imposing the sanctions and explaining what Britain needed to do to have them lifted. Britain complied.

No other explanation for the success or failure of restraint fits both parts of the Suez case. The most powerful party, the United States, did not prevail in part one; Britain a weaker power, intervened despite U.S. opposition.² The British government ignored U.S. advice in part one of the case, going so far as to end consultations and hide its plan for intervention from the United States. Moreover, London did not attribute the cease-fire and withdrawal decisions to either the pressure of British public opinion or the absence of alliance consensus about the policy. Finally, British public opinion was against the use of military force, but the Eden government intervened

¹ Kirshner dismissed the oil explanation and favored the fiscal one, but he offered only a limited amount of evidence for that claim. See Jonathan Kirshner, *Currency and Coercion: The Political Economy of International Monetary Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

² Even if one combines British and French numbers, the United States was still superior in each power dimension: defense expenditures (410% higher), military personnel (60%), GNP (270%), and population (77%). In 1956, the United States had 4618 nuclear weapons compared to 15 for Britain and none for France. See Jan Faber, *Annual Data On Nine Economic Military Characteristics Of 78 Nations* (SIRE NATDAT), 1948-1983 [Computer file]. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Europa Institut [producer], 1989. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research and Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Steinmetz Archive [distributors], 1990. For the

anyway (though the public, not surprisingly, did support the acceptance of the withdrawal in a December 1956 poll).

As was the case in Iran in 1951, the United States used two methods to restrain Britain. Washington stated American opposition to the use of force *and* worked to reinvigorate the diplomatic track.

Both the chain of events and statements by U.S. and British officials provide strong evidence for my claims about both parts of the Suez crisis. Faulty communication led to the initial failure of restraint. No statement by U.S. officials prior to Anglo-French intervention either threatened Britain if London ignored U.S. warnings or suggested a possible penalty such as U.S. economic pressure. In addition, mixed in with many messages opposing British intervention, the United States indicated that it would deter the Soviets and allow Britain emergency arms re-supply shipments if needed. The British also may not have been hearing well as suggested by misunderstandings over Dulles's call for Nasser to disgorge the canal, the SCUA, and Macmillan's trip to the United States.

Support for the importance of communication comes from the fact that after the intervention, when the United States was loud and clear about the penalty it would (and did) impose, Britain agreed to a cease-fire and then withdrawal. History was run twice, once with faulty communication and then a second time with a clear U.S. signal. In this second phase, U.S. economic pressure led to a cease-fire as can be seen in both the memoirs of key British participants (Macmillan, Lloyd, Butler) and the judgments of several later scholars. The reality was that the United States controlled the international financial institutions and the flow of oil from the Western Hemisphere, and Britain needed access to both. The timing of the policy shifts is also strong evidence: the US refusal to provide economic support, followed by British

nuclear data, see www.nrdc.org/nuclear/nudb/datab19.asp, accessed July 10, 2002.

acceptance of the cease-fire, much back and forth but continued U.S. economic pressure, British agreement to a full withdrawal, and then the lifting of the economic sanctions.

In section two, I assess the economic, political, and strategic pressures on the Eden government for and against intervention. In particular, I note that public polls in Britain revealed opposition to military action. In section three, I turn to the motivations for the U.S. policy of restraining Britain; sections two and three shed light on what interests were at stake for Washington and London. In the following section, I explain why the United States held unique leverage over Britain with regard to economic issues, the Soviet Union, and possibly at the United Nations; these were all manifestations of superior American power relative to Britain. In section five, I review British and American policies and note in particular how they saw the role of diplomacy in very different lights. In section six, I consider each explanation for why the U.S. efforts failed to stop the intervention but later succeeded in bringing about a cease-fire and withdrawal. Rational restraint theory is a better explanation than one based on power, intra-alliance norms, or public opinion in Britain (the restrainee).

II. To intervene or not to intervene? The uncertain British environment

For the British government, military, economic, and political factors presented a mixed picture with regard to intervention to regain control of the Suez Canal. There were strong reasons both for and against intervention; the implications of several key factors varied depending on what stance the United States decided to take. At home, British politicians, the media, and the

public were divided on military intervention. According to Adamthwaite, “Suez divided Britain more deeply than any other event since Munich.”³

In this uncertain environment, a strong, clearly-articulated U.S. policy could have determined the course of events. This is in contrast with the British decision not to intervene in Iran in 1951 when non-alliance/non-US factors were more clear-cut and should have pushed Britain toward intervention in Iran.

The case for military intervention is clearly stronger only if one assumes wholehearted American support for British intervention. Yet it was just such an assumption that led to British action. U.S. officials failed to demonstrate in advance that U.S. policy was not, in fact, one of unquestioned support.

The Case for intervention. The case for intervention was based on the economic importance of the Suez Canal, the negative strategic impact an unchallenged canal nationalization could have on British alliances and British prestige in the Middle East and beyond, and – by October – the desire to avoid a war with Israel over Jordan. The case for intervention also informs our understanding of what British interests were at stake in the crisis. Eden received strong support from top ministers including Macmillan and Lord Salisbury. In Eden’s Conservative Party, the Suez group of MPs also strongly backed the use of force.

The canal itself was a unique economic asset of great economic importance to Europe and Britain in particular. In 1955, oil tankers destined for Europe accounted for two-thirds of the canal traffic. 80% of Western Europe’s oil came through the canal. One-third of the ships that passed through the waterway that year were British vessels, and two-thirds of British oil came

³ Anthony Adamthwaite, “Suez Revisited,” in Michael Dockrill and John W. Young, editors, *British Foreign Policy, 1945-1956* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 231.

through the canal. Each year 60,000 British troops passed through the canal.⁴ After learning of the nationalization, Eden said it would have “disastrous consequences” for the economic way of life in the West, something he wrote to Eisenhower on July 27, 1956.⁵ At one cabinet meeting a report on the economic impact was succinctly summarized: “If for any reason we lost our oil supplies from the Persian Gulf, the economy of the United Kingdom and of Western Europe would cease to be viable.”⁶ Britain could not allow Nasser, in Eden’s phrase, “to have his hand on our windpipe.”⁷

Macmillan echoed these sentiments. At the cabinet meeting on August 28, he argued that since the British economy depended upon Mideast oil, Britain had little choice but to use force to protect the canal.⁸ On September 11, Macmillan told the cabinet that Britain’s economic position actually necessitated intervention: “A quick solution to the crisis would restore confidence in the pound.” Waiting would further weaken Britain’s financial position, he said.⁹

The strategic impact was also important for supporters of intervention. If Nasser overcame the Iraqi-Jordanian-British grouping, the British position in the Levant would dissipate. If left unchallenged, the nationalization of the canal would embolden Egypt to further undermine Iraq and Jordan. By 1956, Iraq and Jordan were the “cornerstone” of Britain’s position in the Middle East; this was the culmination of a strategic shift approved by Eden, as

⁴ The facts are from Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower Takes America into the Middle East in 1956* (Brattleboro, Vermont: Amana Books, 1988), p. 281. The 80% figure is from Diane B. Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 79. For more data, see John P. Glennon and Nona J. Noring, editors, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957: Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, vol. 16 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 193. (hereinafter FRUS)

⁵ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 76-77. Kunz also cited a number of British reports from 1956 on the importance of the canal to British oil supplies and the British economy. See endnote 41, p. 226. For Eden’s letter to Eisenhower, see FRUS, 1955-1957, v. 16, pp. 9-11.

⁶ CAB 128/30, CM 62 (56) 2, August 28, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

⁷ Clark, Eden’s Press Secretary, as cited in W. Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand: Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), p. 142.

⁸ CAB 128/30, CM 62 (56) 2, August 28, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

⁹ PRO, CAB 128/30, CM 64 (56), September 11, 1956; as cited in Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 197. This is also mentioned in William Clark, *From Three Worlds* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), p. 187. See also Dillon’s

Foreign Secretary, in March 1953.¹⁰ The British alliances with Jordan and Iraq were inter-related, and Iraq in particular was crucial to Britain's vision of the Baghdad Pact: "Besides, if Jordan went, Iraq would be dangerously undermined, and Iraq was a vital British asset as an ally in the Baghdad Pact and the site of an essential link in the chain of Britain's air defences of the Middle and Far East."¹¹ As the only Arab state in the pact, Iraq helped make the pact legitimate in the Arab world, or so Britain hoped.

As a result, the Suez canal nationalization was seen as the last test of the British empire, the defining moment in the West's battle with Arab nationalism, a battle it had to win to keep Soviets out of region. If Britain passed the test the empire stood, but if not Britain's Mideast empire was finally over.¹² The cabinet was clear: "Failure to hold the Suez Canal would lead inevitably to the loss one by one of all our interests and assets in the Middle East..."¹³ Eden spoke of parallels to WWII: "Once again we are faced with what is, in fact, an act of force which, if it is not resisted, if it is not checked, will lead to others. There is no doubt about that.... Many other eastern lands now begin to understand that the fate of their country is included in Colonel Nasser's schemes."¹⁴ The United States was aware of this British perspective, and Dulles agreed with the British analysis if not the proper remedy: "the British and French would

report of his conversation with Macmillan, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 522. (September 19, 1956)

¹⁰ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 3, 30-31, 84, 97, 100-101. On the British strategy of allying with Iraq and Jordan, see also Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 97.

¹¹ Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (London: Constable & Company, 1967), p. 86. At the time of the Suez crisis, Nutting was a Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (as was the Marquess of Reading).

¹² Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, pp. 85, 91; Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 145, 149, 156; Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lion's last Roar* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1996), 52-53; Neff, 277; Keith Kyle, *Suez* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 96, 122, 139, 155, 166.

¹³ CAB 128/30, CM 54 (56), July 27, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴ *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, fifth series, vol. 558, pp. 14-15. Macmillan suggested to Dulles that the loss of Suez meant the loss of the Middle East. *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 108. See also Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, p. 27; Eden's letter to Eisenhower on August 5 in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 146-148; a conversation between Eden and Dulles on August 24 in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 285-286; and U.S. Amb. Barbour's summary on September 1 of British feelings in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 346. See also Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p. 174.

be finished as first-rate powers if they didn't somehow manage to check Nasser and nullify his schemes."¹⁵

Furthermore, by mid-October 1956, Britain believed it was faced with a war against Egypt or a war against Israel in defense of Jordan. By agreeing to the French-Israeli plan against Egypt, England could focus the attack on enemy number one, Egypt. Britain believed it would almost certainly have to fight a war; the only question was the identity of Britain's opponent. By agreeing to the French plan, Britain could ensure that Israel attacked Britain's chosen adversary. Whether or not it was true that Israel, with French support, was inevitably going to strike an Arab neighbor, Britain seems to have believed it. Turning on Egypt would help preserve Britain's alliance with Iraq and Jordan.¹⁶

Key Conservative ministers, including Macmillan and Lord Salisbury, united behind Eden and supported intervention. Sir Gerald Templer, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, also was a proponent.¹⁷ Even Butler¹⁸ and Lloyd, who had some hesitations about using force, regularly backed Eden's policy. A few conservative members of parliament (MPs) spoke out against the use of force and there may have been 25-40 conservatives who opposed military intervention in theory. But the majority of these dissidents voted with the government on its Suez policy, and by and large, Eden received solid support from the conservative MPs.¹⁹

¹⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 328. See also the Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) of September 19, 1956 in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 526. and the SNIE of July 31, p. 84.

¹⁶ In his review of Lucas's book, Reynolds questions this explanation: "As Lucas admits (Ch. 19), much of his reasoning here is inferential and one feels at times that his argument is almost too ingenious. Simpler explanations [such as Eden's personal emotional state] must not be ignored." David Reynolds, review of books on Suez crisis, *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 423, April 1992, pp. 417-420.

¹⁷ See Anthony Gorst, "'A Modern Major General': General Sir Gerald Templer, Chief of the Imperial General Staff," in Saul Kelly and Anthony Gorst, editors, *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 29-45.

¹⁸ On Butler, see Adamthwaite, "Suez Revisited," pp. 237 and 239.

¹⁹ Leon D. Epstein, *British politics in the Suez Crisis* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1964), pp. 65 and 87-88.

The Case against intervention. The case against intervention was based on the possibility of a Soviet counter-move, fear of world opinion and UN action, potential economic problems, Labour party opposition, and criticism from many top civil servants. A British leader who wanted to avoid intervention had an array of arguments from which to choose.

One major drawback to British intervention in Egypt was the possibility it might draw the Soviet Union deeper into the Middle East. British intervention could serve as a pretext for Soviet meddling. The Soviets could respond with a range of steps to defend Egypt such as threatening Britain and France, supplying aid or arms to Egypt, or sending Soviet forces to the region and Egypt in particular. British leaders did not dwell on the nature of the Soviet response, but this is not surprising given their implicit assumption that the United States would shield them from the Soviet Union. The British did request such protection from the United States.

World opinion and the possibility that it might be translated into collective action against British intervention created a further obstacle. Both supporters and opponents of intervention recognized that world opinion could undermine or obstruct an interventionist policy.²⁰

Mountbatten did not want to jeopardize the UN charter.²¹ However, supporters hoped that world opinion could be appeased by sufficient British resort to diplomatic steps prior to using force.²²

At the same time, then, London needed to avoid incidents that might increase the likelihood of world action against Great Britain. British leaders often considered how a particular policy or event – the withdrawal of international pilots from the canal, heavy Egyptian civilian casualties in an Anglo-French invasion, or the phrasing of the Anglo-French notes to Egypt and Israel –

²⁰ In *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis*, see Brook's warning to Clark (68, 70) and comments by Jebb (87) and Mountbatten (100). See also the chapter on Fitzmaurice. See also CAB 128/30, CM 68 (56), October 3, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

²¹ *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis*, pp. 99, 102.

²² CAB 128/30, CM 62 (56), August 28, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

would affect Britain's standing in international opinion relative to Egypt. On November 4, after the start of Anglo-French bombing but before the use of ground forces, one minister went so far as to worry about the possibility of UN sanctions at the cabinet meeting.²³

On the economic front, the cabinet did discuss some possible drawbacks. From the beginning of the crisis Britain acknowledged that if oil could not come through the canal, Western Europe would have to turn to the Western Hemisphere for oil.²⁴ But Britain knew the United States might not finance such purchases; Britain would not be able to pay for that oil itself; and military intervention might spark a run on sterling.²⁵

Lower-level British officials worried more deeply about Britain's economic vulnerability, but Macmillan never brought their concerns to the attention of the cabinet. Sir Edward Bridges, Joint Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, and Sir Leslie Rowan, Second Secretary at the Treasury, warned Macmillan that independent British action could cause serious economic difficulties; Bridges wrote a particularly strong memorandum on September 7. They repeatedly emphasized that U.S. support was crucial to avoiding currency and other economic problems. Each time Macmillan acknowledged their claims in his brief annotations to the minutes but did not pass along their concerns to other ministers. Johnman summarized the situation: "The Treasury's absolute essential requirement for success – the support of at least the USA – was not and would not be forthcoming and yet Macmillan's advice to [the] Cabinet was that the military operation should proceed."²⁶

Although most Conservative party members supported the government's position, the Labour opposition and a few dissident cabinet ministers opposed British action at Suez. While

²³ CAB 128/30, CM 79 (56), November 4, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

²⁴ CAB 128/30, CM 54 (56), July 27, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

²⁵ CAB 128/30, CM 63 (56), September 6, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

²⁶ Lewis Johnman, "Defending the Pound: the economics of the Suez Crisis, 1956," in Anthony Gorst et al, editors,

the Labour opposition decried the Egyptian nationalization of the canal, it opposed British military intervention unless it was sanctioned by the United Nations and thereby demonstrated respect for the UN charter. This opposition culminated in a division of the House of Commons on October 30 in which over 218 MPs voted against British policy (270 voted in favor). One scholar called the Labour challenges of late October and early November “the most intense parliamentary attack in recent British political history.”²⁷

In cabinet meetings, Sir Walter Monckton, Minister of Defence, repeatedly argued against intervention and ultimately resigned his post a few weeks before the Anglo-French use of force against Egypt. On October 18, Monckton became Paymaster General. Anthony Nutting (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs – just below the Foreign Secretary) and William Clark, the prime minister’s press advisor, also ended up resigning.

In contrast with most top ministers, many top members of the British civil service opposed military intervention. Most of these officials still carried out their public responsibilities even as they offered private dissent; a few resigned over the Suez disagreement. Adamthwaite made a strong claim: “In retrospect Whitehall was anti-Suez to a man.”²⁸ Opponents included Sir Edward Boyle (Economic Secretary to the Treasury), Bridges, Sir Norman Brook (Secretary of the Cabinet), Sir Pierson Dixon (Amb. to the United Nations), Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice (Senior Legal Advisor to the Foreign Office), Sir Roger Makins (Amb. to the United States and then Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury), and Admiral Earl Mountbatten of Burma (First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff).²⁹ But on Suez they were partly cut out of the decisionmaking process, particularly regarding the British collusion with France and Israel. In any case, they

Post-War Britain, 1945-1964: Themes and Perspectives (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), pp. 166-181 at 171. See also Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, 1991, p. 210.

²⁷ Epstein, *British politics in the Suez Crisis*, pp. 69 and 74-75.

²⁸ Adamthwaite, “Suez Revisited,” p. 234.

would have had a hard time stopping the cabinet given that the most powerful ministers – Eden, Butler, and Macmillan – all supported intervention.

The British public and press were also split, but polling data consistently showed more British respondents opposed the use of force than supported it. (See Table 4.1) The British decision to intervene in Egypt was not supported by British public opinion. Prior to the crisis, opponents of British military action always had a notable edge in public opinion polls. In three separate questions, opposition to the use of force was 14 points of greater. Based on polling data and other factors, Epstein came to a slightly more mixed conclusion: “The views of the parliamentary Labour party were representative of about half the nation. Eden did lack clear majority support for his campaign against Egypt....The best that Eden had was a plurality in favor of military action, and he did not clearly have that until after the action had ended.”³⁰ In a detailed review of the press, Epstein drew a similar conclusion – the country was deeply split.³¹

III.. Why did the United States try to restrain Britain?

The United States attempted to restrain Britain and prevent intervention in Egypt because Washington feared an Arab nationalist backlash against the West, Soviet meddling in the Middle East, and criticism from the international community. Even though the United States tried to restrain Britain, U.S. officials also discussed possible downsides to a restraint policy, including how adversaries would perceive such an allied split and the impact a split might have on present and future relations within the alliance. Understanding why the United States restrained Britain sheds light on what U.S. interests were at stake in the Suez crisis.

²⁹ See *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis*.

³⁰ Epstein, *British politics in the Suez Crisis*, p. 170. See especially chapter seven.

Restrain. The United States tried to prevent Anglo-French intervention in Egypt for a range of reasons, although three reasons were mentioned frequently and in many settings. Washington feared that military intervention against Nasser's Egypt would provoke an Arab nationalist backlash against the West in the Arab and Islamic worlds. It feared the opening that intervention might create for greater Soviet involvement in the region. The Americans also did not want to be supporting aggression and colonial intervention in the face of U.N. and world opinion that thought otherwise.

Other factors either were mentioned less frequently or seemed to move into the background as the crisis period dragged on. The White House was conscious of U.S. domestic opposition to military intervention in Egypt and hesitant to embrace British action in the absence of public and Congressional support. In general, U.S. officials worried about the escalation and spread of conflict. On a practical level, some U.S. officials suggested that re-gaining physical control of the canal would not be useful in the absence of Egyptian cooperation in running the waterway and would precipitate major economic trouble in Western Europe. While the United States agreed with Britain that Nasser had to go, Washington favored a more gradual process in part because it avoided many of the above-mentioned pitfalls of overt military intervention.

The Eisenhower administration worried that Anglo-French intervention would spark a negative reaction against the West in the Arab and Islamic worlds and beyond. Early on, the United States thought Western opposition to an international conference to resolve the dispute would arouse the Arab and Moslem worlds.³² More broadly, the use of force would turn the peoples of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa against the West, Dulles told Pineau and Lloyd.³³ Henry A. Byroade, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, argued that intervention would actually fuel

³¹ Epstein, *British politics in the Suez Crisis*, pp. 153-165.

³² *FRUS*, 1955-1957, v. 16,, p. 63.

Nasserism.³⁴ On August 30, Dulles told Eisenhower (who agreed) that military intervention would turn the Mideast and Africa against them, create “bitter enemies,” and result in a loss of Western influence for a generation if not a century.³⁵ A high-level intelligence assessment argued that intervention “would provoke a violent anti-Western popular reaction throughout most of the Arab world.” Over time, the report continued, the “violent manifestations of popular emotionalism would gradually subside” but “popular anti-British and anti-western feelings throughout the area would remain at a high pitch for a protracted period.” Intervention would intensify resentment of the West.³⁶

In Washington’s eyes, British intervention would also facilitate Soviet penetration of the Middle East. On August 12, Eisenhower told a Congressional delegation that “there shouldn’t be much doubt but what the Soviet will fish in troubled waters.”³⁷ On August 30, Dulles linked the anti-Western tide that would result from military intervention to Soviet prospects in the third world: “The Soviet Union would reap the benefit of a greatly weakened Western Europe and would move into a position of predominant influence in the Middle East and Africa.”³⁸ The same intelligence assessment mentioned earlier echoed these sentiments: “The political and moral appeal of the USSR...would almost certainly increase greatly....On the whole, the Arabs would become more susceptible to Soviet influence.”³⁹ It concluded that “[t]hroughout the underdeveloped areas of the world, this deepened suspicion and resentment of the West would provide new opportunities for the Communist powers.”⁴⁰

³³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 640 (October 5) and p. 816 (October 29).

³⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 106-107. Byroade was ambassador to Egypt until September 10, 1956.

³⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 334. Eisenhower’s letter to Eden on September 2 used this same language. (357) See also pp. 95-96, 99, 430.

³⁶ SNIE, September 5, 1956, in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 384-385, 388.

³⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 194.

³⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 334. See also p. 640 and p. 816 (October 29).

³⁹ SNIE, September 5, 1956, in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 386.

⁴⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 390. See also pp. 95-96, 189, 313, 440.

The Soviet threat against Britain, France, and Israel on November 5, 1956 exacerbated the American fear of growing Soviet involvement in the Middle East. On the one hand, the United States did not believe the Soviet Union would directly intervene in Egypt or against Western forces in Europe and thereby start a general war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff doubted the Soviets would take military action.⁴¹ On November 6, a Special National Intelligence Estimate – developed by the various agencies in the American intelligence community – also determined the Soviets were unlikely to attack. The United States decided not to release this estimate to the British.⁴²

On the other hand, American officials were concerned that the Soviets might use Anglo-French military intervention as an excuse for some form or another of meddling in the region. The Soviets might send arms, volunteers, advisors, and offer diplomatic support in an effort to woo Arab states, especially if those states were alienated or threatened by the Western bloc.⁴³ Washington believed ending the intervention would reduce the likelihood of Soviet efforts in the Mideast.⁴⁴ Eisenhower, writing to Eden just after their mid-day phone call on November 6, asked the prime minister to accept the cease-fire resolution without condition “so as not to give Egypt with Soviet backing an opportunity to quibble or start negotiations;...” The United States wanted British compliance with the U.N. resolution to avoid “developments of [the] greatest gravity.”⁴⁵ Much of the U.S. focus was on Syria and the possibility of Soviet support. On November 5 (10:20 am), Hoover told the president of “his great concern over the situation in Syria, and the

⁴¹ November 3, 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. doc 489.

⁴² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 1018-1019. See p. 1030 (#1) and footnote two on the U.S. decision not to share this estimate with Britain or Canada. Lucas wrote that after U.S. intelligence concluded that the Soviets would not attack, Britain's Joint Intelligence Committee was told this on November 6 as the cabinet was meeting. Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 294.

⁴³ For expressions of U.S. concern, see *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 990, 1000, 1001, 1014, 1016-1017 (contrasted with p. 995), 1041, 1048.

⁴⁴ For instance, see Hoover's comments to the French Ambassador, November 6, 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1024.

possibility of the USSR sending forces, volunteer or other, into Syria.”⁴⁶ The next morning, Eisenhower authorized reconnaissance flights over Syria and Israel.⁴⁷

U.S. officials were discussing economic pressure to force Anglo-French compliance even before the Soviet threat of November 5, but the Soviet threat probably hurried along the U.S. timetable. According to Kunz, the threat strengthened the American determination to force British and French compliance “lest they give the Soviet Union an opportunity to intervene in the Middle East.”⁴⁸ Finer took a stronger line and claimed the threat caused the United States to use fiscal pressure against Britain and France, but the evidence that U.S. officials considered such pressure even before the Soviet threat was issued undermines such a strong causal story.⁴⁹

The United States took several steps on November 6 to increase the readiness of U.S. forces, but the notes of the meeting at which the United States made this decision have not been found.⁵⁰ This was probably a response to the Soviet threat the day before, but the absence of the meeting notes makes this difficult to confirm. It may also have been part of a reaction to Soviet moves in Hungary, though the timing fits better with the Soviet threat against Britain, France and Israel on November 5.

Eisenhower was clear that he viewed the Soviet Union, not his NATO allies, as the primary threat to U.S. interests. As Eisenhower told Dulles and Hoover, “The bear is still the central enemy.”⁵¹ Unbeknownst to the British, on November 1 Eisenhower told the National Security Council that the idea that any U.S. action would result in fighting with Britain or France

⁴⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1028.

⁴⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 987.

⁴⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1014. On Syria, see also pp. 966-967, 973, 977.

⁴⁸ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 131.

⁴⁹ Herman Finer, *Dulles Over Suez* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 411ff.

⁵⁰ For a list of the steps taken, see *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp 1035-1037. During this meeting, Eisenhower called Eden (pp. 1025-1027). On military steps, see also p. 1002. On the issue of meeting notes, see footnote one, p. 1035.

⁵¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1051. In his memoirs, Eisenhower wrote almost nothing about U.S. economic pressure on Britain in November. See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY:

was “simply unthinkable.” He could accept the imposition of moderate sanctions against them, but he would not abandon Britain and France.⁵²

Britain’s proposal would violate norms against aggression and undermine the United Nations. World public opinion would be outraged, Eisenhower wrote Eden, by an immediate resort to force. It would violate the UN charter.⁵³ At one point, Eisenhower suggested writing to Eden that if Britain used force without exhausting all diplomatic options, “the United Nations organization would be badly weakened and possibly destroyed.” Dulles cut this line.⁵⁴ But when Dulles met with Pineau and Lloyd on October 5, he made the same argument: “The use of force in violation of the Charter would destroy the United Nations. That is a grave responsibility.”⁵⁵ In the Tripartite Declaration (1950), the United States had pledged to help victims of aggression and in an initial discussion of the Israeli invasion, Eisenhower said “we must make good on our word.”⁵⁶ The notes of this October 29 meeting on the Israeli invasion suggest that Eisenhower was very concerned (and angered) by Israeli aggression, the possibility of having been double-crossed by Britain and/or France, and the violation of the Tripartite Declaration.⁵⁷

U.S. officials also cited domestic checks, such as Congressional opposition and U.S. public opinion, on Eisenhower administration support for military intervention. American public opinion would be outraged by an immediate resort to force, Eisenhower wrote Eden on July 31.⁵⁸ Dulles argued there was not public support for the use of force, and Congress would not approve

Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), especially pp. 91-92 and 98.

⁵² “Memorandum of Discussion at the 302nd Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, November 1, 1956, 9 a.m.,” *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 902-916 at 914 and 911. Dulles was out of the room when the President stated that fighting with these two allies was unthinkable (p. 914).

⁵³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 167.

⁵⁴ Compare *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 432 and 436. Eisenhower mentioned this same point to Dulles on September 7, 1956, p. 430.

⁵⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 642. See also p. 189. (August 12, 1956)

⁵⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 835. (October 29, 1956)

⁵⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 833-839. (October 29, 1956) Just minutes later, Eisenhower repeated his stance to Coulson (UK), *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 839-840.

⁵⁸ See also *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 98, 436.

such an action.⁵⁹ Eisenhower wrote to Eden that Congress was highly unlikely to grant authority even for lesser measures of support and that U.S. public opinion rejected the use of force, “particularly when it does not seem that every possible peaceful means of protecting our vital interests has been exhausted without result.”⁶⁰ At one point, Eisenhower mentioned (and Dulles agreed) that military force would mean West European use of Western Hemisphere oil supplies and, consequently, U.S. domestic controls on oil consumption.⁶¹

The United States was concerned that the conflict in Egypt could escalate, spread, and possibly drag the United States to war. An attack on Egypt might lead Israel to attack Jordan.⁶² A top U.S. diplomat warned Eden that “[f]orceful methods might release chain of events which could be disastrous to whole world.”⁶³ Given the possible impact of military intervention on East-West relations, Dulles told Makins “[t]here would not be enough forces to send troops to put out all the fires which might start once hostilities in Egypt began.”⁶⁴ On August 30, Eisenhower told the NSC that the United States could hope to “prevent the enlargement of the war if it actually breaks out.”⁶⁵

Dulles was also aware that Britain might try to leave the United States no choice but to support them. He characterized the British in this light: “He [Dulles] recalled that the British went into World War I and World War II without the United States, on the calculation that we would be bound to come in. They are now thinking they might start again and we would have to

⁵⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 48, 63, 167, 356.

⁶⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 356. September 2, 1956.

⁶¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 63 and 65. (July 31, 1956)

⁶² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 65.

⁶³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 313. (August 28, 1956)

⁶⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 440. (September 8, 1956)

⁶⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 330.

come in again.”⁶⁶ On October 17, he worried that differences over the Suez Canal Users’

Association (SCUA) implied Britain expected U.S. support:

[B]ut never has it been suggested that US would be expected to go along blindly with concept to which it has never agreed and import of which never explained but which seems involve danger [sic] of leading us into war or at least supporting a war which has been judged by President to be morally unjustifiable and practically imprudent.⁶⁷

On the eve of the war, Dulles cabled Dillon: “Under circumstances it is unlikely US will come to aid of Britain and France as in case of First and Second World Wars where they were clearly victim of armed aggression.”⁶⁸

Some U.S. officials questioned the ability of military forces to operate the canal smoothly after they gained control of it. Humphrey argued that intervention would not work.⁶⁹ Egypt would offer strong resistance, Dulles told Eden.⁷⁰ Dulles felt it would lead to an unending occupation.⁷¹ A U.S. intelligence assessment concurred: the occupation would likely be “prolonged,” and it would be extremely difficult to find Egyptians who would work in the occupation government.⁷²

U.S. leaders sometimes discussed the possibility of damage to Western Europe’s economy if Britain intervened. For instance, in his letter of September 2, Eisenhower wrote to Eden that he worried that military intervention would harm the West European economy.⁷³ Dulles mentioned the same issue to Dillon on October 29.⁷⁴ They worried that the cost of the military operation and the denial of Mideast oil would weaken the West European economies.

⁶⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 65. (July 31, 1956)

⁶⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 745.

⁶⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 816. (October 29, 1956, 11:17 am)

⁶⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 99.

⁷¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 195 and 334.

⁷² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 383-384.

⁷³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 357. (September 2, 1956)

⁷⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 816. (October 29) See also pp. 99, 188-196, 334.

Through much of this period, the United States agreed that Nasser's Egypt needed to be deflated, but the United States preferred a gradual process to weaken or topple Nasser. When Eden and Dulles met on September 20, Dulles told the British Prime Minister that "the United States fully agreed that Nasser should not come out ahead [from nationalization]."⁷⁵ On September 25, Dulles told Macmillan that economic and political measures would be more effective than military ones in "diminishing Nasser's prestige."⁷⁶ On October 2, Eisenhower told Dulles he thought Nasser should be deflated by developing alternative Arab leadership rather than through overt or covert military action.⁷⁷ Part of this difference probably turns on the fact that the United States saw cracks in Nasser's facade while France and Britain believed he was only growing stronger.⁷⁸ At one point, the United States considered economic sanctions as a way to co-opt Britain and France and avoid military intervention.⁷⁹

These factors did not all operate in isolation as a few examples should demonstrate. U.S. officials believed the success of Soviet activities in the Middle East would be affected by the image the United States projected regarding the United Nations and aggressive interventionist policy. If Western Europe's economy became weaker, the United States would have to bear a larger share of the West's burden, affecting both domestic and international (Cold War) issues. Being dragged into the war or forced to come to the aid of the former colonial powers Britain and France would only deepen the negative reaction Arab states would have to the West, including the United States.

The Drawbacks. The United States was aware that a policy of restraint has certain dangers, and Washington sought to avoid such pitfalls. They wanted to avoid a do-nothing

⁷⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 546.

⁷⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 581. For more examples, see pp. 140-143, 334-335, 357, 436-437, 440.

⁷⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 626.

⁷⁸ For instance, see *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 639-645. (October 5)

policy. Some officials accepted that successful diplomacy is often dependent on the threat of force; too much restraint could signal to Egypt that that threat was not credible. Washington also considered how such family squabbles might look in Moscow: how would America's adversary react to a split among the allies? Does such a split strengthen one's adversaries? The United States also risked being seen as a scapegoat by its allies. Restraint may create a responsibility trap in which a restrainee comes to hold the restrainer responsibility for the outcome of a disputed policy whether or not the military policy in question goes forward. In a similar vein, the policy differences could have negative implications for the future relations of the alliance members.

Washington did not want it to appear as if the preferred U.S. response to Nasser was to do nothing or to propose empty diplomatic alternatives.⁸⁰ Dulles agreed with Herve Alphand, the French Ambassador-Designate, that "we could not afford to do nothing."⁸¹

Furthermore, Washington was also aware that too much restraint might suggest that nothing stood behind the diplomacy. In other words, they were acquainted the British and French argument that Egypt will only accept a negotiated settlement if the threat of force was on the horizon.⁸² In his October 5 meeting with Lloyd and Pineau, Dulles told them to keep their forces in being because "it should be made clear that if good faith UN efforts fail, force may become a permissible alternative to be considered."⁸³ One danger in threatening force, of course, is that one's adversary may call the bluff and then the cost of restraint and non-use of force may be higher.

⁷⁹ FRUS, vol. 16, p. 141, note 3.

⁸⁰ On the issue of empty diplomatic alternatives, see FRUS, vol. 16, p. 435. See also Eisenhower's comments on p. 661 and pp. 27, 28, 36, 47.

⁸¹ FRUS, 1955-1957, v. 16, p. 457. (September 9)

⁸² Dillon characterizes the French argument on FRUS, 1955-1957, v. 16, p. 655. Dulles agreed. (p. 657) see 38-39

⁸³ FRUS, 1955-1957, v. 16, p. 643.

As already noted, U.S. officials debated how its adversaries would perceive the split among the three Western allies. On October 6, Hoover told the President that Egypt was trying to split the United States from its allies.⁸⁴ Britain feared that U.S. restraint would strengthen the Soviet-Egyptian relationship.⁸⁵ In a Special National Intelligence Estimate (September 5), U.S. analysts suggested that Moscow would use Anglo-French military intervention to “exploit opportunities for causing friction among the Western allies.”⁸⁶ Dulles admitted the United States sometimes modified plans to preserve a show of allied unity.⁸⁷ For instance, on a minor issue during the Suez crisis (when to appeal to the UNSC), Dulles disagreed with France and Britain but “masked his annoyance for the sake of unity.”⁸⁸

U.S. officials discussed whether or not to hide the allied split from the Soviet Union. Bohlen argued that Washington should hide the split over restraint from the Soviet Union because knowledge of Western divisions would embolden the Soviets and foster greater opposition to the West.⁸⁹ By not hiding the split, Dulles countered, the U.S. policy of restraint could serve as an example to the Soviets.⁹⁰ Ultimately, Bohlen only hinted at the split at a meeting with Bulganin; a few days later, Dulles told Shepilov the United States would offer moral support and possibly more despite the Western disagreement.⁹¹ Dulles later complained to Eisenhower that while the United States was restraining its allies, the Soviet Union was

⁸⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 651.

⁸⁵ CAB 128/30, CM 68 (56) 11, October 3, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

⁸⁶ The report highlighted Britain and France on one side and West Germany and the smaller NATO countries on the other side. See *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 387.

⁸⁷ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 37 (note 73).

⁸⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 590.

⁸⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 133.

⁹⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 149.

⁹¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 156-160, 226.

encouraging Egypt in the direction of greater belligerence.⁹² There is posturing around restraint as states use restraint efforts to send messages to parties other than the restrainee.

The United States also considered what the impact of a restraint policy might be on present and future alliance relations. The United States worried that it would be blamed by Britain and France if things turned out poorly. In general in the eyes of the restrainee, does the restrainer become responsible for the outcome if restraint succeeds? The French seemed to believe so at Suez, and the United States feared being seen as a scapegoat.⁹³ Criticism may be inevitable given the effort to play a moderating role.⁹⁴ Eisenhower disagreed with Britain and France but he also did not want to "alienate our friends."⁹⁵ Even if the United States wanted to explore other policy options, Dulles assured Macmillan that "the United States is not going back on its promise to support the French and the British."⁹⁶ At a meeting with Lloyd and Dulles, Pineau suggestively raised the possibility of the split over Suez destroying NATO. He added that the "temporizing tactics of the US alarm us."⁹⁷ Some U.S. officials expressed concerns that the United States might use up all its influence with Britain and France.⁹⁸ Just as an ally may tire of repeatedly playing the role of the restrainee, it is worth clarifying whether officials tend to see restraining influences as a finite commodity. Do states suffer from restraint fatigue? Still, Eisenhower feared a war more than a split among the allies; a split "would be extremely serious, but not as serious as letting a war start and not trying to stop it."⁹⁹

⁹² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 649. (October 5)

⁹³ In *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, the French blamed the United States, pp. 551 (#2) and 655. The scapegoat question appears on pp. 397, 551 (#4), 625, 632ff, and 679. Evidence that the United States tried to mollify France is on p. 552.

⁹⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 591.

⁹⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 404. (September 7, 1956)

⁹⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 579. (September 25, 1956)

⁹⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 641 and 642.

⁹⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 679, 680, 770.

IV. The United States held the Balance

The British decision to attack Egypt was largely contingent on U.S. policy because Washington's actions shaped several of the most important factors. The United States was the most powerful ally, and this section explains the mechanisms by which Washington could exert that power in this particular case. Only the United States could mitigate the Soviet threat against British intervention in Egypt. On economic issues, only the United States could support the pound, ensure access to Western hemisphere oil supplies, and provide financial support for oil purchases. Though less absolute, the United States would also play an important role with regard to how the international community viewed British intervention and how the United Nations reacted, if at all.

British leaders largely assumed that the United States would support them on these three fronts, and U.S. leaders did not dissuade them from this notion. The United States failed to communicate with Britain in a manner that would have led to successful restraint. Had U.S. leaders done so, Britain would likely have been restrained, as I explain in further detail in section six below.

Soviet Union. The British were under the impression that despite the U.S. policy of restraint, Washington would protect London against the "bear" (the Soviet Union). Greater fear of Soviet policy would have increased the disadvantages of military intervention and might have caused greater British hesitancy to use force. According to Lucas, Dulles warned Dmitri T. Shepilov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, in mid-August that the United States would intervene if the Soviets attacked Britain and France in defense of Egypt.¹⁰⁰ On August 18, Dulles told

⁹⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 67. (July 31, 1956)

¹⁰⁰ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 171-172.

Shepilov “that even though the US might disagree with certain views of the British and French, should those countries become engaged in the long run they could count on US moral support and possibly more than moral support.”¹⁰¹ Eden misconstrued the message and believed the United States would block the Soviet Union if Britain initiated the attack.¹⁰² In addition to “moral support” and petroleum products, Britain had asked the United States “to neutralize any open participation by the Soviet Union.”¹⁰³

Britain needed U.S. support to counter-balance the possibility of Soviet support for Egypt. If Britain intervened and the Soviets came to Egypt’s defense, only the United States had sufficient power to offset the Soviets. The United States was the only great power on par with the Soviet Union. When, on November 5, 1956, the Soviets did actually threaten Britain, the United States came to London’s defense.

Economic support. The nationalization of the canal and possibility of British military intervention jeopardized Britain’s economic position. In particular, Britain’s oil supply was endangered and the standing of the pound as an international reserve currency was under threat. In both cases, only the United States had the access and resources to help Britain out of troubled economic straits.

If Britain’s oil no longer came through the canal, Britain would need substitute supplies and funding. Its energy costs would increase as more oil might be moved around the Cape of

¹⁰¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 226. On August 9, Dulles told the NSC that he “felt the United States must make it clear that we would be in the hostilities if the Soviets came in.” He called for studying the implications of such a statement. (174-175)

¹⁰² Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 171. Dulles and Shepilov met on August 15. Dulles told him that if every effort to obtain a peaceful settlement failed, the United Kingdom and France “would have [the] moral support of [the] US.” *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 206-209 at 208. They met again on August 20 – third meeting acct to *FRUS* (p. 245). *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 237-240.

¹⁰³ Eden met with Dulles on August 1, 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 98. Dulles reported Eden’s requests to the National Security Council on August 9 (*FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 169). See also Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 86. On July 30, Eden asked Murphy (US) to “watch the Bear.” See Kyle, *Suez*, p. 147; and Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 150.

Good Hope instead of through the Suez Canal. If it lost oil that had come through the canal, Britain also hoped to have access to Western hemisphere oil supplies. The United States had control of Western Hemisphere supplies and of sources of additional funds for purchase and transport.

The pound was struggling with gold and dollar reserves hovering around two billion dollars; this was considered the key threshold for maintaining the pound's position as an international reserve currency – something the British wanted to maintain. Thus, the British could not afford to use dollar reserves for increased energy costs. London also faced its annual payment of interest on the debt owed to the United States. Only the United States could waive the interest payment for 1956, help with energy costs, and give Britain access to funds from international financial institutions where the United States held the dominant voting share.

United Nations. American leverage at the United Nations was weaker than with regard to the Soviet Union and economic matters. Britain might still have been restrained if it feared U.N. action to block or stop Anglo-French intervention, but a variety of factors may have given England the impression that the United Nations would not come down hard against intervention, including the fact that the United States itself said nothing about opposing British intervention at the United Nations. With the U.N. factor, it is less certain that the United States had unique leverage as it did with the Soviet Union and on economic issues.

Britain had at least four reasons for believing it would be secure at the United Nations. Prior to the intervention, the United States did not indicate it would take action at the United Nations if Britain ignored U.S. efforts at restraint. Britain was not acting alone but instead was intervening with France, another of the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council. Prior to the intervention, they had already appealed to the United Nations, and the second part

the resolution on a negotiated resolution had been vetoed by the Soviet Union in mid-October 13. The resolution made it look like Britain had pursued a peaceful compromise while the Soviet veto helped prevent that compromise from going anywhere. Lastly, the actual intervention began not with Anglo-French aggression but rather with an Israeli attack on Egypt. While the Anglo-French charade quickly became apparent, Britain and France did try to cast themselves as neutral, third-party peacemakers simply trying to separate the combatants rather than aggressive colonial powers worthy of U.N. condemnation. As events unfolded, this deception failed to fool most members of the United Nations.

V. US and UK policies

In this section, I describe the major elements of U.S. and British policy during the Suez Crisis. This is clear case of an ally trying to restrain its partner from proceeding with a military policy. This section covers the period from July 26 to December 1956, or from the canal nationalization to the British agreement to withdraw its forces from Egypt. While we know already that the United States opposed the use of force and that Britain favored it, in this section I break those positions down into several elements. This also suggests some of the details of how allies restrain each other and how the restrainee resists such efforts.

The United States was opposed to the use of force except in the last resort. Washington favored a diplomatic resolution of the Suez crisis. The United States attempted to restrain Britain in the sense of telling Britain not to proceed with the proposed intervention. But prior to the British intervention, Washington did not spell out what the costs would be for Britain if it disregarded this American warning. The United States used diplomacy and specific diplomatic

initiatives to try to delay and to prevent British intervention. The United States did not threaten to withhold economic support, did not threaten to withhold diplomatic support from Britain at the United Nations, and did offer Britain protection from the Soviet Union until after the intervention (and then the focus was on withholding economic support).

Great Britain contemplated the use of force from the moment Egypt nationalized the canal on July 26. Although British leaders highlighted the few examples of U.S. rhetoric and policy that might support the use of force, most British officials were also aware that the United States strongly opposed military intervention. U.S. pressure and world opinion (UN) contributed to the British desire for a further pretext for action beyond the Egyptian nationalization of the canal. Britain continually adjusted its policy in response to U.S. pressure and initiatives. Britain hoped to use diplomatic policies both to demonstrate that it had made a diplomatic effort to resolve the conflict and to offer Nasser a deal Egypt had to refuse. Even better, from the British perspective, some diplomatic action might inspire Egypt to take a rash step that 'forced' Britain and France to intervene militarily, such as closing the canal or barring the ships from certain countries.

American policy (pre-intervention). The United States actively tried to restrain Britain (and France) by preventing military intervention in Egypt. The United States repeatedly emphasized three inter-related ideas that formed the basis of U.S. policy from the nationalization until Anglo-French intervention: Washington favored diplomatic action and opposed the use of force, but it did not rule out use of force as last resort. In the rest of this subsection, I give examples of these three inter-related ideas.

In late July, 1956, U.S. officials told Britain of American hesitancy to reverse the nationalization by force.¹⁰⁴ The State Department agreed that "The question of eventual intervention does not seem to arise. It would depend on developments. For the present we believe it should be relegated to the background."¹⁰⁵ After a July 31 meeting at the White House rejected the use of force, Eisenhower sent a letter to Eden emphasizing U.S. opposition to British military intervention. The President acknowledged that "eventually the use of force might become necessary" but emphasized "the step you contemplate should not be undertaken until every peaceful means of protecting the rights and the livelihood of great portions of the world had been thoroughly explored and exhausted." Eisenhower went so far as to note the "unwisdom" of even contemplating the use of force at that time.¹⁰⁶

In September, U.S. officials clearly and repeatedly stated opposition to British military intervention. On September 2, Eisenhower wrote to Eden that "American public opinion flatly rejects the thoughts of using force, particularly when it does not seem that every possible peaceful means of protecting our vital interests has been exhausted without result." The President could "not see how a successful result could be achieved by forcible means."¹⁰⁷ At a press conference on September 5, the President emphasized the diplomatic route: "[T]he United States is committed to a peaceful solution of this problem..."¹⁰⁸ In response to a broad argument by Eden of the similarity between Hitler, Soviet expansionism, and Nasser, and the need for

¹⁰⁴ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 148-149. Later, on September 2, Hoover told U.S. embassies that the "U.S. is committed to endeavoring find peaceful solution." *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 350. See also p. 692.

¹⁰⁵ This is an excerpt of Robert D. Murphy's draft statement for the first tripartite meeting to discuss the Suez situation. Murphy, U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, met with Selwyn Lloyd (British Foreign Secretary) and Christian Pineau (French Foreign Minister) on July 29, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 36.

¹⁰⁶ "Letter from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Eden," July 31, 1956, in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 69-71. See also Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 151-152. Eden responded on August 5, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 146-148.

¹⁰⁷ Eisenhower sent the note on September 2; Eden received it on September 3. *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 355-358.

¹⁰⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1956* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958), p. 737.

military intervention, Eisenhower sent a second note to Eden on September 8, claiming that the "result you and I both want can best be assured by slower and less dramatic processes than military force." While the President acknowledged that eventually force might be the only option, he argued that "to resort to military action when the world believes there are other means available for resolving the dispute would set in motion forces that could lead, in the years to come, to the most distressing results."¹⁰⁹ On September 13, one day after Eden told the House of Commons that the failure of the Suez Canal Users' Association (SCUA) might lead to other steps by the Western governments, Dulles told a news conference that the United States was not planning on shooting its way through the canal if Egypt blocked the canal by force.¹¹⁰

A similar pattern of U.S. warnings continued in October. On October 5, Eisenhower told Makins of strong American opposition to the use of force. The same day, Dulles told Lloyd and Pineau that the United States did not rule out force "as an ultimate choice" but thought it would be a "fatal mistake;" he also called the resort to force a "desperate measure" and a "disaster."¹¹¹ On October 22, Dulles cabled the U.S. ambassadors in London and Paris and asked whether they should reiterate the strong presidential opposition to the use of force and to explain that "the views of the President and myself on this point are basic and fundamental and I do not see any

¹⁰⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 435-438. See also PRO, PREM 11/1177, Eisenhower to Eden, September 8, 1956; as cited in Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 184. Eden's letter to Eisenhower, sent on September 6, appears in *FRUS*, vol. 16, pp. 400-403.

¹¹⁰ Dulles's idea was an organization of canal users that would protect the rights of users as outlined in the 1888 Treaty signed at Constantinople. Dulles conceived of the Suez Canal Users' Association (SCUA) as a provisional way of avoiding the need for Egyptian cooperation while delaying Anglo-French pressures for using force. At the second London Conference (September 19-21), the eighteen members agreed to form the SCUA. But this soon began to compete with British and French efforts at the United Nations; they referred the Suez dispute to the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on September 23, having informed the UNSC of the matter on September 12. The next meeting on the SCUA took place on October 1, just before the start of the discussions of the UNSC on October 5. The SCUA had several different names; the name SCUA was adopted on September 21 according to *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 552. I use SCUA throughout for the sake of clarity.

¹¹¹ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 110. For notes on this meeting, see *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 639-645. This came just after a National Security Council meeting at which Eisenhower said, and Dulles agreed, that "the United States would be dead wrong to join in any resort to force." *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 633. (October 4)

likelihood of their being changed after [the] election.” Although C. Douglas Dillon, the U.S. Ambassador to France, responded to Dulles the next day, there is no indication that he brought the matter up with the French government specifically in response to Dulles’s note.¹¹²

Delay and propose. In order to succeed at restraining Britain, the United States relied on delaying tactics and the continual presentation of new diplomatic initiatives.

Dulles adopted an explicit strategy of delaying a British-French clash with Egypt. He sought to restrain U.S. allies by dragging out the diplomatic options until the enthusiasm for confronting Nasser had dissipated.¹¹³ On July 31, he told a meeting of the President and top U.S. officials that U.S. policy was aimed at “gradually deflecting their course of action.”¹¹⁴ When Dulles returned on August 3 from his first trip to London, he and Allen Dulles agreed “the job is not done yet – just a cooling off period.” On August 10, Dulles was quite clear with Dag Hammarskjöld, the U.N. Secretary General: “I said that I certainly thought the more delay there was the less likelihood there was it [force] would be invoked.” On August 18, Dulles told Dmitri Shepilov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, that when Dulles conceived of holding an international conference on the Suez issue he had hoped it would calm Britain and France, as had in fact happened; Dulles earlier told Congressional leaders that Britain and France had held back because of the international conference.¹¹⁵ On September 6, Dulles told the President that he thought “the passage of time was working in favor of some compromise.” That same day, he told Congressional leaders that Egypt had rejected the proposals of the First London Conference. As a result, the United States “must find further steps to postpone the U.K. and French use of

¹¹² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 766; cited in Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 114. Dillon’s response is in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 766-767.

¹¹³ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, pp. 84, 97.

¹¹⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 68.

¹¹⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 226, 195.

force.”¹¹⁶ Eisenhower reiterated this viewpoint at the NSC meeting on October 12: “...if the United States could just keep the lid on a little longer, some kind of compromise plan could be worked out for a settlement of the Suez problem. Time and time alone will cure the disease; the only question was whether we could be sure of time.”¹¹⁷

Dulles believed that if the United States hoped to prevent British/French intervention, Washington needed to offer some policy alternatives.¹¹⁸ On September 8, Dulles spoke with Eisenhower:

I said I was not sure either [that the SCUA would work] but that I felt we had to keep the initiative and to keep probing along various lines, particularly since there was no chance of getting the British and the French not to use force unless they had some alternatives that seemed to have in them some strength of purpose and some initiative.¹¹⁹

Dillon, the U.S. ambassador to France, also sought alternatives and at one point cabled the State Department that “we will have to develop some sort of agreed concrete action in the economic field in order to ensure that military action does not follow an unsuccessful debate in the UN.”¹²⁰ A month later, on the issue of a debate on the Suez crisis in the U.N. General Assembly, Dillon said he assumed “that once Assembly is in session it would supply strong moderating influence.”¹²¹ One gets the sense that U.S. officials hoped to line up enough non-military options to prevent military intervention from ever being the only available choice.¹²²

Thus the late summer and early fall of 1956 were filled with the development of multiple diplomatic efforts, one after another. Dulles’s trip to London in early August laid the

¹¹⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 131, 183, 226, 392, 396.

¹¹⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 703.

¹¹⁸ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 98 (especially endnote 13); and Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 199.

¹¹⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 435. See also the points Dulles made to Eisenhower on August 29, 1956, p. 315.

¹²⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 586. (September 26, 1956)

¹²¹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 767. (October 23, 1956) This echoes a Special National Intelligence Estimate, September 19, 1956, paragraph 9 in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 527.

¹²² Eisenhower himself also brainstormed about possible diplomatic options. See his letter to Hoover in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 662-663. (October 8)

groundwork for the First London Conference which led to the unsuccessful Menzies mission to Cairo.¹²³ As this first major effort was failing, Dulles conceived of the SCUA and Eden publicly presented the SCUA on September 12. The Second London Conference led to the formation of the SCUA even as Britain and France were turning to the U.N. Security Council. Dulles was annoyed that without consulting him, they turned to the UNSC immediately after the SCUA was agreed upon. Yet he may also have been annoyed that two diplomatic tracks were working at once, thus condensing the diplomatic efforts rather than drawing them out as would have been the case if the U.N. appeal only begin if and when the SCUA were to fail. In the second half of October, as Britain and France decided on military intervention, the United States worked with the U.N. Secretary General to bring Egypt, France, and Britain together -- possibly in Geneva -- to negotiate along the lines of the UNSC Resolution 118 of October 13, the unanimous resolution that laid out six principles for the control and administration of the canal.

British policy. Britain favored military intervention from the moment the canal was nationalized. They tried to square the possibility of British military intervention with American restraint. Several British officials understood the strength of American opposition and they tried to convey this to top cabinet ministers. However, only Monckton opposed the use of force and he was brushed aside as Eden, Macmillan, and Butler all favored intervention.¹²⁴ Given this desire to intervene, Britain viewed diplomacy as a tool to help bring about armed confrontation rather than as a pathway to achieve a genuine settlement of Britain's dispute with Egypt.

¹²³ The first international effort to avert a military confrontation was the London Conference held from August 16-23, 1956. The conference of 22 states resulted in the 18-power plan which would have created a new international authority to manage and control the canal. A sub-group of the 18 countries supporting the plan, the five-member Suez Committee led by Australian Premier Robert Menzies, presented the plan to Egypt on September 3-9. Egypt rejected the proposed agreement.

¹²⁴ For instance, see the cabinet meetings of August 28 and September 11 where Monckton speaks out against the use of force but Macmillan, Eden, the Marquess of Salisbury (Lord President), and Viscount Kilmauir (Lord Chancellor) all support the possibility of military pressure against Egypt. CAB 128/30, CM 62 (56) 2, August 28, 1956, and CAB 128/30, CM 64 (56) 4, September 11, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

Although some British leaders emphasized or selected U.S. rhetoric that they claimed might permit the use of force, many British officials were aware of the deep U.S. opposition to overt military intervention. Dulles's trip on August 1-2 and several aspects of the SCUA were, in particular, points of misunderstanding between the two sides. But there is other evidence of the U.S. message coming through loud and clear. The most puzzling misunderstanding is Macmillan's interpretation of his trip to the United States in late September. In general, it is hard to decide exactly what British leaders thought the United States would or would not do if Britain intervened.

On July 26-27, Eden included Andrew Foster, Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in London, and the French Ambassador in an emergency meeting at which top British officials agreed to consider economic, political, and military means to protect the canal.¹²⁵ On July 27, the cabinet decided to use military force, if necessary, to reverse the nationalization.¹²⁶

When Dulles and Eden met in London on August 1 and 2, they came away with very different understandings of what had transpired. They discussed the situation in Egypt and the possibility of an international conference regarding the crisis. On August 1, Dulles said, "A way had to be found to make Nasser disgorge what he was attempting to swallow. Force was the last method to be tried to accomplish this, but the United States Government did not exclude the use of force if all other methods failed."¹²⁷ Eden took this to mean U.S. acceptance of military intervention might be forthcoming. But this ignored two other crucial parts of Dulles's message. First, Dulles told them the international conference had to be a genuine effort to resolve the dispute, not a diplomatic formality. Second, the United States opposed the use of force except as

¹²⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 3-5.

¹²⁶ CAB 128/30, CM 54 (56), July 27, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University. See also *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 61. (July 31, 1956)

¹²⁷ This is the British version of the conversation. See *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, footnote 2 on pp. 95-96. The U.S.

a last resort after all other means of resolution had been exhausted.¹²⁸ Dulles was clear but Eden listened selectively.

The two sides also misunderstood each other on the SCUA, but the U.S. position reinforced U.S. opposition to the use of force. Eden's public introduction of the SCUA on September 12 hinted at the use of force to back up the plan if Egypt refused to cooperate: "In that event Her Majesty's Government and others concerned will be free to take such further steps as seem to be required either through the United Nations, or by other means, for the assertion of their rights."¹²⁹ Yet in speaking out the next day, Dulles lost no time in denouncing the possibility of using force: "We do not intend to shoot our way through [the canal]. It may be we have the right to do it, but we don't intend to do it as far as the United States is concerned."¹³⁰ In October, Dulles and Lloyd again disagreed about the Egyptian payments under the SCUA; what became clear was that while Dulles saw the SCUA as a framework for developing cooperative relations between Britain (and France) and Egypt, Lloyd wanted the SCUA to serve as an instrument of pressure and coercion.

Yet many British officials heard the clear U.S. message of opposition. On August 1, Lloyd told the cabinet that Dulles had "made it clear that the United States Government would strongly deprecate any premature use of force" to restore international control of the canal.¹³¹ In his diary, William Clark, Eden's Press Secretary, "at first sight" characterized Eisenhower's letter of September 2 as "an absolute ban on our use of force."¹³² Of the same letter, Eden told

version is in the main text on p. 95.

¹²⁸ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 154-155.

¹²⁹ Eden was twice interrupted by a Member of Parliament as he said these words, but I have included only Eden's words. See *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, fifth series, vol. 558 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), p. 11.

¹³⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 492, footnote 2. See also Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, pp. 98-99; and Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 201-202.

¹³¹ CAB 128/30, CM 56 (56), August 1, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹³² There is a slight discrepancy about dates. In his entry for September 5, Clark refers to "last night's telegram"

the cabinet that Eisenhower expressed “his disquiet at the prospect that the United Kingdom and France might have in mind to take military action before all the possibilities of securing a peaceful settlement had been finally exhausted.”¹³³ On September 9, Roger Makins, the British Ambassador to the United States, cabled London that there “is no support in the United States for the use of force in the present circumstances and in the absence of further clear provocation by Nasser.” He added that “a go-it alone policy of military intervention would obviously deal them [U.S. officials] a body blow.”¹³⁴ Two days later, when the British cabinet discussed possible options if the Menzies mission failed, Lloyd said the United States was “strongly opposed” to proceeding at once with military action. Monckton told the ministers he was wary of acting without U.S. support and approval.¹³⁵ In his memoirs, Eden himself notes that at one Dulles-Lloyd meeting in October, Dulles stated U.S. opposition:

[Dulles] declared that he was with Britain on every point, except the use of force. Even force he did not rule out as an ultimate resort, and he once more recognized our right to maintain the threat of using it. Nevertheless, he felt that to employ force in the immediate future would be a mistake, since in his view Nasser’s position was deteriorating.¹³⁶

Perhaps most importantly, doubts were expressed on the eve of British military intervention. At the October 25 cabinet meeting, an unidentified cabinet member feared the “lasting damage” that would be done to Anglo-American relations. Moreover, there “was no prospect of securing the support or approval of the United States Government.” But the cabinet decided to go ahead with the plan for military intervention.¹³⁷ At the next cabinet meeting, however, the Ministers considered whether to approach the United States to seek support for Anglo-French intervention. They also noted a crucial economic point: “Our reserves of gold and

from Eisenhower. But according to FRUS, the British received the message on September 3. See Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p. 183.

¹³³ CAB 128/30, CM 63 (56), September 6, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁴ PRO, FO 800/740, Washington to Foreign Office, no. 1849, September 9, 1956; cited in Kunz, 1991, p. 94.

¹³⁵ CAB 128/30, CM 64 (56) 4, September 11, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁶ Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 561.

dollars were still falling at a dangerously rapid rate; and, in view of the extent to which we might have to rely on American economic assistance, we could not afford to alienate the United States Government more than was absolutely necessary.”¹³⁸

British leaders never understood that the United States might actively undermine their interventionist policy. Sometimes they seemed to believe that despite the American policy of restraint, the United States would support Britain in the end.¹³⁹ At other times they seemed to believe Washington would remain neutral and uninvolved.¹⁴⁰ British leaders inexplicably neglected to hold a wide-ranging discussion to consider exactly what the United States would do in the event of Anglo-French intervention in Egypt.¹⁴¹

Diplomacy as Pretext for Action. In contrast with the United States, Britain hoped that failed diplomatic policies would serve as a pretext for military intervention in Egypt. Aware of world opinion and the United Nations, Britain wanted it to appear as if Britain had genuinely tried to find a diplomatic settlement but had been unable to do so due to Egyptian intransigence. London was willing to go through the motions of diplomatic activity in an effort to appear as the more cooperative and less belligerent party to the dispute. Furthermore, Britain hoped that some diplomatic plan would provoke Egypt and create an excuse for military intervention. For instance, Egypt might refuse to allow certain ships to pass through canal as called for under a diplomatic proposal.

¹³⁷ CAB 128/30, CM 74 (56) 1, October 25, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁸ CAB 128/30, CM 75 (56) 1, October 30, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁹ For instance, see Eden's letter to Eisenhower on November 5, 1956 in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 984-986.

¹⁴⁰ This was the French view and the Macmillan view, both of which were conveyed to Eden. On Macmillan's view, see comments by William Clark in an interview with Alistair Horne as cited in Horne, *Harold Macmillan: Volume I, 1894-1956* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1989), pp. 433-434. Clark said Macmillan told Eden and Lloyd the following: "I don't think there is going to be any trouble from Ike - he and I understand each other - he's not going to make any real trouble if we have to do something drastic." Horne says the conversation took place on "an unspecified date before the decisive Cabinet meeting of 24/25 October." On Macmillan's recognition that he had mis-read the Americans, see Horne, *Harold Macmillan: Volume I, 1894-1956*, pp. 444-445.

¹⁴¹ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 113. Dulles once brought up a similar question at an NSC meeting, but it was not really addressed by the participants. See *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 169.

In late July, the British welcomed the idea of an international conference but not because they hoped for any negotiated resolution. Rather, London hoped the conference would provide diplomatic cover while the necessary military preparations commenced. At one cabinet discussion, a minister suggested the use of force would be easier to justify if Egypt provided "some further cause."¹⁴² If Britain's appeal to the UNSC was undermined by a Soviet veto, Eden said, it would give Britain "freedom of action."¹⁴³ Britain also hoped the SCUA would provide a pretext for intervention rather than result in a genuine resolution of the crisis. Macmillan told the cabinet he "regarded the establishment of this users' organisation as a step towards the ultimate use of force. It would not in itself provide a solution."¹⁴⁴ This strategy, along with framing the military intervention as a response to another Egyptian provocation, was part of Britain's effort to neutralize possible opposition at the United Nations and in world opinion.¹⁴⁵

Much of the British disenchantment with the SCUA resulted from U.S. reluctance to force ships through the canal if Egypt refused them passage. If the United States was unwilling to force through ships, the SCUA could not serve as a pretext for the use of force. Under the SCUA plan, ships would pay tolls to the SCUA instead of Egypt. Western leaders predicted that this might result in Egyptian refusal to let such ships pass through the canal, just the sort of pretext Britain and France had been hoping for to justify intervention. The United States initially did not rule out that possibility. On September 10, Dulles told Alphand, the French Ambassador, the United States would not fight its way through the canal over tolls.¹⁴⁶ But on September 11,

¹⁴² CAB 128/30, CM 59 (56) 3, August 14, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University. see also *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 61.

¹⁴³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 313. See also Lloyd's letter to Dulles (paragraph 6), August 28 (delivered August 29), 1956, p. 321. See also Dulles's explanation to the NSC of this Anglo-French strategy, August 30, 1956, p. 328. (and see 342)

¹⁴⁴ CAB 128/30, CM 64 (56) 4, September 11, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University. See also Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 150, 201-203.

¹⁴⁵ For instance, see Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 460.

Dulles gave Amb. Makins a statement that concluded by considering what to do if Egypt rejected SCUA ships: "In this event the parties to or beneficiaries of the Convention would be free to take steps to assure their rights through the United Nations or through other action appropriate to the circumstances." U.S. officials emphasized diversion of oil tankers around the Cape but left open the possibility of other steps.¹⁴⁷ But as noted above, on September 13 Dulles publicly rejected military action if Egypt used physical force to prevent canal travel.

The Failure of Restraint. The final details of the attack on Egypt were agreed upon just a week later at the secret trilateral meetings of officials at Sevres, France, on October 22-24. These discussions, involving multiple officials and trips back and forth to London, resulted in the Protocol of Sevres in which Israel would attack Egypt on October 29, Britain and France would issue an ultimatum the next morning calling on Egypt and Israel to pull back from the canal, and Anglo-French bombing of Egypt would begin on October 31 after, as was assumed, Egypt rejected the ultimatum.¹⁴⁸ Eden and Lloyd presented a censored version of the Sevres plan to the British cabinet on October 25, and the cabinet approved the plan.

As planned, Israeli armed forces moved into Egypt's Sinai Desert on October 29. The Anglo-French ultimata to Egypt and Israel were issued on October 30, and Egypt rejected the call to withdraw from the canal zone. In the evening of October 31, a few hours later than

¹⁴⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 476-480 at 480. On what to do if Egypt rejected ships, Rountree (US) gave Coulson (UK) a vague diplomatic answer on September 5 (p. 374). On September 7, a U.S. paper commenting on Anglo-French proposals noted that if Egypt took forcible action to block the SCUA, "then, and perhaps only then, will Egypt be an aggressor or guilty of a threat to peace." In a meeting with the French Ambassador-designate on September 9, Dulles stressed the plan to divert tankers around the Cape and supplement European oil needs with supplies from the Western Hemisphere if Egypt refused SCUA tankers access. (p. 457) The next day, in a meeting with the same official, Dulles was more blunt as he emphasized that "we would not 'fight' them [ships refused by Egypt] through the Canal but would route them around the Cape." (p. 460)

¹⁴⁸ Although the original Protocol of Sevres was written in French, Kyle (*Suez*, Appendix A) offers what he believes to be an accurate English version of the agreement. On Sevres, see also, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 776-777.

originally scheduled, British bombers began attacking Cairo airfields. On October 31 (7 pm EST), Eisenhower went on television and radio and opposed the Anglo-French intervention.¹⁴⁹

At 12:15 am (EST) on November 5, the United Nations passed a resolution calling for the introduction of U.N. peacekeepers into Egypt. Already morning in Cairo, British and French paratroopers began landing near Port Said, Egypt.¹⁵⁰ November 5 also produced a dramatic Soviet step as Moscow sent letters – signed by Premier Nikolai Bulganin – threatening a Soviet response to Britain, France, Israel, and the United States.¹⁵¹ Later on November 5, between 2:45 and 3 pm (EST), the Soviets publicly broadcast the messages to Britain, France, and Israel.¹⁵² On November 5 at 11:30 pm EST (November 6 at 6:30 am Cairo time), British amphibious forces landed at Port Said.¹⁵³

American policy (post-intervention). Even before the Bulganin letters on November 5, the United States was not averse to using economic pressure to gain Anglo-French compliance. U.S. officials had discussed moving slowly to replenish British and French oil supplies in order to get them to be more constructive on the cease fire issue. For instance, at a meeting on November 4 (9:30 am EST), the United States decided not to activate the emergency oil committee for two stated reasons. Not only would it look bad to be acting with Britain and France now, especially in eyes of African and Asian states, but also “it was felt that one of the best cards we had to bring the British and French to take a constructive position was the way we handled the oil matter. If we rushed into cooperation with them, we would perhaps be giving away a vital card.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1956* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958), pp. 1060-1066 at 1064.

¹⁵⁰ Kyle, *Suez*, p. 444.

¹⁵¹ Bulganin's letter to Eisenhower is printed in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 993-994.

¹⁵² *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1003, note 2.

¹⁵³ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1013, note 2.

¹⁵⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 974. See also Eisenhower's comment on p. 988 (November 5, 10:20 am). The United States recognized that Western Europe's oil supply “may soon be endangered.” (987)

On November 5, Israel had accepted the cease-fire, and Anglo-French acceptance came on November 6. This was the first stage of successful U.S. restraint: British and French agreement to a cease-fire.

But the United States was interested not only in a cease-fire but also in the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt. The U.S. policy of restraint was based on economic pressure; Washington blocked oil re-supply and support for the flagging British pound. I focus here on the oil angle; the historical record on the fiscal side is more limited.

U.S. officials refused to address Britain and France's oil needs in order to compel them to withdraw from Egypt. At the National Security Council (NSC) meeting on November 8, Secretary of the Treasury, Humphrey argued that U.S. action on oil should wait until "British and French evidenced compliance with the orders of the United Nations." The NSC decided that, in Eisenhower's words, "this Government officially should keep out of the oil supply problem until we were assured that the cease-fire was in effect." In policy terms, this meant that the use of the Middle East Emergency Committee (MEEC) to coordinate oil supplies during the crisis would be delayed: "When a cease-fire has been arranged in Egypt and when the UN police force is functioning in Egypt, [the United States will] consider putting into operation the plan of action of the Middle East Emergency Committee."¹⁵⁵

At the next NSC meeting on November 15, the United States still did not activate the MEEC. U.S. officials noted that they had already authorized the shipment of oil from Venezuela to Europe, but that not enough tankers were available. In holding off on the MEEC, they expressed concern about several issues: the reaction of Arab states; advising U.S. oil companies in courses of action that might violate U.S. anti-trust laws; and being seen as rescuing Britain and

¹⁵⁵ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 1070-1086 at 1076-1078.

France.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, at the meeting Hoover denounced as “erroneous” a news article that alleged that the United States “was actually withholding oil supplies from Great Britain and France in order to force them to comply” with the U.N. decisions.¹⁵⁷ Back in Egypt, U.N. peacekeepers arrived on November 15.

On November 25, Hoover expressed his fear that the United States would be blamed for the worsening oil situation in Europe, especially as winter approached. When pressed to start the MEEC, Eisenhower reiterated U.S. policy: “The President recalled that we have held up this measure until the invading powers accepted immediate withdrawal of their troops.”¹⁵⁸ But Eisenhower did agree to set the MEEC in motion and soften U.S. policy:

[The draft public statement] should take into account our requirement for prior compliance by the British and French with UN resolutions, or at least a prior commitment on compliance, but should focus on the idea that we are acting to help all the other European countries which, through no fault of their own, have suffered as a result of the closing of the Suez Canal.¹⁵⁹

On November 26, Hoover cabled Aldrich that the United States needed “concrete evidence of more substantial withdrawal” before resuming consultations with Britain and France. However, he added that it was not necessary for the evacuation to be completed prior to renewed consultations.¹⁶⁰

On November 29, the United States learned Britain would comply with the U.N. resolutions and withdraw. The British Cabinet agreed to withdrawal after they were promised U.S. support and a U.N. promise to clear the canal with ‘all available equipment.’¹⁶¹ On November 30, the NSC freed up oil for Britain, activated the MEEC, and took several fiscal

¹⁵⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 1127-1132.

¹⁵⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1130.

¹⁵⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1194.

¹⁵⁹ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1195.

¹⁶⁰ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1201.

¹⁶¹ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 317.

steps to help Britain shore up the British pound. The Anglo-French withdrawal was completed on December 22, though Israeli forces remained in Egypt until early March, 1957.

The United States also used fiscal pressure to block Britain's ability to stabilize its currency reserves and protect the pound, but this aspect of U.S. policy is less documented than the withholding of oil supplies. It is less clear when the United States decided to use this pressure. Perhaps additional research could uncover U.S. discussions of using fiscal tools against England. Still, there is evidence of the *ending* of the U.S. refusal to give Britain the fiscal means to prop up the pound; if there is an end point, there is also a starting point.¹⁶²

VI. U.S. Failure and Success

What explains the U.S. failure to stop Anglo-French intervention followed by the U.S. success at attaining both a cease-fire and the withdrawal of British forces? The U.S. failure to restrain Britain was a failure of communication. Washington failed to tell Britain about the costs of ignoring the U.S. restraint effort. Washington corrected this communications oversight in the later, successful U.S. restraint of Britain that led to a Suez cease-fire and then British withdrawal from Egypt.

In general, the failure and then success support rational restraint theory more than an explanation based on power, intra-alliance norms, or (Britain's) public opinion on the use of force at Suez. A combination of capabilities, interests, and communication explains both parts of the case – this is rational restraint theory. The evidence, especially in part one when U.S. restraint failed, cuts against all three other explanations. Britain intervened despite the fact that England was less powerful than the United States, more of the British public opposed the use of

force than supported it, and U.S. opposition to military intervention was known. At the end of this section, I turn to the case-specific explanations for the failure to stop British military intervention, the success at bringing about a cease-fire, and the success of achieving a British withdrawal. I also consider and reject a major competing explanation in this particular case, the possibility that a Soviet threat rather than U.S. economic pressure caused the shift in British policy.

Failure. The U.S. effort to restrain Britain failed because the United States did not spell out the costs of British defiance of the American warning. Had the United States done more to detail its policy in the event of British intervention, Britain would likely have been restrained. Britain, including ardent supporters of using force, cared about U.S. opinion. Members of the cabinet were made aware that Britain might need U.S. economic support and oil from the Western Hemisphere. Furthermore, when after the Anglo-French attack on Egypt the United States did use some of its leverage over Britain, Britain gave in to U.S. pressure and agreed to a cease-fire and then withdrawal. Suez is an unusual case where history, to some degree, was run twice. In this case, understanding how a different U.S. policy might have affected British decisionmaking is more than informed speculation.

The United States did not spell out the potential costs of British defiance. The United States did not reject London's request for protection from the Soviets. In fact, Washington did just the opposite and warned *the Soviets*. The United States did not pledge to withhold fiscal support or oil supplies. The United States did not tell Britain it might oppose British intervention at the United Nations.

Britain, in turn, did not ask about costs. Without a price attached, the British may have been more dismissive of U.S. warnings; according to Kunz, they never asked the United States

¹⁶² FRUS, v. 16, pp. 1166-1170.

what it would do if Britain used force against Egypt.¹⁶³ Kunz argued that the British did not think through what would happen if they intervened in Egypt, needed American economic aid, and the United States refused to provide it.¹⁶⁴

How do we know that if the United States had spelled out the costs more clearly, Britain would not have intervened? First, history was run twice. After Britain intervened, the United States refused to provide Britain with economic support and joined the Soviets in attacking the Anglo-French intervention at the United Nations. As a result of U.S. economic pressure, Britain agreed to a cease-fire and then withdrawal of its forces from Egypt.

Second, British officials cared about U.S. opinion and recognized the need to seek U.S. advice and support. Even supporters of intervention cared about it. On July 27, in the first cabinet meeting on the crisis, Eden said Britain's "first aim" must be to reach a "common understanding" with France and the United States.¹⁶⁵ In another example, British ministers wanted to know what the U.S. view was if the Menzies mission failed to sway Egypt.¹⁶⁶ On October 26, the cabinet discussed England's economic situation and discussed the need for contacts with the United States in order to shore up the pound.¹⁶⁷ Later, at the October 30, 1956 cabinet meeting, some ministers worried about the impact on the pound of moving forward with intervention without U.S. support.¹⁶⁸

Third, greater American clarity might have emboldened or reinforced opponents such as civil servants or dissident ministers. They would have had powerful ammunition to bolster reports about what might happen. Saying Britain needed to make sure it had U.S. financial

¹⁶³ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 94, 103, 106-107.

¹⁶⁴ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 113. At one point in September, Dulles asked if the British and French had considered the economic implications of diverting tankers around the Cape. *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 450, 457.

¹⁶⁵ CAB 128/30, CM 54 (56), July 27, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹⁶⁶ CAB 128/30, CM 60 and 61 (56), August 21 and 23, 1956, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University.

¹⁶⁷ Kyle, *Suez*, p. 335.

assistance is harder to dismiss if the United States has outlined explicitly conditions under which it would not provide such assistance. Supporters of intervention like Macmillan were able to fudge the issue by talking about difficulties with the United States but not confronting the genuine possibility that American support would not materialize when push came to shove with Egypt.

Fourth, being more explicit in general might have forced the United States itself to adopt a more consistent policy. U.S. actions and policies were not tightly focused on stopping British intervention, but an internal discussion of whether and how the United States would punish British defiance could have been a productive exercise. Could the U.S. really hope to stop British intervention even as the United States offered Britain some cover from the Soviets? This was not the only area in which the United States offered Britain some support. In August, the United States told Britain "it would permit emergency purchases of military equipment as long as there was no publicity."¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, even after Britain intervened, Eisenhower and Dulles were still willing to stand aside as long as Britain and France accomplished their task quickly. When London and Paris delayed and drew out the time frame of intervention, Washington started to pressure them more heavily.¹⁷⁰ In short, spelling out the costs to Britain of intervening in Egypt could have led to a more concrete and streamlined U.S. policy.

If that is the case, why did the United States not send a clear, pre-intervention signal about the costs it would impose on Britain? There was no official U.S. policy regarding such costs. Perhaps it was an oversight: Washington mistakenly thought a warning would be enough and did not realize spelling out the costs was needed to convince Britain to refrain from

¹⁶⁸ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, p. 259. See also Kyle, *Suez*, p. 357.

¹⁶⁹ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 92. See also *FRUS*, 1955-1957, v. 16, pp.176-177, 177-178, and 185-187. Yet during the crisis, the U.S. military also interfered with operation of the British Navy. (Clark, p. 205)

intervention. This may have been because American leaders themselves had not thought through prior to British intervention what the United States would do if London defied American wishes. In addition, in the days just before the Suez War, the United States was kept in the dark about Anglo-French plans and may not have realized the imminence of military action. In fact, some have contended that Britain did not tell the United States of the final plans precisely so as to avoid a last-minute U.S. restraint effort.¹⁷¹

U.S. officials may also have differed over the costs. Near the height of the crisis, on October 30, Dulles said he did not want Britain to go under financially; this may explain why Dulles never threatened economic punishments – he may not have believed in using the economic club on Britain. The same day, in contrast, Eisenhower told Dulles he did not want to help Britain and France with dollars.¹⁷² On November 3, 1956, Dulles entered the hospital and was unable to play a central role in U.S. decisionmaking during the period when the United States used economic pressure to guarantee the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt. In his absence, Herbert Hoover Jr. (Acting Secretary of State) and George Humphrey (Secretary of the Treasury), who both probably took a harder line than Dulles, played a more prominent role in U.S. decisionmaking.¹⁷³ Dulles left the hospital on November 18.¹⁷⁴

As noted earlier in this chapter, the evidence for explanations of U.S. restraint failure other than rational restraint theory (capabilities, interests, communication) is lacking. First, Britain, even when French resources are included, was less powerful than the restrainer, the United States. This challenges an explanation for success or failure based on the power balance alone. Second, Britain did not heed Washington's advice, went forward with the policy in the

¹⁷⁰ Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 269-270, 307.

¹⁷¹ For instance, see Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), pp. 116-117.

¹⁷² Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, pp. 260-261.

¹⁷³ Hoover was normally the U.S. Undersecretary of State, the number two position in the State Department.

face of U.S. objections, and hid the decision to intervene from Washington in late October. Not only did the process not reflect a commitment to intra-alliance procedural norms of consultation consensus and, but the outcome did not either; no consensus policy emerged between the two allies, Britain and the United States, and Britain went to war without Washington's consent. Third, British public opinion opposed the intervention; had opinion dictated policy, Britain would not have intervened.

Success One: Cease-Fire. Once Washington communicated its policy clearly – at this stage not only with words but also with deeds (sanctions) – Washington prevailed and restraint succeeded. The United States corrected its earlier communication shortcomings. Britain agreed to a cease-fire because reserves of the British pound were falling and the United States refused to allow fiscal support until Britain agreed to the cease fire. Britain had either to agree to the cease fire or to devalue the pound and end its role as an international reserve currency, place import restrictions, or take some other drastic economic measure at home. Only the United States had the financial resources, International Monetary Fund leverage, and access to oil supplies to satisfy Britain's economic needs.

The most important evidence that U.S. economic pressure determined British policy came from Harold Macmillan's memoirs. As the British cabinet met, he tried and failed to secure either a temporary loan from the United States or approval to draw from Britain's quota at the International Monetary Fund (where the United States had the controlling votes):

Accordingly I made the necessary soundings. I telephoned urgently to New York; the matter was referred to Washington. It was only while the Cabinet was in session that I received the reply that the American Government would not agree to the technical [IMF] procedure until we agreed to the cease-fire.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 947 (fn. 2).

¹⁷⁵ Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm, 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1971), p. 164.

Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, later claimed this economic pressure determined Macmillan's outlook: "Also before the Cabinet met, I had spoken to Macmillan, who said that in view of the financial and economic pressures we must stop." Lloyd added that Macmillan "strongly advocated" accepting the cease fire during the cabinet meeting itself.¹⁷⁶ Others who support an economic explanation include Lloyd himself, Horne (one of Macmillan's biographer), Kunz (citing Macmillan), and Betts; they all reject the Soviet threat explanation mentioned below.¹⁷⁷ Butler, known by his initials RAB, agreed. According to Butler, just after he became acting Prime Minister, Humphrey called: "'Rab,' he said, 'the President cannot help you unless you conform to the United Nations resolution about withdrawal. If you do that, we here will help you save the pound.' This was blackmail. But we were in no position to argue. I gave him assurances."¹⁷⁸

Macmillan says little about who he dealt with in the United States, though he later mentions that George Humphrey, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, *maintained* his opposition to drawing from the IMF or getting a loan when the two parties continued to disagree about the terms of the cease fire. The use of the word maintain implies that this was a continuation of earlier Humphrey opposition. Lloyd also fingered Humphrey; Lloyd suggested Humphrey was acting with the support of Eisenhower.¹⁷⁹ Kyle's language suggests others were involved as well, saying Macmillan "received confirmation" that Humphrey was blocking British efforts to draw on its IMF quota.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A personal account* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1978), p. 209-211.

¹⁷⁷ Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, pp. 210-211; Alistair Horne, *Harold Macmillan: Volume I, 1894-1956* (New York: Viking, 1988), pp. 440-445; Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, pp. 131-133; Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 62-65.

¹⁷⁸ R. A. Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1971), p. 195.

¹⁷⁹ Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, p. 211.

¹⁸⁰ Kyle, *Suez*, p. 465. It remains to be seen if there is any evidence in U.S. Treasury records.

However, Eden and later Macmillan claimed this was not the reason that the British accepted the cease-fire and offered a third explanation in addition to the Soviet threat and the economic pressures. Britain had accomplished its task in Egypt and thus the job was done. Eden explained: "We had intervened to divide and, above all, to contain the conflict. The occasion for our intervention was over, the fire was out."¹⁸¹ Britain agreed to a cease fire only because it had accomplished what it set out to do in Egypt.

But this explanation is contrary to fact. The Anglo-French forces had not captured the canal, as they had planned, and had done little toward achieving a second objective, toppling Nasser. They had not taken the cities of Suez and Ismailia and would be unable to un-block the canal. Lloyd, who noted the role of the financial pressures in the cabinet's decision, gave another reason as well: Britain had pledged to stop the fighting between Egypt and Israel and the fighting had stopped. But if the Anglo-French objective had been to end the Egyptian-Israeli fighting, why did Western forces land in Egypt after Israel had completed its objectives? Other cabinet ministers argued that Britain had not achieved its objectives: "we should appear to have fallen short of that effective occupation of the Canal area which we had publicly declared to be one of our objectives."¹⁸²

Britain had nowhere else to turn when Washington refused to provide oil or support for the pound. Washington controlled access to oil supplies in the Western hemisphere, the major alternative for Britain, France, and Western Europe with the loss of oil sent via the Suez Canal. Washington held a controlling share at the IMF and could thus block British efforts to draw down its IMF quota in order to bolster its currency reserves at home. Only Washington could

¹⁸¹ Eden, *Full Circle*, p. 624. In his memoirs, Eden's ranking of the three factors from most to least important appears to have been achieved objective, economic pressure (run on the pound), and Soviet threat. While Kyle considers a number of factors, he seems to most favor the idea that Britain's stated job was done: "the ostensible reason for the landing was no more." (p. 465)

decide whether to waive the annual British payment on its post-war loans from the United States and thereby save Britain a portion of its currency reserves.

Success Two: Withdrawal. Once Britain and France agreed to a cease-fire, the United States and its allies argued over the terms of Anglo-French withdrawal from Egypt. But the United States prevailed by using economic pressure to force its allies to agree to withdraw their forces from Egypt. While Britain probably thought that agreeing to a cease-fire would have been enough to secure the U.S. economic support that Britain desperately needed and only the United States could provide, Washington held out until this second condition (withdrawal) was met.

Like the situation prior to the cease-fire, Britain's economic situation was desperate, and the United States held unique economic leverage vis a vis Britain. Throughout November, British currency reserves were continuing to decline, and on its own Britain could only remedy these problems with drastic solutions that it hoped to avoid (such as ending the role of the pound as an international reserve currency or imposing import restrictions). Oil was in short supply: "Deprived of petroleum, England and France had no choice but to give in."¹⁸³ In terms of British oil supplies and currency reserves, only the United States had the access and resources to help.

The Soviet Threat. The major case-specific alternative explanation for the change in British policy is Moscow's threat on November 5 to take action. But this explanation for British policy (cease-fire) is flawed.

Washington responded to the Soviet threat by publicly pledging to defend its NATO allies, Britain and France. On November 5 at 5 pm, Eisenhower met with Acting Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr. and other advisors about a proposed White House statement and said

¹⁸² Scott, *Divided We Stand*, p. 292. See also Kyle, *Suez*, p. 465.

¹⁸³ Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 90.

“we should give the Soviets a clear warning.”¹⁸⁴ Eisenhower’s memoirs offered a more detailed version of his comments, adding that the United States would oppose a Soviet move “with force.”¹⁸⁵ At a 6:15 pm meeting with the French Ambassador, State Department officials told him the Soviet message gave the United States the opportunity to state its opposition to any unilateral action, including Soviet intervention, outside of the U.N. resolutions.¹⁸⁶ In the White House news release, the United States was clear:

Neither Soviet nor any other forces should now enter the Middle East area except under United Nations mandate....The introduction of new forces under these circumstances would violate the United Nations Charter, and it would be the duty of the United Nations members, including the United States, to oppose any such effort.¹⁸⁷

Britain and France knew that the United States would support them in the event of Soviet military intervention. When the French Ambassador to the United States thought Hoover had suggested the United States would not abide by the NATO agreements unless France accepted the U.N. (cease fire) resolution, a State Department official told him there was not the least justification for his concern. The U.S. Ambassador to France reassured the French as well.¹⁸⁸ The British understood the U.S. message: “United States has warned Russia that any attempt to use Russian forces in the Middle East would encounter American opposition.”¹⁸⁹

British leaders did not seem overly concerned by the Soviet threat. One British official who met with Lloyd and Eden said neither seemed to be paying much attention to the Soviet note.¹⁹⁰ Eden and Macmillan later wrote British leaders never took the threats seriously; Britain

¹⁸⁴ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1000.

¹⁸⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), p. 90.

¹⁸⁶ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, pp. 1005-1006.

¹⁸⁷ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1008.

¹⁸⁸ *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 1025, note 5; and Kyle, *Suez*, p. 459.

¹⁸⁹ This was part of a message sent from the British Chiefs of Staff to the commander of the Anglo-French military operation at Suez, General Sir Charles Keightly. AIR 8/1940 Chiefs of Staff to Keightly, COSKEY 41, *FLASH* 060536Z, as cited in Kyle, *Suez*, p. 459.

¹⁹⁰ Kyle, *Suez*, p. 615, note 34.

had its own nuclear force and knew that the West had a significant edge in nuclear weaponry.¹⁹¹

One author claims the Soviet letter actually hardened the British stance.¹⁹² At a minimum, British leaders did not want to be seen as letting the Soviet ultimatum determine Britain's stance on the cease fire resolution. On November 5, Eden wrote Eisenhower suggesting he was not afraid of a confrontation with the Soviet Union: "I have always felt, as I made very clear to Mr. Khrushchev, that the Middle East was an issue over which, in the last resort, we would have to fight."¹⁹³

Furthermore, if Britain was deterred from additional military steps by the Soviet move, why did Britain continue with the intervention plan even after the Soviet letter? As noted above, British amphibious forces came ashore after Bulganin's threat.

The minutes of the decisive British cabinet meeting on the morning of November 6 are less than forthcoming, as is often the case with British cabinet minutes, and provide only limited insight into British decisionmaking. In favoring acceptance of the U.N. cease-fire, Lloyd mentioned the ability to re-gain some support at the United Nations, the need to "shape our policy in such a way as to enlist the maximum sympathy and support from the United States Government," and the importance of maintaining Britain's anti-Soviet position. "We must not appear to be yielding in face of Soviet threats," he said. The cabinet then discussed that continuing the Anglo-French operation could spark Soviet intervention, either directly or in Syria, intervention by other Arab states, and U.N.-imposed economic sanctions. They argued

¹⁹¹ Eden, *Full Circle*, p. 621; and Macmillan, *Riding the Storm, 1956-1959*, p. 165. Finer wrote that the British and French did not take the Soviet letters seriously. Finer, *Dulles Over Suez*, p. 430.

¹⁹² Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, p. 131.

¹⁹³ FRUS, 1955-57, vol. 16, p. 984. Eden wrote this in his memoirs as well. Eden, *Full Circle*, p. 621.

about whether Britain could accept a cease-fire and still claim to have achieved its objectives. In the end, the cabinet supported the cease-fire.¹⁹⁴

Bulganin's letters and the threats they entailed should be distinguished from more general Western concerns about a growing Soviet role in the Middle East. The first major Soviet foray into the Arab-Israeli conflict was the Czech (Soviet) arms deal with Egypt in September 1955, just over a year prior to the Suez War. Thus when the Soviets started voicing opinions and threatening actions during the Suez crisis, Washington and London started to fear that the Soviets might use the crisis as an opportunity to build stronger ties with some of the radical Arab states. But concern about Soviet meddling was different from concern about direct, immediate Soviet military intervention against Britain and France in Egypt (or possibly Western Europe). The general Western concern about Soviet meddling both pre- and post-dates Bulganin's letters.¹⁹⁵

This distinction is especially important when considering evidence of Western concern about Soviet moves. For instance, one scholar claimed that a letter from Eden to Eisenhower on November 7, in which Eden discussed Soviet intentions, "explained the reasoning behind [Eden's] decision to withdraw."¹⁹⁶ But Eden never said in the letter he was explaining the British decision to accept the cease-fire and make way for a U.N. force. The letter, part of Eden's effort to get Eisenhower to agree to a three-way summit with French Prime Minister Guy Mollet, is focused on the larger issue of Soviet meddling in the Middle East:

It may be that even wider issues are now at stake. If the Soviets intend to seize this opportunity of intervening by giving substantial support to Nasser, they may create a situation which could lead to a major war. Hitherto I have not thought it likely that Russia

¹⁹⁴ CAB 128/30, CM 80 (56), November 6, 1956, Lamont Library (Harvard).

¹⁹⁵ For an example prior to Bulganin's letters, see Eisenhower's memorandum on November 1, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, v. 16, p. 924.

¹⁹⁶ Robert Pape, "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work," *International Security* 22, no. 2, Fall 1997, pp. 90-136 at 116.

would take this dangerous step. I have believed that it was anxious to avoid world war and that, although it would make all possible minor troubles, it would stick to the policy of making mischief by all means short of war. But the new men in the Kremlin may be less coldly calculating than their predecessors and, if so, they may be led into taking a step which may precipitate a really grave situation.

The letter is forward-looking, not a retrospective explanation of British policy. It is also part of Eden's effort to convince Eisenhower that the issue of the Soviet role in the Middle East is so pressing that the United States should not put off the three-way summit, as Eisenhower had just done.

VII. Conclusions: What does this case demonstrate?

Like chapter three on British non-intervention in Iran, this chapter demonstrates that restraint is attempted in international affairs even if restraint efforts are not always successful. The United States tried and failed to stop British intervention in Egypt but later succeeded in pressing for a cease-fire and British withdrawal.

Second, the most powerful ally does not always get its way. The United States was more powerful than Britain but Britain intervened in Egypt nonetheless.

Third, power or capabilities are not irrelevant to understanding part one (intervention) and part two (cease-fire and withdrawal) of the Suez crisis, but power needs to be considered along with the balance of interests and clarity of communication. Taken together, capabilities, interests, and communication – rational restraint theory – explain the Suez crisis. Both parties were deeply interested in addressing the Egypt problem, but they disagreed as to how to do so; while London was interested in toppling Nasser and preserving British prestige, Washington was focused on the wider, negative impact British intervention could have on West's position in the

Cold War. In part one, the United States failed to communicate its policy and restraint failed; Washington squandered its power edge. In part two, the United States policy was clearly communicated not only with rhetoric but, more importantly and clearly, through direct economic pressure on Britain. Restraint succeeded.

Fourth, neither the domestic opinion nor the intra-alliance norms explanation adequately explain the Suez case, especially in part one. The British public opposed intervention, yet the Eden government intervened. Eden and other top officials made no references to public opinion or public pressure in deciding to intervene, to agree to a cease-fire, or to withdraw. Opinion did not dictate policy. In terms of procedural norms of alliance decisionmaking, the evidence suggests not only that a norm of consensus did not prevent British intervention, but also that London may have stopped consulting with Washington in late October 1956 so as to avoid further discussions and disagreements about the impending Anglo-French intervention in Egypt. The Suez case reflects a norm of deception and misunderstanding more than consultation and consensus.

Fifth, Britain did not agree to a cease-fire and withdrawal due to a threat from the Soviet Union. The timing and evidence are not consistent with an explanation for British decisions based on the Soviet reaction. Britain and the United States feared that Suez might result in greater Soviet meddling in the Middle East, but this was a general concern rather than a specific fear in London that Britain better comply with the Soviet request or else.

Thus far, I have focused on U.S. efforts to restrain Britain. But sometimes the tables were turned and Britain attempted to restrain the United States, as I discuss in chapter five.

Table 4.1: Polling on the 1956 Suez Crisis

August 1956 (Gallup): *If Egypt will not accept the decision of the [international] conference, should we take military action against her, or confine ourselves to economic and political actions?* (p. 384)

Military action	33%
Economic and political action	47%
Don't know	20%

September 1956 (Gallup): *If Egypt will not agree to international control of the Canal, what should we do? Would you approve or disapprove if we were to: Give Egypt an ultimatum that unless she agrees to our proposals we will send in troops to occupy the Canal?* (p. 391)

Approve	34%
Disapprove	49%
Don't know	17%

September 1956 (Gallup): *If Egypt deliberately interfered with the free passage of shipping in the Suez Canal, should we take military action right away or refer the matter to the United Nations and only act with the United Nations approval?* (p. 391)

Take military action	27%
Refer to UN	64%
Don't know	9%

November 1956 (Gallup): *Do you think we were right or wrong to take military action in Egypt?* (p. 395)

Right	37%
Wrong	44%
Don't know	19%

December 1956 (Gallup): *Do you think we were right or wrong to take military action in Egypt?* (p. 398)

Right	49%
Wrong	36%
Don't know	15%

December 1956 (Gallup): *Having begun military action in Egypt, do you think that Britain and France should have continued until they had occupied whole Suez Canal zone, or do you agree with their accepting the cease fire?*

Should have continued	34%
Right to accept	53%
Don't know	13%

Source: George H. Gallup, ed., *The Gallup International Public Opinion: Great Britain 1937-1975*, volume one 1937-1964 (New York: Random House, 1976).

Chapter Five
Role reversal:
Britain Restrains the United States in East Asia

I. Introduction

In the spring of 1954, French forces fought what turned out to be the definitive battle in the French-Indochinese War. While the battle at Dien Bien Phu was not decisive in military terms, the victory of the communist Vietnamese forces (Viet Minh) represented a tremendous symbolic blow to the French effort to suppress Vietnamese communism. As the battle raged at Dien Bien Phu and France's position was weakening, the United States tried to prevent communist control of Indochina with a program called United Action. Washington conceived of United Action as an ad-hoc coalition that would bolster the French war effort and stop Chinese support of the Viet Minh.

But United Action was never implemented because Britain restrained the United States. Britain opposed United Action on a number of grounds, but the most important factors were the fundamental difference of opinion over the strategic importance of Indochina and the British fear that United Action might spark unnecessary conflict between the West and the communist world. Britain successfully restrained the United States, its more powerful ally.

Why was British restraint successful? Rational restraint theory, and in this case understanding the interests of each party, provides the strongest explanation of this policy outcome. Although Washington was more capable than London, U.S. policymakers were divided about U.S. interests in Indochina. While the executive branch made a strong case for U.S. involvement, the U.S. Congress was more reluctant and would not support

United Action unless and until U.S. allies – and especially Britain – were willing to participate. As I noted earlier in this dissertation, the balance of interests depends not only on how interested each party is in the issue but also how broadly those interests are shared (or not) within each government. The split in the United States ‘weakened’ U.S. interests and allowed London to take a decisive stance against United Action. Though it tried, the Eisenhower administration could not find a way both to proceed with United Action absent British involvement and to meet the Congressional stipulation.

Other explanations are less persuasive. The most powerful ally, the United States, did not prevail. The outcome was not determined by a U.S. commitment to procedural norms in the alliance such as consultation and consensus. While domestic opinion in the United States ran against intervention in Indochina, there is little evidence that public opinion shaped the administration’s position, except perhaps as mediated by Congressional actions. I also reject a case-specific explanation of issue linkage.

The sequence of events and statements by participants and later scholars highlight the importance of Britain and the U.S. Congress in restraining the United States. On April 3, Congress told the White House that Britain had to be part of United Action for Congress to support the initiative. Yet Britain refused on April 11-13 and April 25 to offer its support for United Action and instead hoped the East-West talks at Geneva would yield a compromise settlement on Indochina. As Eisenhower later noted, Britain’s April 25 cabinet decision not to support United Action “ended for the time being our efforts to find any satisfactory method of Allied intervention.” While the Eisenhower administration wanted the West to keep fighting in Indochina, Britain was open to the partition of Indochina into communist and non-communist areas. Britain’s disinterest

doomed United Action even if the Eisenhower administration spent several more weeks trying to form United Action without British participation. In June, the United States accepted the partition of Indochina, thus signaling the end of the American quest for United Action.

This case has major significance for both Britain and the United States. The British blockage of United Action may have averted a great power clash over Indochina. It gave the peace talks at Geneva a better chance of success. One scholar has suggested that the British gain at Geneva was keeping Europe out of the Indochina mess for the next twenty years.¹ The same cannot be said for the United States; despite the fact that United Action was scuttled, Washington still sank deeper and deeper into Vietnam in the ensuing years.

II. Intervention, U.S. Policy, and British restraint

As France's effort to defeat communist forces in Indochina looked increasingly fragile in 1954, the United States and Britain were forced to think about how they should respond. France had battled communist insurgents since late 1946 with high levels of American aid for the French fight commencing in 1950. On March 13, 1954, Vietminh forces attacked French forces intentionally massed at Dien Bien Phu. Despite elaborate French planning designed to provoke just such a confrontation, the Vietminh forces seized the upper hand and on April 4, French leaders asked the United States for immediate, direct military intervention to bolster France's position. The request came just weeks before the Geneva Conference on Far Eastern Problems (opening April 26) which

was to include discussion of the Indochina conflict as well as possible negotiated solutions. The United States had not wanted to discuss Indochina at Geneva but had acquiesced to British requests to do so in January 1954.

As part of its effort to build support for U.S. military intervention in Indochina, the Eisenhower administration met with Congressional leaders on April 3. Congress did not give the administration a blank check for action in southeast Asia and instead presented several stipulations. Most importantly, Congress expected the administration to act as part of a multilateral effort; in essence, this meant that the United States could only intervene if Britain would join the U.S. effort. Members of Congress asked variants of the same question: “Where do the British stand?”² While Eisenhower and Dulles may have hoped to persuade London to intervene in Indochina by demonstrating a united Congressional-Executive branch front, they instead were faced with the reverse – needing to convince the British in order to get Congressional support for military intervention in Indochina. Dulles had gone into the meeting willing to act with or without allied support.³

Military intervention meant different things to different actors, but in this chapter I focus mainly on United Action – a term I clarify below – because the United States exerted the greatest diplomatic effort to bring United Action to fruition and it was most clearly blocked by the lack of British support. Britain restrained the United States on United Action. The three proposed types of military intervention were direct U.S. support of French forces at Dien Bien Phu; an ad-hoc U.S.-led coalition called United Action; and a security organization for southeast Asia along the lines of NATO. (see Table 5.1) The

¹ James Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 144.

² Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), p. 211.

United States considered all three types to greater or lesser degrees, but Britain only supported the idea of a lasting security organization (and only if it was to be formed after the Geneva talks).

France and U.S. Adm. Arthur W. Radford wanted direct U.S. military intervention. Called Operation Vulture, this probably would have meant U.S. conventional bombing and possibly the use of nuclear weapons.⁴ The operation's goal was to prevent a French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.⁵ Britain opposed such intervention. Historians disagree as to how seriously the French request was considered by the United States. While some believe the United States actively considered the French request, others contend that Washington sought any excuse to avoid a direct role in support of French forces. Either way, the United States rebuffed two French requests for immediate intervention to help save Dien Bien Phu on April 4-5 and April 24.⁶ In terms of this study, Britain's non-support for direct military intervention only translates into restraint if the policy of direct military intervention would have been implemented by the United States absent British opposition. Because of the historical uncertainty regarding the intent

³ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, second ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 33.

⁴ Participants and historians disagree as to whether and, if so, how seriously the United States considered using nuclear weapons. See below under why did Britain oppose United Action (sub-section on 'Fear of War'). Adm. Radford raised the possibility of using three tactical A-weapons. Neal H. Petersen, editor, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954: Indochina*, volume 13, part one of two (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), pp. 1270-1271. (hereinafter *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13)

⁵ Melanie Billings-Yun, *Decision against war: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 103.

⁶ On the April 4, 1954 rejection, see Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, pp. 104-109. She argued that Eisenhower used British opposition as a cover for his own opposition to immediate U.S. intervention to save Dien Bien Phu. On the April 24, 1954 rejection, see Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 61.

of the Eisenhower administration, I leave aside this historical question to focus on United Action.⁷

The second and third types of intervention both involved multilateral defense organizations. But the United States and Britain disagreed about the timing, permanence, and objectives of a collective defense organization in SE Asia.

Dulles and Eisenhower placed significant emphasis on some form of "United Action." United Action was a term Dulles first used in public in a speech to the Overseas Press Club of America on March 29, 1954; Eisenhower agreed with the speech.⁸

Eisenhower had asked about "a broadened effort to save Indochina" at the NSC meeting just prior to Dulles's speech on March 25.⁹ In his speech, Dulles did not present United Action in great detail, and this lack of detail repeatedly left the idea open to different and sometimes contradictory interpretations.¹⁰ The United States wanted to announce prior to

⁷ Eisenhower went back and forth on his opposition to immediate military intervention. He said immediate intervention was possible (*FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1150; also see p. 1181); on April 6 the NSC called on U.S. officials to start planning activities for intervention (pp. 1263, 1264); and at his April 7 press conference, Eisenhower refused to comment on whether the United States would go it alone in the last resort. (1281) Yet on April 5 Eisenhower told Dulles in a private phone call that he opposed "active war." (p. 1242) At the same April 6 NSC meeting, Eisenhower was clear: "As far as he was concerned, said the President with great emphasis, there was no possibility whatever of U.S. unilateral intervention in Indochina, and we had best face that fact." (1253) Even if Eisenhower opposed emergency intervention, he may not have wanted to rule it out if he believed the threat of immediate intervention could have a deterrent effect on the communist forces.

⁸ Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the cold war* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 43; Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, pp. 60 and 64. For the idea for the speech, see *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1150.

⁹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1166.

¹⁰ George C. Herring and Richard H. Immerman ("Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: 'The Day We Didn't Go to War' Revisited," *Journal of American History* 71, September 1984, pp. 343-363 at 350) suggested an apt warning about United Action: Eisenhower and Dulles "proceeded with extreme caution, keeping numerous options open and covering their tracks so well that they baffled contemporaries and future scholars." But they also describe U.S. motivations for United Action and some of the details (p. 350, especially footnote 20). At the time, Sen. John Stennis, for instance, was puzzled: "I followed Secretary Dulles' speech very closely, and I have not been able to decide exactly what is meant by 'united action.'" (US Congress, Senate, *Record*, March 30, 1954, p. 4209 as cited in Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 66) Cable suggested that much of the allied confusion and disagreement on U.S. policy came about because what was originally a means (forming an international coalition) to an end (immediate intervention) came to be seen as an objective that stood on its own (United Action). Some of the confusion in the historical writing on United Action may be because some scholars focus on United Action as a means to immediate

the Geneva talks the formation of an ad-hoc¹¹ coalition to defend Indochina and SE Asia against communist takeover – United Action. On April 6, the National Security Council delayed a decision on military intervention but decided to move forward on United Action.¹² The United States wanted to form the coalition in order to stiffen French resistance, negotiate from a position of strength at the Geneva talks, deter Chinese support of the Viet Minh, begin to prepare for the possibility of French defeat and withdrawal, and defend SE Asia from communist takeover.¹³ The United States opposed the partition of Vietnam. If this putative allied coalition became engaged in fighting, the United States hoped other countries would supply the ground troops.¹⁴ For most of April, the United States conceived of United Action with Britain serving as Washington's lead partner.¹⁵

intervention while others take it as an end in and of itself, as I do in this chapter. Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, pp. 53-54. Hoopes suggested that Dulles intentionally left the plan vague because an exact policy had not been decided upon and allies and the Congress had not been consulted. (*The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, p. 210).

¹¹ The record does not provide conclusive evidence as to why the United States preferred an ad-hoc coalition. U.S. officials wanted to get the ball rolling before Geneva and may have felt that talks about a permanent organization would take much longer. They also may have wanted to apprise Congress of developments with United Action during an interim stage rather than waiting until a permanent organization had been agreed upon.

¹² *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 13, p. 1264.

¹³ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 13 contains extensive documentation of the various goals linked to United Action. The United States wanted to form the coalition in order to stiffen French resistance and avoid a French sellout at Geneva (1164, 1187, 1233, 1257, 1275n1, 1278, 1308); negotiate from a position of strength at the Geneva talks (1227 and 1229); deter Chinese support of the Viet Minh (1202n3, 1217, 1228); begin to prepare for the possibility of French defeat and withdrawal (1151, 1164, 1257); and, more generally, defend SE Asia from communist takeover as might occur in domino-like fashion (1167-68, 1257, 1276, 1292). At times, U.S. officials suggested that United Action was not directed at China, but this usually occurred when the United States was trying to convince a reluctant ally of the merits of United Action. (1240, 1305) See also Eisenhower's letter to Churchill in Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1963), p. 347.

¹⁴ Divine, *Eisenhower and the cold war*, p. 48ff; Herring and Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu," pp. 350-351, note 20; and Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 54.

¹⁵ In early 1954, Walter Bedell Smith, U.S. Undersecretary of State, headed a Special Committee on Indochina that explored the possibility of a regional defense organization. Lloyd C. Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam: From World War II Through Dienbienphu* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), pp. 172 and 177.

While Britain did not support immediate intervention or United Action, it did support discussion after the Geneva talks of a third option -- a lasting, NATO-like regional defense organization.¹⁶ Britain wanted to defend SE Asia from communist takeover, but did not agree that the fall of Indochina would result in the domino-like fall to communism of other SE Asian states. Britain opposed the U.S. plan (United Action) because London believed the United Action would undermine the Geneva talks by sending an aggressive message to the communist states, possibly result in a call for British ground troops in Indochina, and possibly result in a major war with China (and even the Soviet Union). Britain supported the negotiated partition of Vietnam as the least bad option for ending the French-Indochinese war. In addition, British leaders believed that forming the organization *after* the Vietnam question was settled would preclude the possibility of British forces being drawn into the Indochina war. Britain was not opposed to *private* discussions about the collective defense organization prior to the Geneva talks. The difference was over public statements about such talks.¹⁷

While it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the different types of intervention in the historical record, the distinction between a lasting security organization and United Action is crucial; Britain supported the idea of the former, not the latter.¹⁸ In contrast, Dulles was pushing United Action and the more permanent regional security organization was only a fallback position that the United States accepted in May after United Action as originally conceived (and then modified) had failed to attract allied support.

¹⁶ For a NATO reference, see *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1308, 1313.

¹⁷ Eden made clear to Dulles that he did not want to form United Action prior to the Geneva talks. *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1308n2, 1320. See also 1311 and 1319. See each side's draft of the statement to be released at the end of the talks, pp. 1313-15.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu, April 1954: The Failure of United Action," in Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, and Mark R. Rubin, *DIEN BIEN PHU and the Crisis of Franco-*

The United States twice asked Britain for support for United Action and Britain blocked the U.S. policy on both occasions. Dulles went to London from April 11-13 and the two sides agreed to a joint statement on Indochina and other matters:

Accordingly we are ready to take part, with the other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defense, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security and freedom of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific.¹⁹

But it soon became clear that they disagreed as to what this meant. When Dulles invited British Amb. Roger Makins and diplomatic officials from other prospective participants to a meeting about forming United Action, Eden cried foul. Again, historians disagree as to whether Eden or Dulles was to blame for this crucial misunderstanding of the communiqué, but the bottom line was that the two sides interpreted this key clause differently.²⁰ To Britain, it meant that talks could commence after Geneva on a lasting security organization but not on an ad-hoc coalition for intervention in Indochina. Britain opposed United Action, thus thwarting Dulles's plan. On April 24, the United States pressed London for a second time to no avail.²¹ The British cabinet officially rejected the

American Relations 1954-1955 (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990), pp. 55-77 at 68; Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 55.

¹⁹ "U.S.-U.K. Statement," dated April 13, 1954, *Department of State Bulletin* 30, no. 774, April 26, 1954, p. 622.

²⁰ Gardner (*Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 224-228) blamed Dulles for the misunderstanding. Waldo Heinrichs ("Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation," in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye, *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 86-103 at 96) wrote that "Eden later reneged" on what they had agreed upon in London. Cable (*The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 59) also said "Dulles... was probably right." Anthony Short ("British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," in Cohen and Iriye, *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960*, pp. 246-271 at 253) suggested it could be understood either way. Warner ("Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," pp. 69-70) wrote that Eden went back on his word, but the United States went public without British permission about the proposed defense organization. Hoopes seemed to accept Eden's version. (*The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, p. 215)

²¹ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 237-240. Makins reported that U.S. officials were constantly asking him about Britain's likely reaction to a larger U.S. role in Indochina. See Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 172, 203-204.

U.S. request on April 25.²² Eisenhower later noted the importance of the British decision on April 25: "This ended for the time being our efforts to find any satisfactory method of Allied intervention."²³

One alternative explanation for the failure of United Action is that Eisenhower and Dulles did not want United Action; concern about British opposition was just a cover story.²⁴ In fact, however, the United States was serious about implementing United Action if it could get British support. Eisenhower may have opposed immediate intervention to save Dien Bien Phu, but he did not speak out against the idea of a coalition for other purposes. Although Nixon later wrote that Eisenhower was not enthusiastic about UA and not inclined to pressure allies, Eisenhower told the NSC on April 6 that the coalition was matter of "highest urgency." At the same meeting, Eisenhower stated a preference for regional organizations over "emergency military action."²⁵ When Eisenhower told Dulles in a private telephone call that he opposed

²² Warner: "[I]t is clear that the ministerial meetings of [April] 25th marked the end of any prospect of United Action in Indochina, at any rate before the Geneva Conference." Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 73. Billings-Yun agreed that the need for British support was the key obstacle to United Action (*Decision against war*, p. 96). See also Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 69. Short agreed: "In the climatic year of 1954 it would seem, therefore, that the object of British policy in Southeast Asia was as much to restrain the United States as it was to contain communism." ("British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 256) Gary R. Hess concurred: "That [U.S.] urgency, however, was not shared by the British;...In the end the United States had to accept delaying movement on collective defense." Hess used the term collective defense in the context of United Action. Hess, "The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia: The SEATO Structure of Containment," in Cohen and Iriye, *The Great Powers in East Asia*, pp. 272-295 at, p. 277. According to Herring, in late April Dulles "made frantic efforts to convert Eden, urgently warning that without support from its allies France might give up the fight. The British would have none of it, however, and the administration was forced to back off." Herring, *America's Longest War*, p. 37. See also Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, p. 218.

²³ Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 351.

²⁴ Hoopes, for instance, wrote that Eisenhower restrained Dulles. See *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, p. 212.

²⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1266, 1263, 1257, 1259.

“active war,” he could have easily added his opposition any other policy as well (but he did not).²⁶

Eisenhower was displeased when the plan faced roadblocks. After the Congressional meeting on April 3, Dulles told Eisenhower that the meeting raised some “serious problems,” though neither blamed Congress for wanting allied involvement.²⁷ Eisenhower offered to return to Washington, but Dulles said he need not do so.²⁸ After Britain rejected calls for intervention on April 24-26 just prior to the Geneva talks, Eisenhower was angry and wrote in his diary that the British had shown a “woeful unawareness” of the risks the United States faced in the region.²⁹

Dulles made a major effort to win support for United Action. If he did not truly believe in the proposal, he need not have gone to such great lengths and twice traveled to Europe to seek support for the plan. Furthermore, he believed Britain might join United Action, as did Eisenhower and Undersecretary of State Smith who said at the NSC meeting on April 13 (Dulles was away) that London would “ultimately come along.”³⁰ If they really opposed their own United Action plan, the possibility of British acceptance would have been a much larger problem than they indicated as it would have removed the cover story that they sought (according to supporters of this explanation).

The United States also sought to modify the policy even after Britain objected, something it would not have done if it hoped for British opposition as a cover to kill off

²⁶ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1242.

²⁷ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1230. Also cited in John Foster Dulles, telephone conversation with Eisenhower, April 3, 1954, Telephone Conversations series (White House), “January 1-June 30, 1954 (2),” Dulles Papers, as cited in Herring and Immerman, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” p. 353. In his memoir, Eisenhower claimed that he agreed with the Congressional stipulations. *Mandate for Change*, p. 347.

²⁸ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1230.

²⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, April 27, 1954, Diary Series, “April 1954,” Whitman File, as cited in Herring and Immerman, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” p. 360.

United Action. In other words, Britain handed the United States an excuse, but Washington did not abandon the policy at that point. After Britain refused to support United Action, Washington asked for British moral support.³¹ Washington also intensified its pursuit of a version of United Action that included Australia and New Zealand but not Britain. Although both of these modified versions of United Action also failed, the fact that the United States pursued them suggests that Washington was not looking to bury United Action at the first opportunity. U.S. officials genuinely wanted to pursue this policy option. A later scholar agreed: "Dulles was too clever by half if he was laying a smokescreen to cover retreat."³²

A second alternative explanation for the failure of United Action is that France refused to bend its policy toward southeast Asia to rejuvenate the Vietnamese anti-communist forces. United Action failed not because of British restraint but due to French unwillingness to meet U.S. needs.³³ But this explanation is not borne out by the record. The United States wanted France to commit to the right of French colonial states (the Associated States of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) to declare independence from France. U.S. officials believed this incentive was necessary for nationalist Vietnamese to

³⁰ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1254, 1256, and 1326.

³¹ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 260-261.

³² Heinrichs, "Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation," p. 96. Gardner agreed: "...materials now available to the historian suggest that Dulles was not operating simply to make a record, and that, uncertain as he might be about immediate intervention or long-term collective defense, he was *very* serious about his efforts." (p. 401n104) Herring and Immerman also believe the United States was serious about United Action. Billings-Yun does not. Eisenhower's insistence on a British troop commitment killed United Action. (100, 101, 103) But Billings-Yun treats United Action largely in the sense of a means to implement the immediate military intervention planned for in Operation Vulture. So when she says Eisenhower wanted the British to block the plan, she is suggesting he wanted to block immediate intervention but have someone else take the blame. But that is different from suggesting he was opposed to any coalition to help the French, replace them if they left, and deter the PRC. As I stated earlier, the variety of definitions of United Action mean there is not consistency in how policymakers and scholars use the term.

³³ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 234, 245, 255. But Gardner cites a U.S. document that refers to problems with immediate air intervention, not United Action. See *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1404-1405.

feel that they had something at stake and were therefore fighting the communist Vietminh for something meaningful (rather than fighting to prolong French colonialism).³⁴ But by the eve of the Geneva talks in late April, Dulles believed France had done so after meeting with Joseph Laniel (Prime Minister) and Maurice Schumann (French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs): "the second condition regarding the independence of the Associated States seemed to have been substantially met and should present no difficulty."³⁵ Second, even if France was not committed to the policy change, if Britain had joined the United States the pressure for a French policy shift would have been more intense and thus more likely. Without British support for United Action, France could escape having to make a final decision.

III. Why did Britain oppose United Action?

Britain had a number of reasons for opposing United Action and they included differences over both the allied objective and the policy in question. But much of Britain's opposition probably flowed from the different strategic assessments of Indochina in London and Washington. London simply did not believe Indochina was crucial in the war against communism and was unwilling to risk war and a loss of focus of the Western allies in order to save all of Vietnam from communist rule. In understanding why Britain opposed United Action, one can also gain insight into British interests in Southeast Asia and beyond.

³⁴ See, for instance, Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, pp. 22, 23-24, and 58.

³⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1395. The first, and only other, condition was British support. See also Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," pp. 255-256.

Objectives. Britain attached less strategic significance to Indochina and much of its other discomfort with United Action probably stemmed from this fact. While the United States feared that the loss of Indochina would, like falling dominoes, lead to the loss of other SE Asian and Asian states to the communist camp, Britain believed that even with part of or none of Indochina the NATO allies and their Asian partners could establish a defensible line against Soviet and Chinese-sponsored thrusts. In Britain's eyes, Indochina was expendable. British officials rejected the domino theory in this case.³⁶

Britain was concerned about excess efforts to save Indochina in part because of what this might mean for the Western defense of other, more important areas. Resources expended to defend Indochina would take away from the defense of important areas like Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. This was true of British resources, but London also worried about France's preoccupation with Indochina.³⁷ The war in Indochina was hurting the French effort in the defense of Europe. France's NATO units were "dangerously understrength."³⁸

One way, then, to look at London's major reasons for opposing United Action flows from the initial observation that Britain, unlike the United States, believed little harm would be done by the loss of some or all of Indochina to communist control. Better to lose Indochina (or part of it) and strengthen allied defenses in the rest of free Southeast Asia than insist on all of Indochina and thereby prolong the French-Indochinese war, risk a war with China, and scuttle the Geneva talks. Instead of United Action, Britain favored partition of Indochina at the Geneva talks and setting up – post-Geneva – a regional,

³⁶ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1323.

³⁷ Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 67.

NATO-like defense organization for SE Asia. It made little sense to draw a defensive line through an area that had already been lost to one's enemy. Britain's approach can be summed up as cutting losses, focusing on what really matters strategically (Western Europe and a more narrow area of Asia), and avoiding an unnecessary war (including both direct British entry into Indochina or a larger war with China). From London's perspective, United Action broke all three of these rules.

U.S.–British policy differences over the Geneva talks and partitioning Indochina were symptoms of this difference over goals (or security priorities) in SE Asia. Britain was willing to accept the partition of Vietnam and thus saw Geneva as an excellent vehicle for resolving the conflict. Britain did not want to implement any policy before Geneva that might undermine the talks. The United States long opposed partition even into late April.³⁹ Just prior to meeting with Dulles in mid-April, Eden and the French ambassador agreed that talk of a regional defense pact should wait until after the Geneva Conference.⁴⁰ Whereas partition not only accepted the existence of the Vietminh but also legitimated the communist Vietnamese control of northern Vietnam, United Action aimed at picking up where the French left off and trying to fully defeat the Vietminh. One policy sanctioned the Vietminh while the other still aimed to eradicate the Vietminh. This was a policy difference, but it was based on fundamental differences over the Western allies defensive perimeter in Asia. Britain was willing to accept the communist Vietnamese. Washington wanted to avoid a “who lost Vietnam?” debate. British policy – supporting the Geneva talks, accepting the idea of partition, opposing United Action –

³⁸ Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 10.

³⁹ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 173, 244.

⁴⁰ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 218. See also p. 252.

forced the United States to admit, yes, at least for now, we have lost part of Vietnam to the communists.

Fear of War. Britain's fear that United Action would lead to unwanted war included three inter-related pathways to conflict: the introduction of British combat troops in Indochina, a U.S.-led war with China, and the use by the United States of nuclear weapons. Britain did not want to join a ground war and thought the commitments implied by United Action made such a possibility more likely. On April 13, after meeting with Eden, Dulles wrote Eisenhower that "the British are extremely fearful of becoming involved with ground forces in Indochina."⁴¹ In addition, Britain feared that United Action might be designed to launch an attack on China.⁴² While U.S. officials argued that China would stay out of an allied attack on Indochina, some British leaders feared that intervention in Vietnam would ultimately lead to a communist attack on the British homeland.⁴³ Churchill thought the intervention would be ineffective "and might well bring the world to the verge of a major war."⁴⁴ At the April 7 British cabinet meeting, Eden also expressed fear of a wider war.⁴⁵

British leaders also feared that any conflict might escalate and lead to nuclear war. While the United States may not actually have seriously considered using nuclear weapons against Vietnam, general U.S. policy left Britain with the impression that nuclear weapons might be under consideration especially if fighting in Indochina led to an all-out war. Dulles emphasized the general role of nuclear weapons (massive

⁴¹ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1323.

⁴² *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1232-33, 1311-13, 1316.

⁴³ Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 255.

⁴⁴ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 241. See also p. 244. See also Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 258; and Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 89.

⁴⁵ CAB 128/27, CC 26 (54) 4, April 7, 1954, microfilm, Lamont Library, Harvard University. See also Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," pp. 65-66 and p. 73.

retaliation) and thereby alarmed the British in a press conference on December 29, 1953, and in a major policy address on January 12, 1954. Ironically, Washington thought the idea of using nuclear weapons would cause its allies to stay the course.⁴⁶ According to one scholar, the United States favored the use of nuclear weapons if the PRC intervened in Indochina but would have needed Congressional approval and the cooperation of European allies.⁴⁷ One scholar later argued that British fears were unfounded: "In light of what we now know from Communist sources, it seems unlikely that either the Russians or the Chinese would have risked a world war for the sake of the Vietminh."⁴⁸

The nuclear angle raises an important question about alliance restraint: to what extent did U.S. officials internalize prior or anticipated British objections to the use of nuclear weapons and, as a result, refrain from even proposing the use of nuclear weapons? A clear answer to this question would contribute to studying how much restraint can occur even without a policy discussion and formal restraint attempt. Dulles knew that Britain feared that the United States would use nuclear weapons against China, but we do not know how much, if at all, this affected his decisionmaking regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁹ In early April, two U.S. officials discussed Adm. Radford's idea of using tactical nuclear weapons in Indochina. One objected on the grounds that French and British officials would oppose the use of nuclear weapons.⁵⁰

Alliance relations. British officials struggled with alliance relations with the United States and felt pressure to conform to U.S. policy. On the one hand, Britain

⁴⁶ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 151, 184-185.

⁴⁷ Divine, *Eisenhower and the cold war*, p. 51. See also Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 48-54.

⁴⁸ Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 74.

⁴⁹ Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 65.

⁵⁰ April 7, 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1270-1272. See also Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 159-160, 162, 186, 213, 215, 222, and 380n10.

deplored U.S. unilateralism on the possible use of nuclear weapons and restrictions on East-West trade. At home, the Labour opposition raised the issue of the U.S. style of decisionmaking. On April 5, for instance, John Strachey, a Labour member of the parliament, complained the United States often acted first and consulted later. Some British officials called the U.S. tendency "unilateral concerted action."⁵¹ On the other hand, British leaders feared straining the alliance with the United States as would likely occur if Britain refused to support United Action.⁵² Churchill was long known to favor particularly close relations with the United States.

Domestic Actors. At home, Britain would have had a hard time selling British involvement in the war in Indochina. Domestic opposition seemed to revolve around the idea of British ground forces fighting in Indochina. The British people were not in favor of suffering casualties to defend France's hold on Indochina. Evelyn Shuckburgh, Eden's private secretary, later wrote: "[A] war for Indo-China would be about as difficult a thing to put across the British public as you could find."⁵³ Shuckburgh asserted that Eden felt the British government would fall if it went along with the U.S. policy for intervention.⁵⁴ Dulles characterized Eden's position less drastically. He cabled the State Department that in his meetings with Eden, the Foreign Secretary told him "that there is a real problem of UK parliamentary and public opinion; [and] that any implied commitment for involvement in the Indochina war would be intensely unpopular."⁵⁵ Further evidence is needed to assess whether British officials were genuinely concerned about domestic

⁵¹ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 189.

⁵² Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 237-241.

⁵³ Evelyn Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez: Diaries, 1951-1956* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson., 1986), p. 172, as cited in Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 72. Shuckburgh was Eden's private secretary. See also Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 244 and 253.

⁵⁴ Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez*, p. 175, as cited in Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 74.

opposition or whether they felt this was an argument against supporting United Action that the United States would understand and accept.

Adversary. The fear that the Soviet Union might take advantage of a split between the Western allies was not a major factor in British decisionmaking. In fact, at different times both Britain and the United States tried to work *with* the Soviets during the Geneva talks. Shuckburgh was critical of Eden for straying from the American side at the Geneva talks; he felt Eden was trying to be a mediator rather than a loyal Western ally.⁵⁶

Dulles also tried to use the Soviets against Britain and France. At the start of the Geneva conference, Dulles asked Molotov if expanding the invitation list would allow the United States to circumvent the French objection to delegations from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; suggested that such delegations should receive U.S.-Soviet guidance; and recommended broader U.S.-Soviet thinking about the conference's outcome.⁵⁷ The last suggestion might have opened the door to an array of topics. Molotov offered no response of substance. Gardner claimed that Dulles was thinking if "he could get things straight with his main adversary, he could go about dealing with America's allies from a position of strength."⁵⁸ Moscow had its own agenda and wanted to use Geneva "to nudge the French into abandoning the EDC."⁵⁹ Later in the talks, Walter Bedell Smith, Undersecretary of State, reported that Moscow was trying to take advantage of "the deadlock in Western capitals."⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1320.

⁵⁶ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 274.

⁵⁷ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 256-257.

⁵⁸ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 256-257. On the details of Dulles's comments to Molotov, Gardner cited Louis L. Gerson, *John Foster Dulles* (New York: Cooper Square, 1967); and April 27, 1954 in John P. Glennon, editor in chief, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954: The Geneva Conference*, volume 16 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 570-580.

⁵⁹ Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 11.

⁶⁰ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 277.

Third-Party Allies. Britain also articulated a few secondary reasons for opposing United Action including Commonwealth opposition and other policy differences. The first lesser reason was opposition by several Commonwealth countries. In the spring of 1954, the Colombo powers (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and Indonesia) wanted a negotiated settlement and not a resurgence of Western colonialism in Asia. What these states wanted was important to Britain because these newly independent S. Asian states were former British colonies with close cultural and economic ties to Britain.⁶¹

Policy Differences. Although thus far I have focused on the importance of conflicting U.S.-British objectives in the region, Britain also took issue with specific aspects of United Action. First, if United Action was a cover for immediate intervention, Britain believed that it was too late for France – even multilateral intervention would not help.⁶² But this was not a major difference of opinion since some U.S. officials were also skeptical of the military value of immediate intervention. In late April, Dulles believed that immediate American air intervention was unlikely to save Dien Bien Phu.⁶³

Second, Britain argued that pressing China would not lead the PRC to yield on Indochina. China would not be deterred by a strong allied policy, short of using nuclear weapons.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Hess, "The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia," p. 281. See also Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 74. See also Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 241.

⁶² Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 219. See also Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 73. Not surprisingly, the French told the United States that immediate armed intervention could save Dien Bien Phu. (*FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1401.)

⁶³ *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1404.

⁶⁴ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 219. Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 250.

IV. Successful restraint: Why did British opposition doom United Action?

In early June, 1954, U.S. leaders finally accepted that Indochina would be partitioned into communist and non-communist parts, thus signaling the end of United Action and the effort to form a multilateral coalition to save all of Vietnam from communism.⁶⁵ Time and time again, British opposition to United Action blocked the U.S. proposal. According to Short, "[f]rom practically all the papers and studies that have been published on the subject of American intervention at Dienbienphu, one conclusion stands out: if Britain had agreed, the United States would have engaged in some form of intervention in Vietnam in the spring or summer of 1954."⁶⁶ How did British opposition prevent the implementation of United Action? Why was British restraint successful? Britain succeeded in stopping United Action because the split between the Eisenhower Administration and the U.S. Congress gave Britain veto power. If Congress had not called for British participation in United Action, Eisenhower could have chosen to proceed with United Action even in the face of London's opposition. The lack of unanimity among American policymakers gave Britain leverage.

The best explanation for successful restraint is rational restraint theory (capabilities, interests, communication). The Eisenhower administration felt strongly that an important interest was at stake in Indochina. But the intensity of interest needs to be weighed along with the degree of support, and in this case Congress did not support the administration. Instead, it stipulated that Washington could only act with London's support. This 'watered down' the U.S. interest and opened the door to British restraint;

⁶⁵ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 286-289.

⁶⁶ Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 247.

the Congressional stipulation prevented the United States from acting unilaterally as it might have based on its advantage in capabilities alone.

Three other explanations for Britain's success in restraining the United States are less convincing. The more powerful state, the United States, did not prevail. The United States did not acquiesce out of a normative sense of obligation to respect the dissenting view of an ally. Finally, domestic U.S. opinion may have played a role, but this was largely in the context of Congressional pressure.

At the close of this chapter, I consider one additional explanation based on issue linkage that is specific to this case (though an argument based on issue linkage could be applied more broadly). While further research is needed, I am skeptical of the idea that the United States did not act because it feared the effect going forward with United Action would have on other alliance issues such as the establishment of the European Defense Community, an issue then under consideration. I now turn to each explanation in detail.

Rational Restraint Theory. If Washington was more capable and the Eisenhower administration was very interested in saving Indochina, why did Britain prevail? I argue that the interest equation was complicated by two factors that led to British success in restraining the United States. First, Congressional policy in effect weakened the American interest in defending Indochina. Second, Britain's global concerns about averting WWII weighed heavily against the local (or regional) U.S. concerns in Indochina.

The stipulation resulting from the split in the United States between the Eisenhower administration and Congress is the key to explaining the success of British

restraint efforts. Because Congress told Eisenhower officials that they had to gain British participation to go forward with any form of intervention, including United Action, British opposition to United Action proved decisive.

Congress told Eisenhower of its concerns about getting drawn into Indochina, and Eisenhower did not want to proceed without Congressional support. The President met with Congressional leaders on February 8, 1954, and they expressed “adamant opposition” to a land war in Asia. This meeting was in response to the furor over the U.S. dispatch of mechanics to Vietnam.⁶⁷ He made a public statement on March 10 that there would be “no involvement of America in war unless it is a result of the constitutional process that is placed upon Congress to declare it.”⁶⁸ On March 25, he told the National Security Council (NSC) that Congress “would have to be in on any move by the United States to intervene in Indochina. It was simply academic to imagine otherwise.” At the same NSC meeting, Eisenhower set the stage for the infamous meeting on April 3 by suggesting that the Administration needed to explore what Congressional support could be anticipated in the event of intervention in Indochina.⁶⁹

On April 3, Congressional leaders told the administration to get allies on board before Eisenhower sought Congressional approval for U.S. military intervention. Dulles and Radford had hoped that Congress would move first and give Dulles support before he went to allies but that was not the case:

Neither Eisenhower nor Dulles differed fundamentally with the congressmen on the form intervention ought to take, but the conditions did tie their hands by virtually eliminating any possibility of unilateral intervention, an option that they had not entirely ruled out. The conditions weakened Dulles’s position with allied leaders by requiring the allies’ commitment prior to action by Congress, an order

⁶⁷ Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 26. Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 171 and 174.

⁶⁸ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 13, p. 1106.

⁶⁹ *FRUS*, 1952-1954, v. 13, p. 1165-1166.

the administration would have preferred to reverse. Most important, they made collective intervention dependent on British support and French concessions, each of which would be difficult to obtain.⁷⁰

This set the stage for the importance of the British reaction. Once Britain declared its opposition to United Action the plan was nearly doomed. Dulles did try to think about ways to finesse the issue – such as by getting British moral support or relying on Australia and New Zealand – but these too failed. Moreover, the alternatives may not have satisfied Congressional leaders bent on active British involvement.

Leaving aside Congressional issues, the United States was more interested in a local or direct sense in Indochina and felt much was at stake in economic and strategic terms. Britain, however, was very interested in ensuring the defense of Western Europe and avoiding WWII and in that sense both parties cared deeply about Indochina but for contrasting reasons. The British interest was not specific to Indochina but rather to any U.S. effort to escalate that could result in global thermonuclear war.

U.S. officials emphasized Indochina's strategic importance and portrayed Indochina as a vital area in the battle against communism. Indochina was not considered as important to the United States as several other areas in Asia including Japan and the Philippines.⁷¹ But the Eisenhower administration believed a pro-Western Southeast Asia was vital and the fight in Vietnam “would determine the future not only of Indochina but of the region.”⁷² This viewpoint was reflected in everything from public statements by

⁷⁰ Herring and Immerman, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” p. 353.

⁷¹ Marc S. Gallicchio, “The Best Defense Is a Good Offense: The Evolution of American Strategy in East Asia, 1953-1960,” in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye, *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp 63-85 at 65. Gallicchio cited Robert J. Watson, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, vol. 5: *The JCS and National Policy, 1953-1954* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1986).

⁷² Hess, “The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia,” p. 273. See also Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 52.

administration officials to secret findings of the National Security Council.⁷³ On March 10, 1954, a British embassy official reported home on the priority of Indochina in the United States: "It is *the* issue of the moment, outranking Germany, Middle East, Korea, and all other sore spots. So, when I say that Indo-China has top priority, I mean precisely that."⁷⁴ The United States also feared France would sell out Indochina and that the fall of Indochina would mean a shift of France into the neutralist camp.⁷⁵ Washington hoped to open up SE Asian markets for Japan, though France and Britain strongly rejected the idea that they should go to war to open up this market for Japan.⁷⁶ As one scholar later noted: "Neither the Truman nor the Eisenhower administration ever questioned the critical importance of French Indochina to the United States and the rest of the non-Communist world."⁷⁷

In contrast, Britain did not fear the loss of Indochina to communism. Britain was not interested, did not view the loss of Indochina as a strategic loss, and focused instead

⁷³ For instance, see NSC 5405 [John P. Glennon, editor in chief, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954: East Asia and the Pacific*, volume 12, part one of two (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 366-381, January 16, 1954]; extracts of 5405 are also in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 971ff. It was reaffirmed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 12, 1954 in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 16, p. 472ff. NSC 5405 was endorsed by Eisenhower on January 16, 1954 (Hess, p. 275). See also NSC-64 (US on Indochina), February 27, 1950; and NSC 124/2, January 25, 1952 (on the domino effect) in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 12, pp. 45-51. Eisenhower appealed to Churchill on behalf of United Action and on April 7 spoke about Indochina and the domino theory at a presidential press conference [*FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1280-1281 and 1203]. See also Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, pp. 54-55, and Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 117. Dulles used strong language in his March 29 speech where he unveiled United Action. See Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 61. Other cites on the importance of Indochina to the United States include *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, pp. 1108ff, 1146-1148, and 1160.

⁷⁴ Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 61.

⁷⁵ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 202-203; and Radford in Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 243.

⁷⁶ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 192-196. See also Burton I. Kaufman, "Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy with Respect to East Asia," in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye, *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 104-120 at 107.

⁷⁷ Richard H. Immerman, "Prologue: perceptions by the United States of Its Interests in Indochina," in Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, and Mark R. Rubin, *DIEN BIEN PHU and the Crisis of Franco-American Relations 1954-1955* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990), pp. 1-26 at 17.

on Malaysia instead.⁷⁸ In short, “[t]he British defined their Southeast Asian interests much more narrowly than the Americans and did not share the sense that Indochina was critical to the future of the region.”⁷⁹

As noted earlier in section three, however, Britain feared that too active a policy in Indochina could compromise the defense of Western Europe and even spark WWII. To the British, not only was Indochina not important for the defense of SE Asia, but it also threatened to undermine the central mission of the Western alliance, the protection of Western Europe from Soviet attack and conquest. While the United States – or at least the executive branch – was worried about losing Indochina to the communists, Britain emphasized the link to larger aims of the alliance. This is a second way in which the balance of interests between the United States and Britain was conducive to successful alliance restraint.

Power. The most powerful ally, the United States, did not get its way. A less powerful state, Britain, restrained a more powerful state.

Intra-Alliance Norms: Consultation and Consensus. A third possible explanation for U.S. restraint is that the United States felt bound to listen to and respect the objections of its ally, Britain, to the proposed U.S. policy, United Action. Washington abandoned United Action out of a commitment to procedural norms of consultation and consensus.

The evidence does not support this explanation. First, U.S. decisionmakers never attribute their policy decisions on United Action to such a normative commitment.

⁷⁸ Heinrichs, “Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation,” pp. 93-94. See also Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 159 and 245; and Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*, p. 141.

⁷⁹ Hess, “The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia,” p. 281. Warner (pp. 62-63, note 28) cited a British paper on policy in Indochina from the end of March 1954, an enclosure to COS (54) 97, March 29, 1954.

Second, much of the relationship is actually characterized by behavior which represents the opposite type of relations such as deception and misunderstanding. If norms of consensus and consultation prevailed, one would have expected the two sides to deal with each other on a level playing field for an informed alliance decision on the contested policy, United Action. Yet, Eden and Dulles had an acrimonious split over what they agreed to in London on April 11-13. Eden characterized the problem: "Americans may think the time past when they need consider the feelings or difficulties of their allies. It is the conviction that this tendency becomes more pronounced every week that is creating mounting difficulties for anyone in this country who wants to maintain close Anglo-American relations."⁸⁰ Later, Britain suspected the United States wanted use British support for United Action and the fight against communism in SE Asia as cover for U.S.-launched direct air intervention at Dien Bien Phu.⁸¹ Rather than a respectful relationship where the mere mention of an objection leads to the shelving of United Action, this British fear of U.S. deception suggests a wary (and typical) alliance relationship in which both sides suspect the other is trying its best to pursue its own interests.

Third, the United States tried to circumvent British objections and proceed with United Action, a clear sign it did not consider British objections as the final word on United Action. Dulles tried to set up United Action using Australia and New Zealand and ignoring Britain; on May 19, 1954 Eisenhower stated publicly that he might agree to send

⁸⁰ Eden telegram number 1696, April 19, 1954, FO 371/112053, PRO, as cited in Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 70. Warner also mentioned Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez: Diaries, 1951-1956*, p. 21.

⁸¹ Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," p. 256 (citing Eden and Churchill in CAB 129/68, PRO). See also Warner, "Britain and the Crisis over Dien Bien Phu," p. 73, also citing CAB documents: "The foreign secretary [Eden] made it clear that he believed that the proposal for a strike at Dien Bien Phu was a red herring and that the real objective would turn out to be China."

U.S. marines even without British involvement. Perhaps down the road Australia and New Zealand would lobby or compel Britain to join, but either way this suggests a desire to ignore and overcome Britain's opposition to United Action. As it turned out, Australia and New Zealand were not anxious to join and plan was never implemented.⁸² The United States tried to circumvent British objections in other ways too, such as Dulles's overture to the Soviet Union discussed above and a request for British moral support (only) for United Action.

U.S. Domestic opinion. Domestic opinion in the United States was not in favor of military intervention in Indochina. Though the outcome of this case is consistent with the wishes of the U.S. public, the Eisenhower administration tried its best to defy public opposition to intervention. To the extent that public views had some power, it was because Congressional views supported a similar outcome. Whether these Congressional views were, in turn, a reflection of public opinion is open to debate. In sum, though the outcome was consistent with public preferences, the process by which it was reached was not; there was little evidence that public opinion constrained the administration absent Congressional pressure.

Many Americans were against the use of ground troops, in large part because the Korean war had just ended.⁸³ The Eisenhower administration faced these issues with conflicting political mantras: no more Chinas, no more Koreas, cut defense spending.⁸⁴ The administration did not want to be blamed for a country falling under communist rule (no more Chinas), did not want U.S. forces to get bogged down in an Asian land war (no more Koreas), and did want to reduce U.S. military spending through greater reliance on

⁸² Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 273-274, 277-278.

⁸³ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, pp. 216 and 254.

local (non-U.S.) armed forces and nuclear weapons.⁸⁵ Thus when the United States abandoned United Action, one could argue that it was following public opinion.

Opinion polls detail much of the public opposition. As table 5.2 demonstrates, the American public was consistently opposed to sending U.S. ground forces to Indochina, and, with one exception, opposed to sending U.S. air and/or naval forces to Indochina. According to a poll in late March 1954, even if the communists were about to take over Indochina, 47% (a plurality) favored trying to arrange for an armistice and a peaceful settlement by negotiation rather than sending American soldiers and flyers to take part in the fighting there (9%) or sending the French more supplies (34%). These polling measures are not perfect since most polling asked about levels of involvement that were deeper than the initial plans the Eisenhower administration had for United Action. In other words, had the public been asked, opposition to an ad-hoc regional defense coalition may not have been as strong as opposition to the introduction of US forces in the air or on the ground.

Eisenhower and Dulles did not characterize their concern about getting Congressional support in terms of popular opinion. Instead, they focused on the comments of Congressional leaders. But public opinion may have been the foundation of the Congressional viewpoint that led to Congressional calls for allied participation in United Action. Many U.S. officials wanted to avoid bearing the brunt of United Action or any other intervention in Indochina as they felt the United States had done in the Korean conflict. Supplying the largest share of ground forces could very easily result in a high

⁸⁴ Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 16.

⁸⁵ On the latter point and Eisenhower's New Look strategy, see NSC 162/2, October 1953 in William Z. Slany, editor in chief, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, volume 2, part one of two (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 577-597.

number of casualties. When they talked about United Action, Eisenhower and Dulles tried to address the absence of popular support for another ground war by planning to get ground forces from another country. They may have hoped this would insulate the plan from public criticism.

Issue linkage. One additional possible explanation for successful British restraint is the linkage between United Action and other alliance issues. The United States did not proceed with United Action because it feared doing so would alienate its British allies and undermine U.S. policy for Europe itself (including the European Defense Community). I do not fully explore this alternative but note it here for future research. The main idea is that the United States needed Britain and France in Europe so it could not afford to press too hard on them in Asia: “[T]he importance of its allies to cold war strategy in Europe had limited American options in dealing with Asian nationalism.” In particular, Washington needed Paris for the European Defense Community (EDC).⁸⁶ Despite its shortcomings, “France seemed indispensable” for NATO, for the idea of a European Defense Community, and as the frontline against communism in Asia.⁸⁷ Creating the EDC was a “major goal” of the Eisenhower administration and this meant France had a stronger hand since it was the lone holdout.⁸⁸ At one NSC meeting prior to the definitive battle at Dien Bien Phu, Dulles spoke explicitly about the relationship between U.S. policy in Indochina and French support for the EDC.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, second ed., pp. 18-29, as cited by Hess, “The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia,” p. 276. See also Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Heinrichs, “Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation,” p. 93.

⁸⁸ Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, pp 7 and 22.

⁸⁹ February 26, 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1081. At one point, the United States also warned Britain: if Britain did not help in SE Asia, the United States might not help in other places (*FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, p. 1245).

One problem with this explanation is that it suggests the United States should have been more accommodating of French requests such as the two requests in April for immediate American military intervention. A second problem is that this explanation says more about what the United States might do vis a vis France and not Britain, but Britain was the main opponent to United Action. Wanting to get France to join the EDC is not necessarily relevant to compliance with British policy preferences.

V. Conclusion

This case again demonstrates that restraint attempts by allies are a part of international politics. In addition, the success of the British restraint effort in this case is best explained by rational restraint theory rather than an explanation based on power, domestic opinion, or intra-alliance norms.

One thing that is suggested by studying this case is how important the Eisenhower administration considered allies. Allies could be a nuisance but the United States could hardly do without them.

Eisenhower repeatedly comes back to the need for allies. Allies complicate matters but the United States need them for the cold war.⁹⁰ According to Eisenhower, “Without allies and associates the leader is just an adventurer like Ghengis Khan.”⁹¹ The New Look meant “much was required of diplomacy among friends.” Allies “formed the cold war lines, controlled strategic locations, and provided bases and the bulk of conventional forces. America’s free world alliances provided the sanction for use of

⁹⁰ Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 246.

force.”⁹² Earlier, when Dulles suggested re-thinking the U.S.-West European alliance, Eisenhower let it be known in Europe that he was amazed alliance members would think he would desert them.⁹³ In Asia, Eisenhower assumed one had to act with allies.⁹⁴

Dulles was aware of the danger of alliance disunity but disliked having to cave in for the sake of alliance unity: “The happiest day in his life will be when we don’t have to modify our policies etc. to keep up a façade of unity.”⁹⁵ Still, Heinrichs concluded that the Indochina policy discussions “severely strained [U.S.] relations with the principal allies.”⁹⁶

The focus of the empirical chapters thus far has been on explaining the success and failure of attempted restraint. In the next section, I turn to the theory and history of alliance restraint as a motivation for alliance formation.

⁹¹ April 29, 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, v. 13, part 2, pp. 1431-1445, as cited in Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 258.

⁹² Heinrichs, “Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation,” p. 87.

⁹³ Ambrose, pp. 49-50 as cited in Billings-Yun, *Decision against war*, p. 43.

⁹⁴ Divine, *Eisenhower and the cold war*, p. 28 (to Sherman Adams, assistant to the President), p. 43 (to Gen. Alfred Gruenther, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe), and p. 51 (to Robert Cutler, special assistant to the President for National Security Affairs).

⁹⁵ “Telephone call to Amb. Lodge,” June 25, 1954, Dulles Papers, as cited in Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, p. 301. See also p. 288-289 on the danger of disunity.

⁹⁶ Heinrichs, “Eisenhower and Sino-American Confrontation,” p. 98.

Table 5.1: Types of Intervention in Indochina/SE Asia, 1954

1. Immediate aerial/naval intervention to save Dien Bien Phu
 - a. unilateral U.S. intervention (Operation Vulture)
 - b. multilateral intervention and thus one possible definition of United Action (as the means to implement immediate intervention to save Dien Bien Phu)
2. United Action – a multilateral coalition to
 - a. see #1b above
 - b. support France in the war in Indochina (and influence France to stay in war rather than negotiate its way out of the war at the Geneva Conference)
 - c. fight on in Indochina in the event of French withdrawal or defeat
 - d. deter China from supporting the Vietminh
3. a regional defense grouping to defend SE Asia against communism

Table 5.2: 1954 Indochina Polling in the United States

Consistent opposition to sending US ground forces to Indochina

	No – Yes – Don't Know/No Opinion		
Feb 25-March 2	82 – 11 – 8	(Gallup)	The United States is now sending war materials to help the French fight the communists in Indo-China. Would you approve or disapprove of sending U.S. soldiers to take part in the fighting there?
April 1954	49 ¹ – 40 – 8 ² – 3 ³	(NORC) ⁴	Would you also favor sending American troops to Indo-China (if it looks like the communists might take over all of Indo-China)? [Asked of 61% who said 'yes' to: If it looks like the communists might take over all of Indo-China, do you think our own air force should take part in the fighting?]
May 2-7	68 – 22 – 10	(Gallup)	same wording as Feb 25-March 2
May 21-26	73 – 20 – 8	(Gallup)	same wording as Feb 25-March 2
June 12-17	72 – 18 – 10	(Gallup)	same wording as Feb 25-March 2

¹ Includes those who favor sending air forces but not ground troops (18%) *and* those who oppose the introduction of both U.S. air and ground forces (31%).

² Those respondents who offered no opinion on the first question (If it looks like the communists might take over all of Indo-China, do you think our own air force should take part in the fighting?) were not asked about the introduction of ground forces.

³ In favor of sending air force, don't know about sending ground forces.

⁴ National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Opposition to sending US air and/or naval forces to Indochina (one exception)

No – Yes – Don't Know/No Opinion

March 19-24	no > yes	(Gallup)	see next section of this document, question one.
April 1954	31 – 61 – 8	(NORC)	If it looks like the communists might take over all of Indo-China, do you think our own air force should take part in the fighting?
May 2-7	52 – 36 – 12	(Gallup)	Would you approve or disapprove of our sending air and naval forces, but not ground forces, to help the French (fight the Communists in Indochina)?
May 21-26	55 – 33 – 11	(Gallup)	same wording as May 2-7
June 12-17	55 – 33 – 12	(Gallup)	same wording as May 2-7

Other Questions of Interest

Suppose things go so bad in Indo-China it looked as if the communists were going to beat the French and take over all of Indo-China. Which one of these things do you think the United States ought to do? (Gallup, March 19-24, 1954)

1. Send American soldiers and flyers to take part in the fighting there. (9%)
 2. Send the French more supplies than we do now--but no soldiers or flyers. (34%)
 3. Try to arrange for an armistice and a peaceful settlement by negotiation. (47%)
- No opinion - 10%

What do you regard as the biggest issue, or problem, facing the United States Government today? (Gallup, May 2-7, 1954)

- Maintaining world peace, U.S.-Soviet relationships - 24%
Indochina - 18
Communists in U.S. - 16
Unemployment, economic conditions - 14
Foreign policy - 7
(followed by seven other issues + miscellaneous at 8% + don't know at 9%)

Do you think our government should do anything more to keep the communists from taking over the rest of Indochina? (NORC, June 1954)

- Yes - 52%
No - 31
Don't know - 17

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way our government has handled the Indochina problem? (NORC, June 1954)

- Approve - 52%
Disapprove - 21
Don't know - 27

Do you approve or disapprove what the (Eisenhower) administration has done about the Indo-China situation? (Opinion Research Corporation, July 1954)

- Approve - 39%
Disapprove - 25
No opinion - 36

- Favor "signing an agreement for the defense of Southeast Asia along with such countries as the Philippines, Siam and Australia." - 60%
-- Favor collective military action to "keep the Communists from taking over all of Indochina" - 69%
-- Favor US military action "if other countries are not willing to join us." - 21%⁵

⁵ H. Schuyler Foster, *Activism Replaces Isolationism: U.S. Public Attitudes 1940-1975* (Washington DC: Foxhall Press, 1983), p. 136. The original source may be the American Opinion Report (State Department internal publication) for June 1954 or NORC poll #353. See the placement of Foster's footnote 15.

Chapter Six

Alliance Formation and Restraint

I. Introduction

Some states form alliances in order to restrain other states. In this chapter, I consider six alliances where alliance restraint and balance of threat theory each purport to explain the formation of a military alliance. I find that in four cases, the alliance restraint explanation is more persuasive; in the fifth and sixth cases the restraint element still played an important, albeit secondary, role.¹ (see table 6.1)

However, this does not mean that balance of threat theory is irrelevant in the four cases where restraint was the primary motivation for the origin of the alliance. In fact, threats often works in tandem with alliance restraint. In a triangular sense I explain below, the existence of a threat sets the stage for one ally to pursue provocative policies that scare its soon-to-be ally into forming a restraining alliance.

The importance of these cases goes beyond alliance restraint and its role in alliance formation. Alliance restraint should be considered along with other possible explanations when scholars study the origin of an alliance or list the theoretically plausible explanations. But these cases also suggest a broader point: the sole emphasis on the external orientation of understanding alliance formation needs to be modified. There is little doubt that many alliances are primarily about affecting the decisionmaking and behavior of those countries external to the alliance. An alliance formed in response to an external threat is an obvious case in point. Some alliances, however, are formed to

¹ As I noted in chapter two, these two explanations, threat and restraint, are just two of several possibilities for explaining the origin of alliances. In some of the cases in this chapter, some of the other explanations are also important. But in all but one of the six cases, restraint is as important or more important an explanation than a threat-based explanation. In the NATO case, the Soviet threat was probably greater than the desire to restrain Germany.

modify the behavior of someone within the alliance itself more so than any external party. If deterring a party external to the alliance is the cause of some alliances, controlling an ally through restraint or other mechanisms is the cause of many others. Schroeder emphasized the importance of control and policy modification inside the alliance in his seminal article in 1976; by focusing on cases of alliance restraint, this dissertation seconds his more general claims about the role of control in understanding alliances.²

In the next section, I explain further the categories of internal and external motivations for alliance formation. This is followed by the presentation of a triangular model of restraint and alliance formation in section two. In sections three through eight, I analyze historical cases where restraint was a major factor in the decision to form the alliance. The final section summarizes the results of this chapter.

II. Internal and External Motivations for Alliance Formation

What do I mean by internal and external explanations for the origin of alliances? By external motivations – the conventional framework – I mean an alliance formed in response to the policies of a state(s) outside the alliance, an adversary. Waltz's balance of power theory and Walt's balance of threat theory are the two most common examples of

² Paul W. Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 227-263. See also Patricia A. Weitsman, "Intimate Enemies: The Politics of Peacetime Alliances," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1, autumn 1997, pp. 156-192. Wallander agreed: "Although ostensibly motivated by common defense against external threats, alliances have often been motivated at least as much by security management among members as by collective defense concerns." Celeste A. Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War," *International Organization* 54, no. 4, autumn 2000, pp. 705-735 at 711.

explanations for alliance formation based on external factors.³ States A and B ally to balance against the power, threat, or some other aspect of state C.

By internal motivations, I mean an alliance formed as a result of the policies of state(s) who becomes a member of the very same alliance. This includes several different categories: bandwagoning (where a weaker state feels threatened by a stronger state so it allies with the stronger state), tethering (where “states [of roughly equal power] ally with states posing symmetrical threats”), and restraint.⁴ If state A and state B form an alliance, state A did so as a result of some policy of state B, not a third, external state such as state C.⁵

What evidence would support threat-based and alliance restraint explanations in each case? A threat-based explanation for the formation of alliances (“states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat”⁶) is more convincing if the ally would not have been expected to defend its new ally prior to the formation of the alliance; the threat increased just prior to the formation of the alliance; and policymakers privately explained their reasoning in terms of threats. If the ally would have been expected to defend its new partner anyway, the threat did not change or decreased prior to formation, and policymakers say little in private about a threat, the threat-based explanation is weak.

An alliance restraint explanation for the formation of alliances (a state forms an alliance so as to restrain its new ally) is more convincing if the soon-to-be alliance partner was acting provocatively and aggressively; the restraining ally wanted to avoid

³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, and Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

⁴ On tethering, see Weitsman, “Intimate Enemies,” pp. 156-192.

⁵ State A and state B may both act for internal reasons, external reasons, or a mixture of the two.

⁶ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 21.

being drawn into a war; policymakers privately explained their reasoning in terms of restraint; and the text of the agreements include clauses that serve to restrain the policies of one or both parties (this last point is an uncertain prediction). The absence of these signals weakens the case for an alliance restraint explanation.

In the cases in this chapter, I have evidence to confirm or reject most points listed for the threat and restraint explanations. If one finds evidence that one party to the alliance (state A) joined so as to restrain the other state (state B), this does not pre-determine the motivation of the second state (B) for joining the alliance. One side may be motivated by restraint (A) while the other (B) joins the alliance to balance against an external threat. Let me now turn to how restraint often relates to the genesis of alliances and the linkage between restraint and threats.

III. Triangular Restraint and Formation

Most of the empirical cases in this chapter are examples of a triangular relationship between three states and involve both restraint and external threat. The rest of this section describes this model.

Alliance formation and restraint often involves a triangular relationship between two soon-to-be allies and a third hostile state. The first two states are more closely aligned, though not formally allied (states A and B). The third state is their mutual adversary (state C). Even before consummating a formal alliance, state A is already likely to come to state B's defense against C because it fears how strong C would become if it swallowed up B, states A and B have some cultural or historical ties, they share common

interests, or recent policies and statements have created certain expectations about future pairings or groupings.⁷ State A forms a formal alliance with State B ostensibly against C not because of any new threat by State C, but rather because it fears that its ally (B) will act recklessly, provoke C, and drag A needlessly into a war of state A and B against state C.

Either member of the alliance, state A or state B, could be the primary actor pushing for the A-B alliance. State B may act provocatively toward state C with the intent of drawing state A into an alliance. Alternatively, state A may judge some policy of state B as potentially provocative and war-promoting even if state B did not intend it to be so and/or did not intend to draw state A into an alliance.

The five cases of alliances that follow this pattern are Germany-Austria in 1879 (adversary: Russia); Britain-Japan in 1902 (Russia); United States-South Korea in 1953 (N. Korea); United States-Taiwan in 1954 (People's Republic of China); and Egypt-Syria in 1964 and 1966 (Israel). For instance, Germany and Austria (1879) saw Russia as the enemy; Germany would have had to defend Austria even if they were not formally allied. But Germany decided the alliance would allow it to prevent Austria from provoking Russia and causing a war in which Germany could hardly stand aside.

IV. Germany-Austria (1879)

While Germany's primary motive for allying with Austria was to preclude it from allying with another state, an additional important motive was to prevent war between

⁷ This not meant to be an exhaustive list. Also, in theory, state C might only be an adversary of one of the first two states, either state A or state B.

Austria and Russia by influencing Austrian policy decisions. After Russo-German relations worsened in the latter half of the 1870s, Germany became more interested in an alliance with Austria. Austria had been interested in such a pairing for much of the decade.⁸ The actual Russian threat to Germany probably played a lesser role in the formation of the alliance because Germany both felt Russia was unlikely to attack and felt that Germany would have to come to Austria's aid even without the treaty. In an indirect sense, however, the adversarial nature of the Austro-Russian relationship meant that Germany feared *Austria* might provoke the Russians and drag Germany into a war against Moscow; the hostile state of Austro-Russian relations set the stage for restraint as an explanation for the German interest in an alliance with Austria.

Understanding what led to the Austro-German alliance is significant given the long-term importance of this alliance. According to one scholar, the treaty "is perhaps the most important of all the treaties negotiated by Bismarck and it remained the corner-stone of German foreign policy till 1918."⁹ Langer called the alliance the "kernel of the whole Bismarckian system....All other arrangements centred [sic] about it."¹⁰ Taylor guessed that "[p]robably even Bismarck did not fully realize the decisive nature of the step that he had taken."¹¹ By calling for a long-term rather than ad-hoc alliance, the treaty marked a significant shift in German (and really European) foreign policy. With the 1879 pact, Bismarck ended Germany's role as an honest broker un-tied to any one state until the last moment. Furthermore, the agreement helped set in place the European alignments over

⁸ My discussion of the Austro-German alliance was greatly informed by Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 84-101, 133-135.

⁹ Nicholas Mansergh, *The Coming of the First World War: A Study in the European Balance 1878-1914* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1949), p. 26.

¹⁰ William L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*, second edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 196.

¹¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 264.

the next three plus decades leading to World War One. By joining together Austria and Germany and antagonizing Russia (as St. Petersburg saw it), the alliance was an important step along the way to defining the two sides for future European political competition and war.

Austria and Germany signed the treaty on October 7, 1879. It had two key clauses. First, each party pledged to come to the other's aid in the event of a Russian attack. Second, both parties agreed to benevolent neutrality if attacked by any party other than Russia. In other words, Germany would not join a third state in attacking Austria, and Austria would not join a third state in attacking Germany.

The primary German motive for the alliance was preclusive: prevent Austria from allying elsewhere. According to Snyder, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck thought the alliance would preclude a Russo-French-Austrian alliance against Germany and would draw in England as "silent partner" given shared Anglo-Austrian interests in the near east.¹² "I wanted to dig a ditch between her [Austria] and the western powers," Bismarck noted.¹³ Bismarck moved to cement the alliance with Count Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, before Andrassy was replaced by Austrian officials who Bismarck expected to be less sympathetic to an alliance with Germany. Bismarck sought to act before leadership preferences moved Austria toward a rival state; he did not want Austria "drifting into the arms of France."¹⁴

In addition, Germany may not have needed the alliance to mitigate the Russia threat directly. Germany would have been expected to defend Austria with or without the

¹² Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 87-88, 90.

¹³ Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 263.

¹⁴ Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, pp. 178-179, 180. See also Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 267; and Raymond James Sontag, *European Diplomatic History 1871-1932* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1933), p. 19.

formal alliance, according to Bismarck.¹⁵ Furthermore, according to Snyder, Germany did not need an alliance with Austria to meet the Russian threat; there was “little objective likelihood of an attack by Russia [on Germany], and Germany could plausibly defend itself against such an attack without Austrian assistance.”¹⁶ Germany would only have needed Austrian help for opposing a joint Russo-French attack on Germany, but good German-French relations in 1879 meant that such a combination was unlikely. Moreover, the German military felt it was superior to the Russian armed forces. Busy at home with nihilists and terrorists, Russia “was quite clearly unprepared to embark upon another war.”¹⁷ One historian claims that Bismarck only highlighted the Russian threat to Germany to convince the reluctant German emperor, William I, to support the Austro-German alliance.¹⁸

Even if Germany did fear Russia, Russia offered Germany an alliance that would have dealt with Russian-German hostility. In late September 1879, Bismarck rebuffed Russian feelers for an alliance that included Russian respect for Austria-Hungary and a Russian pledge to stay neutral in a Franco-German war. From this episode, Taylor deduced Germany’s true motives: “If Bismarck had really feared Russia, this offer gave him everything he wanted. But Bismarck’s real anxiety was the Austro-Hungarian desire

¹⁵ Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 88, 90, 91.

¹⁶ Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 89. See also Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 265. The Russian threat cannot be wholly dismissed, however. See Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, pp. 180 and 184.

¹⁷ Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 176. Taylor downplayed the possibility of a Franco-Russian (made more likely by Austro-German alliance), Russo-Austrian (not “remotely possible”), or Franco-Austrian (“hardly worth making an alliance in order to avoid this) alliance against Germany. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 261. See also Sontag, *European Diplomatic History 1871-1932*, p. 20-21.

¹⁸ Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, pp. 259-260.

to follow a 'western' policy, and Russian aggressiveness was his excuse, not his motive."¹⁹

If the threat from Russia was not a major factor in German decisionmaking, why else besides preclusion did Germany seek an alliance with Austria? A second reason that Germany was interested in the treaty was that the alliance would allow Germany to restrain Austria and prevent a needless (Austrian) drive to war with Russia. Germany wanted "to exert some control over Austrian policy and hence to forward one of Bismarck's primary aims: to prevent the outbreak of war between Russia and Austria."²⁰ In every alliance, "there was a horse and a rider, and he [Bismarck] did not wish Germany to be the horse."²¹ By allying with Austria, Germany could rein in Austria and stop policies that might provoke Russia and lead to war. Bismarck's "real fear," wrote A.J.P. Taylor, "was of Austro-Hungarian restlessness, not of Russia aggression."²²

The idea of an Austro-German alliance contrasted favorably in Bismarck's eyes with the possibility of a Russo-German alliance. In the latter case, Bismarck feared, Russia would have the upper hand. In an alliance, Russia would be able to dictate the direction of the alliance's policies, and this might lead to German entanglement in peripheral issues such as Russia's Balkan policies.²³ If Germany allied with Russia and then opposed an alliance policy, "the Tsar could enforce submission by threatening to join forces with France." Austria had no similar alternative ally. Also, "Russian policy was restless and aggressive...A Russo-German alliance would embroil Germany in every

¹⁹ Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 266.

²⁰ Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 91. According to Langer, Bismarck "argued that Austria, as the weaker of the allied powers, could be led by Germany." (*European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 196)

²¹ Sontag, *European Diplomatic History 1871-1932*, p. 19.

²² Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 259.

²³ Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 196.

Russian quarrel.” Austria, in contrast, was a “satiated state...her friendship need not involve dangerous obligations”²⁴

In signing a treaty with Austria, Germany faced a common challenge: how to form a restraining alliance without empowering its new partner so the partner feels free to be even more aggressive. The agreement needed by one state (e.g. Germany) to gain some restraining influence, a treaty, may also give the other ally (e.g. Austria) more of a security cushion and thus more of an incentive for aggressive behavior.²⁵ In this case, for instance, increasing Austrian security through the alliance could have made Austria “less accommodating in confrontations with Russia.”²⁶ “Once he [Bismarck] had given Austria-Hungary a guarantee of existence, he was always in danger of being drawn into her quarrels,” Taylor noted.²⁷ Austrian leaders, who had favored an alliance with Germany to get support against Russia in the disputed Balkans, could have decided to propose or pursue more militant policies now that Austria had a treaty guarantee of German support in an Austro-Russian war (or at least such a war that Austria could paint as a defensive one against overbearing Russia). As noted below, Britain faced a similar balancing act in its 1902 alliance with Japan, as did the United States with South Korea in 1953.

²⁴ Sontag, *European Diplomatic History 1871-1932*, p. 20.

²⁵ This an example of moral hazard: insurance against risk may result in more risky behavior.

²⁶ Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 91. See also Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 263.

²⁷ Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, p. 263.

V. Britain-Japan (1902)

Britain formed an alliance with Japan in 1902 both to counter the Russian threat and to restrain Japan. In terms of the Russian threat, Britain was concerned by Russia in general, Russo-French naval gains, the Russian penetration of China, and the possibility of a Russo-Japanese agreement that might further strengthen the Russian position in East Asia. British leaders believed the Russian threat to Britain was real. At the same time, London did not want Japan to confront Russia and drag England into a war Britain opposed and could not afford. Britain wanted to control Japanese policy such that Japan neither appeased nor provoked Russia. Within two years, however, a convergence of Anglo-French thinking made British restraint of Japan less crucial; Russia and Japan could (and did) fight without Britain needing to join the battle.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance was signed on January 30, 1902. Britain agreed to stay neutral in a Japanese-Russian war.²⁸ Britain also agreed to support Japan if France joined on the Russian side of the war. The treaty was signed at a time when Britain was looking to decrease its foreign commitments, end conflict where possible, and rely more on alliances and burden-sharing. The British empire was costly, and the British public was unwilling to consider further taxation or reduced social welfare spending at home in order to prop up the empire. The Anglo-Japanese alliance provoked a Russo-French counter-agreement on March 17, 1902.²⁹

²⁸ But some claim Britain would have intervened if Russia was crushing Japan in a war, even if France stood aside. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 355.

²⁹ The date is variously given as March 16, 17, 19. See Amos S. Hershey, *The International Law and Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1906), pp. 28-29; Alfred L. P. Dennis, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Publications, 1923), p. 8; and Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 270.

Threat. Russia threatened Britain in several ways, as British leaders saw it. First, for both military and economic reasons, Britain wanted to limit Russia's involvement in China. China was big prize for all the imperial powers, and they repeatedly sought to slow or block each other's access. Second, Britain saw that its long naval superiority was under threat in the far east from Russo-French naval increases. Lastly, Britain wanted to avoid a Japanese rapprochement with Russia that might further bolster Russian power in the region.³⁰ Britain believed Japan had the option of settling with Russia rather than allying with Britain, even though this was not a viable option for Japan because Russia made "exorbitant" demands.³¹

While Britain considered three policies to deal with these problems, only one was successful. Britain's attempts to negotiate an understanding with Russia (1898) or a treaty with Germany (1898, 1901) all ended without an agreement.³² Only the third option, an alliance with Japan, was successful.

At least one British leader figured that since England would have to defend Japan anyway, London may as well form an alliance and get some concessions from the

³⁰ On British concern about Russian advances in China, see Zara S. Steiner, "Great Britain and the Creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," *The Journal of Modern History* 31, no. 1, March 1959, pp. 27-36 at 36. On the Russo-French naval threat, see Ian H. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907* (London: The Athlone Press, 1966), p. 174-175 and 183-184; David Steeds, "Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1902-23: a Marriage of Convenience," in Nish and Yoichi Kibata with assistance from Tadashi Kuramatsu, *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Volume 1: The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 201; and Steiner, "Great Britain and the Creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," pp. 29-30. On the British desire to prevent a Russo-Japanese understanding, see Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 139 and 270; Dennis, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 5; and Steeds in Nish and Kibata, p. 202.

³¹ Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 149; Steeds in Nish and Kibata, pp. 199, 203. Hershey gives details of the failed Russo-Japanese negotiations over a settlement in the Far East. See Hershey, *The International Law and Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 55-61.

³² See Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 270 and 272; Steeds in Nish and Kibata, 201; Dennis, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 17; Steiner, "Great Britain and the Creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance;" Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp. 181, 205, 207, 232; and J. A. S. Grenville, "Lansdowne's Abortive Project of 12 March 1901 for A Secret Agreement with Germany," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, November 1954, pp. 201-213.

Japanese. Lord Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary, described his logic: "The question, he added, was whether Britain should allow Japan to be wiped out by France and Russia in certain given circumstances: 'If the answer is "no," may we not as well tell her so beforehand and get what we can out of the bargain?'"³³

Restraint. Restraint was also a major British motivation for the treaty. By allying with Japan, Britain hoped, Japan would feel more secure and less likely to drag Britain into a war with Russia or Russia and France. In a dispatch to Claude MacDonald [British Minister at Tokyo], January 30, 1902, Lansdowne explained the signing of treaty. Britain "had been largely influenced in their decision to enter into this important contract by the conviction that it contains no provisions which can be regarded as an indication of aggressive or self-seeking tendencies in the regions to which it applies. It has been concluded purely as a measure of precaution..." He further hoped the treaty would "make for the preservation of peace."³⁴ On May 9, 1902, a British permanent under-secretary, situating restraint within the larger British effort to control Japanese policy, said the agreement was signed to avoid a Japanese effort either to "go for the Russians" or to "lose heart and give way."³⁵ Whereas prior to the treaty Britain had been concerned that a Russo-Japanese agreement would strengthen the Russians at Britain's expense, London welcomed the Russo-Japanese understanding on Manchuria in April 1902, just a few months after the signing of the Anglo-Japanese treaty. The understanding called for a reduction of Russian forces in Manchuria (in China) and meant that Russo-Japanese

³³ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 205.

³⁴ The dispatch is reproduced in K. Asakawa, *The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), pp. 206-207

³⁵ The letter appears in Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 240.

conflict over the Manchuria issue, a conflict that might drag Britain into the battle, was less likely.

The handling of Korea in the Anglo-Japanese treaty provides mixed support for the idea of restraint. Japan's interest in Korea was one issue that could have dragged Britain into an unwanted conflict, and thus both parties were concerned with how the Anglo-Japanese treaty dealt with Korea. On the one hand, the treaty recognized Korea's independence and both parties "declared themselves to be entirely uninfluenced by any aggressive tendencies in either country [China or Korea]." This fit with Britain's desire not be drawn into a war over Korea. On the other hand, the treaty recognized that Japan was "interested in a peculiar degree" in Korea and could safeguard those interests if they were threatened by the aggressive action of another state. This meant that Britain would have been expected to come to Japan's aid in a war over Korea if one or more states joined Korea in the fight against Japan.³⁶

Just two years after the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Japan went to war with Russia. Did the outbreak of war demonstrate that British restraint of Japan had failed? Possibly but another interpretation is that London may no longer have felt the need to restrain Japan in order to achieve its goal of not being drawn into an Asian war. In 1904 – unlike 1902 – Britain and France had both come to the realization that not only did they each not want to be drawn into a war in the Far East but also that the other had no interest in such a war either. If codified, this shared Anglo-French interest in war avoidance meant that neither would have to go to the aid of Russia or Japan; the Anglo-Japanese and Franco-Russian treaties were worded such that London and Paris only had to join the war if a second state intervened on Russia or Japan's behalf. In 1902, restraint of Japan was the

³⁶ The text of the treaty appears in Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp. 216-217.

British mechanism for avoiding being drawn into Russo-Japanese war. In 1904, an implicit (made explicit in late 1904) agreement with France was the mechanism for avoiding being drawn into war based on the phrasing of the Anglo-Japanese treaty

VI. United States-South Korea (1953)

After nearly three years of fighting, the Korean armistice talks had reached a crucial stage by mid-1953. U.S. officials correctly believed a final agreement with the communist forces was within reach, but they worried about threats by the Republic of Korea (South Korea or the ROK) to take military and political steps to undermine and block an agreement. In the end, the United States formed a bilateral alliance with the Republic of Korea in order to restrain Seoul from pursuing military policies that would undermine the armistice talks.³⁷ The defense pact was not the only U.S. concession to restrain the ROK from unilateral military action, but it was one of the most important and had significant long-term importance.

The nature of restraint in this case is slightly different from that in many other cases of restraint and alliance formation. In most cases, the restrainer sets up the alliance in response to a general concern about provocative policies or the potential for such policies by the restrainee. The formation of the alliance sets up a mechanism (the alliance) by which the restrainer hopes to rein in the restrainee in the future, if necessary. In the case of the ROK and the United States, the United States offered the alliance in response to a specific set of ROK policies intended to disrupt the armistice talks that the

³⁷ The United States and the ROK were already multilateral allies under the United Nations Command (UNC), but the bilateral security pact proposed a stronger alliance bond. For instance, the bilateral pact would be an open-ended commitment rather than linked to a particular conflict.

United States hoped would succeed. The formation of an alliance was an explicit quid pro quo offered by the United States to get the ROK to drop specific policies.³⁸

South Korea wanted an alliance in exchange for not scuttling the armistice talks. On April 3, 1953, Pyun Yung Tai, the Foreign Minister, told the United States that the ROK wanted a pact in exchange for supporting the armistice. On April 14, U.S. representatives in South Korea suggested to Washington that the United States offer an alliance to placate Korea, but Dulles and Eisenhower wanted to avoid a pact.³⁹ Later in the summer, on June 23, the alliance remained one of four ROK conditions for accepting the armistice.⁴⁰

The United States and the ROK moved through three stages starting with the U.S. unwillingness to sign an alliance. This shifted to a second stage in which Washington accepted the idea of an agreement, but the two sides disagreed about the timing of the negotiations and implementation. In the third and final stage, the United States consented to South Korea's timetable for accepting an alliance prior to the conclusion of the armistice. The United States, the dominant member of the UNC, first tried to gain ROK cooperation on armistice issues without offering a security pact, but this failed to sway President Syngman Rhee and other leaders.⁴¹ Thus, on May 30, 1953, top U.S. officials

³⁸ A further twist is that South Korea then pushed the United States for a broad treaty that would allow for a wide range of military steps in the face of communist aggression. In early August 1953, Dulles successfully opposed these pressures and blocked Rhee's efforts for a tighter U.S. commitment in the wording of the treaty. Thus a treaty signed in order to restrain an ally (ROK) had to be worded in such a way so as to avoid giving that more aggressive ally (ROK) the freedom to pursue additional provocative and aggressive military policies. On Rhee's efforts and Dulles's resistance, see Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 55. Also, as noted below, the U.S. Congress added an understanding to the treaty on the limitations of U.S. support for South Korea.

³⁹ Yong-Pyo Hong, *State Security and Regime Security* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 42, 45.

⁴⁰ Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, pp. 52-53.

⁴¹ The U.S. position was sent from Washington to U.S. officials in Korea on May 22, 1953; they presented the U.S. position, including U.S. reluctance to sign a bilateral security pact, to Rhee on May 25. The Korean president promptly rejected it. See Edward C. Keefer, editor, *Foreign Relations of the United States*

accepted that they would have to offer a pact and did so on June 6. But the two sides were still split about the timing: Eisenhower offered to formulate the pact after the armistice was signed while Rhee demanded an agreement prior to the signing of the armistice.⁴²

The shift in U.S. policy toward offering a security pact came as a result of ROK policy – its demand for a security pact and threats to undermine the move for an armistice – rather than as a result of any change in the threat posed by communist forces. In fact, the offer came at a time when communist and UNC negotiators had nearly agreed upon an armistice deal as they moved toward the de-escalation of the conflict. Dulles summarized the U.S. shift that resulted from South Korean pressure: “But to get an armistice took great sacrifices on our part... We did not promise... to give a security pact because we wanted to. The South Koreans have always wanted one and we have refused until now,...”⁴³

Why did South Korea want a security pact? ROK leaders saw a pact as the second-best choice after true unification of the peninsula under ROK rule. First, if the ROK was going to have to accept a non-unified Korea, it needed some assurance on its post-armistice security; a US-ROK alliance would provide such security. Second, Rhee had long pledged to the Korean public that he would oppose an armistice that lacked unification under his rule. Thus, for domestic political reasons, he needed a face-saving

1952-1954 (*Korea*), vol. 15 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 1086-1090 and 1097-1098. (hereinafter FRUS 1952-1954)

⁴² See “Letter from U.S. President Eisenhower to Korean President Rhee on Proposed Armistice, June 9, 1953,” in Se-Jin Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations 1943-1976* (Seoul, Korea: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), pp. 151-153; and Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, pp. 46-47.

⁴³ July 31, 1953 as quoted in Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 40. All but the last ellipse appear in Hong’s version of Dulles’s comment. See also Fred Greene, *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1968), pp. 77-78.

formula to cover his apparent retreat from that position. A defense pact would provide that cover.⁴⁴

The ROK had a number of military options if it wanted to scuttle the armistice talks. Rhee repeatedly threatened to go it alone and fight the communists without US or UNC support (a 'march north'); to withdraw the ROK forces from the UN command; and to prematurely release North Korean prisoners. Koreans rallied in support.⁴⁵ Rhee may have made these threats assuming that the United States would have to back him up, though U.S. officials did consider a withdrawal from Korea as noted below. As one U.S. official characterized it, the ROK could disrupt the UNC and the armistice talks by independently attacking the Communists, refusing UNC orders, or taking hostile action toward the UNC forces.⁴⁶

Even as the United States and the ROK were talking about a deal, Rhee took provocative steps. On June 7, 1953, Rhee issued "extraordinary security measures," recalled South Korean officers from U.S. training schools, and increased propaganda favoring a unilateral military move.⁴⁷ More dramatically, on June 17-18, Rhee ordered the release of thousands of North Korean prisoners of war (POWs). POWs and repatriation procedures had been a central point of contention in the armistice talks, so the release was a major challenge to the communist side and could have greatly damaged

⁴⁴ Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, pp. 43-44, 46, 47, 52, 57. The South Korean public supported Rhee's policy of opposing an armistice and getting a U.S. security commitment. (58)

⁴⁵ James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III, The Korean War*, part II (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier Inc., 1979), pp. 983-984. See also Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 43; and Richard C. Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee: An Unauthorized Portrait* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1960), p. 157.

⁴⁶ FRUS 1952-1954, vol. 15, pp. 1112-1114 and 1116. Robertson took Korean threats seriously, especially after the prisoner release in mid-June. Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 53. The United States warned Rhee not to undertake unilateral steps. See Sydney D. Bailey, *The Korean Armistice* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 139.

⁴⁷ Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee*, p. 160.

the prospects for a negotiated settlement. Rhee wanted to delay the conclusion of the armistice talks until after a US-ROK alliance was agreed upon.⁴⁸

In order to stop renegade ROK military actions that would have ruined the chances for a political deal to end the war, U.S. officials considered several options including toppling Rhee's regime and taking over the ROK government; withdrawing U.S. forces from Korea; and offering the ROK a bilateral security pact. After rejecting the first two options, Washington offered the ROK a security pact in exchange for ROK moderation and cooperation on the armistice issues. Rhee and Walter S. Robertson, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, met for two weeks. In exchange for the pact, the United States asked for assurances that the ROK will "refrain from opposition to an agitation against an armistice," cooperate in the implementation of an agreement, and keep ROK forces under the operational control of the UNC.⁴⁹ "If the final issue between Rhee and ourselves appears to be whether or not we give him a security pact," Admiral Duncan noted, "it might well be worth giving Rhee such a pact in order to keep him in line."⁵⁰ In a joint statement issued after the Dulles-Rhee consultations, the ROK pledged "to take no unilateral action to unite Korea by military means for the agreed duration of the political conference."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ May 30, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, vol. 15, pp. 1123. For another example of the linkage between ROK cooperation on the armistice and the signing of security pact, see details of a June 5 meeting between U.S. and ROK officials in James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III, The Korean War*, part II (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier Inc., 1979), p. 1000. See also Peter Lowe, "The Significance of the Korean War in Anglo-American Relations, 1950-1953," in Dockrill and Young, eds, *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56*, pp. 126-148.

⁵⁰ May 29, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, vol. 15, p. 1118.

⁵¹ The north-south political conference was part of the armistice deal and expected to be held within three months of the conclusion of the armistice (by October 27, 1953). The United States agree to withdraw from the conference after 90 days if the conference was "fruitless." See "Joint Statement Issued at Seoul by Korean President Syngman Rhee and U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles Regarding Post-Armistice R.O.K.-U.S. Policy, August 7, 1953," in Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations*, pp. 183-185.

Ultimately, in mid-July, the ROK accepted the tradeoff. Although other factors also affected the ROK decision, the security agreement was an important one.⁵² The two parties signed a bilateral alliance and despite continued noise from the ROK about its displeasure with the armistice agreement signed on July 27, 1953, the ROK took no additional steps to enact a military policy that would circumvent or undermine the armistice. To further sharpen the limits of U.S. obligations and reiterate U.S. opposition to unilateral ROK military moves, Congress added an additional understanding that South Korea accepted: "...nor shall anything in the present Treaty be construed as requiring the United States to give assistance to Korea except in the event of an armed attack against territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the Republic of Korea."⁵³

VII. United States-Taiwan (1954)

As with South Korea, the United States at first resisted the idea of an American-Taiwanese alliance. But U.S. officials came to believe that an alliance with the nationalist Chinese, the Kuomintang (KMT), would give Washington the ability to rein in KMT forces and prevent a KMT provocation of mainland communist China.

⁵² Other than the mutual security pact, the ROK received an aid package from the United States. In addition, Chinese forces attacked ROK units, perhaps in an effort to force the ROK to accept the terms of armistice. See Donald W. Boose, Jr., "The Korean War Truce Talks: A Study in Conflict Termination," *Parameters* (US Army War College Quarterly), Spring 2000, pp. 102-116; and Hong, *State Security and Regime Security*, p. 54.

⁵³ The text of the treaty and the additional understanding may be found at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/korea/kor001.htm> or in Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations*, pp. 185-186. The treaty, as well as the Dulles-Rhee statement of August 7, highlighted the need to combat the "common danger" from the north (Dulles-Rhee statement). But we should expect states to highlight threat-based reasons in public rather than restraint-based motivations. Public disclosure of restraint issues would reveal fissures that adversaries might then try to exploit.

The Mutual Defense Treaty was signed on December 2, 1954; related letters with explicit restraining provisions were signed on December 10, 1954. Eisenhower blocked Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's attempt to include an explicit pledge to protect the coastal islands in the treaty.⁵⁴ Instead, Article VI stipulated that the treaty protections applied to Taiwan, the Pescadores, and "will be applicable to such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement."⁵⁵ In his letter, Dulles stated that the use of force by either party from Taiwan, the Pescadores, or some U.S. areas "will be a matter of joint agreement" and neither party could remove jointly held military "elements...from the territories described in Article VI to a degree which would substantially diminish the defensibility of such territories without mutual agreement."⁵⁶

Congress added additional stipulations to limit U.S. obligations under the treaty and to "releash" KMT leaders. The U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations noted that the treaty did not modify the legal status of Taiwan and the Pescadores, that the United States would only support Taiwan in cases of self-defense, and that Senate approval would be required for an expansion of the territorial coverage of the treaty.⁵⁷ These clauses all sought to rein in the nationalist Chinese's grand ambition for harassing and even re-taking the Chinese mainland.

For the Eisenhower administration, a treaty with Taiwan met two needs. On the U.S. domestic front, it allowed the president to appease the right wing members of the

⁵⁴ Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 57.

⁵⁵ The text of the treaty may be found at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/china/chin001.htm>

⁵⁶ The text of the letter may be found at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/china/chin002.htm>. See also William T. Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player: U.S. Extended Deterrence Strategy in the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 80-81.

⁵⁷ Greene uses the term releash in *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia*, p. 80.

Republican party who vehemently opposed communist China and were in favor of an aggressive policy to confront the communists.

But it also gave the United States a chance to restrain Taiwan. Divine explained: "...by insisting on restraining Chiang Kai-shek, the President protected himself against the danger of automatic involvement in one of the generalissimo's military adventures."⁵⁸ If domestic needs meant Eisenhower had to accept some tie to the KMT, U.S. officials tried to make sure that that tie would help rein in Taiwan's leaders. The treaty "negotiated with Taiwan was as much about restraining one's ally as about deterring on its behalf."⁵⁹

VIII. Egypt-Syria (1964, 1966)

In 1964, Egypt brought together the Arab states under the Arab summit system, a system that lasted for almost two years. Cairo brought together this multilateral political and security alliance to rein in Syria and prevent the execution of a plan to confront Israel over Israel's water diversion project. Egypt's efforts to form a multilateral alliance were not a direct response to a heightened Israeli threat. Egypt feared Syria's *reaction* to the Israeli threat and formed the alliance more to control the Syrians than to balance against Israel.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player*, p. 81.

⁶⁰ In terms of Syria and Egypt, Walt called Egypt's summit effort "an attempt to balance against the Syrians." While I think we share the same sentiments as to what Egypt was trying to accomplish, I think the term restraint – Egypt restraining Syria – is more appropriate because the effort was made within the confines of a multilateral military alliance that included as allies both Egypt and Syria. (Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 87) In a later table, Walt notes three motives for the summits including "Balance Israel." As I explain in the main text, I think the Israeli threat was less of a factor for Egypt than the desire to restrain Syria out of fear that Syria would provoke Israel. (Walt, Table 10, p. 159)

Egypt and Syria, along with the rest of the Arab world, saw Israel as their enemy. Even prior to the summit meetings, there was little doubt that Egypt would come to Syria's aid in the event of another Arab-Israeli war.

Rising popular concern over Israeli progress on water diversion and "repeated urgings" by officials of the Arab League led to a meeting of Arab Chiefs of Staff in December 1963 that set the stage for a restraining alliance. Khouri said that according to published reports, the Chiefs agreed to a plan of "strong" military action. The plan was to be submitted to the Defense Council for final approval.⁶¹ Khouri wrote that the Arab Chiefs of Staff "supported Syria's call for the use of military power, if necessary, to compel Israel to halt her water diversion efforts."⁶² More generally, Evron notes the growing pressure exerted by the Syrians on Arab governments over the Israeli water project.⁶³ But Egypt did not want to get in a military confrontation over water. Just prior to the meetings, on November 23, 1963, the Syrian vice-president, Ahram Maurani, proposed to Nasser that the Arabs use force to block Israel's water diversion plans. Nasser's answer suggested Egypt would not back up Damascus: "Ahram, my brother, and what would happen if Israel bombed Damascus?"⁶⁴

The decision of the Arab chiefs of staff forced Egypt's hand and set the stage for a restraining alliance. While the Israeli threat to the Arab side did not change during this

⁶¹ Fred J. Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," *The Review of Politics* 27, no. 1, January, 1965, p. 44.

⁶² Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, third edition (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), p. 227.

⁶³ Yair Evron, *The Middle East: Nations, Superpowers and Wars* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 54. Nasser later claimed that the Syrian delegate stated that Syria could not divert the Jordan tributaries for fear of an Israeli attack. Nasser thus implied that the meeting revealed Syrian weakness. ["President Nasser's Speech at the Airforce Academy's Graduation," July 1, 1964, pp. 251-254 at 253, in Walid Khalid and Yusuf Ibish, *Arab Political Documents 1964* (Beirut, Lebanon: Political Studies and Public Administration Department of American University of Beirut, n.d.).]

⁶⁴ Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to our time*, second edition, revised and updated (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), p. 617.

time period, the Chief's action meant that war was a distinct possibility. Those opposed to war, such as Egypt, would need to step in or risk being dragged along. Khouri says Nasser and other Arab leaders realized the weakness of the Arab armed forces, intra-Arab fighting (e.g. Yemen) and tension, and the possibility of Western intervention undermined this plan. "President Nasser therefore requested an urgent meeting of all the Arab heads of state to check the grave trend towards a war on Israel which had developed within the Arab world and to seek and agree upon some nonmilitary course of action which might placate the angry Arab masses."⁶⁵ Evron concurs: "In order to create some united Arab position about this 'threat' and at the same time restrain Syria, Nasser came around to the idea of Arab summit meetings." He adds: "there was a pressing need to restrain them [the Syrians] in order to prevent them from throwing him [Nasser] headlong into an unwanted war."⁶⁶

Nasser faced a dilemma and the summit approach provided a way out. On the one hand, Egypt did not want war and argued that the Arab forces were not ready to confront Israel. A defeat at the hands of the Israelis would be a blow to Egyptian prestige, and Egypt would end up paying a large share of the war's human and financial costs. On the other hand, Nasser did not want the loss of face that would inevitably result from being seen as the state that vetoed a confrontation with Israel. This, too, would not be good for Egypt's leadership and standing in the Arab world.

⁶⁵ Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, p. 227. See also Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 44.

⁶⁶ Evron, *The Middle East: Nations, Superpowers and Wars*, pp. 54-55. Seale agrees that Nasser was seeking to restrain Syria; see Patrick Seale with Maureen McConville, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), p. 121ff. Interestingly, Seale claims Syria itself was trying to restrain Yasser Arafat and slow the Palestinian raids against Israel. Whereas the Palestinians wanted a people's war to spark a conventional Arab-Israeli war, Syria saw a people's war as "substitute" for a conventional one. (p. 125)

The summit meeting, then, emerged as a policy that would not undermine Egypt's military or political position. Rather than taking the heat for rejecting the Syrian-led call for using force to stop Israel's water diversion activities, Nasser could spread the responsibility across all the Arab states. At the same time, the summit provided links that would allow Egypt to share in the credit for any Arab counter-diversionary water policies that were actually implemented. For instance, if Amman proceeded with a plan to divert water, Egypt would be able to share the spotlight under the rubric of summit resolutions calling for such Arab diversions.⁶⁷

What were the results of the first summit in January 1964? At the summit, only Syria's Amin al-Hafiz wanted war or at least the use of force to stop Israel's diversion of the Jordan.⁶⁸ General Ali Ali Amer, Egypt's Chief of Staff, was appointed head of the Unified Military Command "which would draw up plans for coordinating the power and strategy of all Arab armed forces."⁶⁹ The summit did not call for any immediate military action and an Egyptian, Amer, was now coordinating any war efforts.

The summit also sought to divert the tributaries of the Jordan River, a move that was seen by moderates as a way to head off Syrian calls for stopping, through the use of force, Israeli diversion efforts. The Arabs may have hoped to divert the Banyas and Hasbani Rivers. "The decision to divert the Jordan was reached as a kind of compromise between the cautious Nasserite and the breast-beating Syrian approaches."⁷⁰ Later, in March 1966, Wasfi Tell, Jordanian Prime Minister, told *Al-Rai Al-Amm*, a Kuwaiti

⁶⁷ See Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970*, third edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 98.

⁶⁸ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, p. 100.

⁶⁹ Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 46.

⁷⁰ Evron, *The Middle East: Nations, Superpowers and Wars*, p. 56. At some point, a Board for Exploitation of the Jordan Waters was established. [*Arab Report and Record*, 15-28 February, 1966, no. 4, p. 48.]

newspaper, that the Arab water diversion and establishment of the PLO "are preventive aspects. There was no discussion [at the summits] on any active measures."⁷¹

As a result of the summit, Syrian calls for a confrontation with Israel were muted. Khouri concludes that the January 1964 summit "precluded any immediate threat of an armed conflict between the contending [Arab and Israeli] parties."⁷² He adds: "The most decisive conclusion reached at the summit meeting was to try to frustrate Israel's water diversion plans, not by using armed force, but by preventing as much water as possible from reaching Israeli territory through Arab diversions of the Hasbani, Banyas, and Yarmuk Rivers. At the summit meeting, only the Syrians apparently pressed strongly for military action."⁷³ Kerr concurs: "the most important need of the moment had not been the diversion of water but the diversion of the Syrian government from any hope of immersing Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir in war or embarrassment."⁷⁴ UN and Western officials believed that the summit had eliminated any imminent risk of war by rejecting the idea of using military power to stop Israeli water diversion efforts.⁷⁵ According to Khouri, Israeli leaders saw the results of the first summit as "a face-saving scheme to justify their [Arab] failure for not carrying out their threats to force Israel to halt her project," but other historians disagree and suggest that Israel was concerned that the first summit was a sign of an Arab push for war against Israel.⁷⁶

⁷¹ *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 March, 1966, no. 5, p. 52.

⁷² Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 32.

⁷³ Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 45.

⁷⁴ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, p. 100.

⁷⁵ Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 49.

⁷⁶ Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 50. Shlaim calls the first summit as "the first time that the Arab states collectively declared in an official document that their ultimate aim was the destruction of the State of Israel." Israel "took a very grave view" of the second summit as well. The Israeli prime minister saw the summit as a sign of careful Arab preparation for war with Israel. Still, he notes that at the third summit, "Nasser injected a characteristic note of caution by warning against resuming the [water] diversion work before the Arabs had improved their land and air defense capabilities. He hinted that if Syria acted

At the second summit meeting in Alexandria in September 1964, Syria continued to advocate the use of force against Israel but was again blocked. Attendees disagreed on the timetable of Arab (water) diversionary efforts and the coordinated military policies. However, Syria's desire to use of force against Israel was again rebuffed at Alexandria. Instead, in the military arena, the heads of state agreed to continue plans to divert water rather than directly disrupting Israeli water diversion efforts; start work on projects in Jordan that would not provoke Israel and thus could avoid a premature Arab-Israeli military confrontation; and grant General Amer the power to position Arab armies in front-line states in the event of war with Israel. Arab plans included "embarking on immediate work for the Arab projects for the exploitation of the waters of the River Jordan and its tributaries." In their statement, the leaders also put Israel on notice: "any aggression against any Arab state will be considered aggression against all the Arab countries, and will be repelled by them all."⁷⁷ A few months after the second summit, Nasser stated that "we succeeded...in *agreeing* on the diversion of the River Jordan sources."⁷⁸ After the second summit, Israel protested and threatened but took little action because it was unsure if the Arab states would implement these decisions.⁷⁹ On May 31, 1965, Egypt rejected a Syrian call for the removal of the United Nations Emergency

unilaterally, it would not be able to count on his assistance." Safran says that in the period of the summits, "the Arab states were openly preparing to go to war with Israel over the Jordan waters." See Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 230-232; and Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, 1981), p. 385.

⁷⁷ "Joint Communiqué of the Second Arab Summit Conference," September 3, 1964, pp. 389-391, in Walid Khalid and Yusuf Ibish, *Arab Political Documents 1964* (Beirut, Lebanon: Political Studies and Public Administration Department of American University of Beirut, n.d.).

⁷⁸ Emphasis added. "President Nasser's Speech at a Rally Held to Commemorate Victory Day," December 23, 1964, pp. 543-554 at 549, in Walid Khalid and Yusuf Ibish, *Arab Political Documents 1964* (Beirut, Lebanon: Political Studies and Public Administration Department of American University of Beirut, n.d.).

⁷⁹ Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," p. 54.

Force, a group of U.N. peacekeepers stationed in Egypt's Sinai Desert in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez War.⁸⁰

With the collapse of the summit system, Syria returned to the offensive. The summit framework grew weaker in 1965 even as a third summit was held at Casablanca in September 1965. Almost a year later, on August 5, 1966, the Arab League officially informed members that the summit was postponed indefinitely.⁸¹ On August 15, 1966, Israel and Syria engaged in a major military confrontation over the Sea of Galilee. Syria claimed the battle was part of its new offensive strategy against Israel. Syria "would not confine herself to defensive action but would attack defined targets and bases of aggression within" Israel.⁸² On the same day, *Radio Damascus* explained "the strategy which Syria is now following in facing the state of aggression is a change from the position of defence to the position of attack."⁸³ Atassi claimed on August 20, 1966, that the UAR (Egypt) and Syria had agreed to coordinate military measures.⁸⁴ In resolutions released on October 31, 1966, at the end of the Ba'th party conference, the Syrian party said that postponing military action against Israel until the Arab forces were superior was a "treacherous" policy; they thus rejected Nasser's favored approach.⁸⁵ Instead, the party

⁸⁰ David Kimche and Dan Bawley, *The Sandstorm: the Arab-Israeli War of June, 1967* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 33.

⁸¹ *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 August, 1966, no. 15, p. 180.

⁸² Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, p. 232. Tessler cites Khouri in Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 378. See also *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 August, 1966, no. 15, p. 177 and 16-31 August, 1966, no. 16, pp. 188-189.

⁸³ *The USSR and Arab Belligerency* (Jerusalem: Information Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1967), p. 24.

⁸⁴ *Arab Report and Record*, 16-31 August, 1966, no. 16, p. 189.

⁸⁵ For discussion of Nasser's calls for delaying the next military confrontation with Israel, see Kerr, pp. 98-99; and Khouri, "The Jordan River Controversy," pp. 44-45.

resolutions called for “a people’s liberation war...to liberate Palestine, overthrow reactionary regimes and eliminate foreign influences.”⁸⁶

Egypt again reacted to Syrian moves by trying to use an alliance with Syria to restrain Damascus. According to Kerr, Egypt was “[c]learly disturbed at the Syrians’ recklessness but no longer able to invoke the consensus of the summit to restrain them, Nasir invited [Syrian] Prime Minister Zu’ayyin to Cairo and on 7 [sic] November signed a treaty of mutual defence. By this means he would at least bind Syria to advance consultation in the future.”⁸⁷ Another source suggests a similar Egyptian calculus: “Observers in Cairo and other Arab capitals thought that President Nasser, who led the Egyptian side at the talks, might have obtained a promise in return for Egyptian help in the event of an attack that Syria would not provoke serious incidents with Israel.”⁸⁸ Nutting also says Nasser supported a defense agreement to rein in both the Syrians and the Fatah guerillas.⁸⁹ Evron says that Egypt wanted to restrain Syria and deter Israel. Evron contends that Egypt failed on both counts. Egypt was unable to extricate itself by leaving the pact for fear of how abandoning the defense agreement would affect Egypt’s standing in the Arab world.⁹⁰ Israeli officials were uncertain whether the pact signaled restraint or Arab aggression.⁹¹

⁸⁶ *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 November, 1966, no. 21, p. 249.

⁸⁷ Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, p. 122. Seale concurs that Egypt was using the defense pact to try to regain control of Syrian policy. Seale, *Asad*, p. 126.

⁸⁸ *Arab Report and Record*, 1-15 November, 1966, no. 21, p. 250.

⁸⁹ Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 389, 391-392.

⁹⁰ Evron, *The Middle East: Nations, Superpowers and Wars*, p. 72.

⁹¹ James Feron, “Israel Sees Arabs’ Defense Pact and U.N. Vote as Curbing Syria,” *New York Times*, November 7, 1966, p. 9. Tessler (*A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, p. 368) wrote: “Israel was deeply concerned about the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement, and especially about the mutual defense treaty concluded by the two countries....As seen from the Israeli capital, the November defense pact had allied the Jewish state’s two most dangerous enemies and, equally important, it had given the more aggressive and irresponsible of the two an ability to determine the behavior of the other, militarily stronger partner.”

Months later, on May 5, 1967, Nasser sent his prime minister to Damascus to issue a warning that “our agreement for mutual defense will apply only in the event of a general attack on Syria by Israel. No merely local incident will cause us to intervene.”⁹² Within days, however, the escalation between the Arab states and Israel was taken to new heights as an erroneous Soviet warning about Israeli troop concentrations, the withdrawal of U.N. peacekeepers, and the Egyptian closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping brought the region to the brink of war. On June 5, 1967, Israel attacked Egypt and decimated the Egyptian armed forces within days.

IX. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization-West Germany (1949)

The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a multilateral defensive alliance, was part of the U.S. policy response to French pressure on the possibility of a renewed German threat. The United States was eager to both rebuild Germany and accommodate French security concerns which centered on renewed German aggression. NATO came to be seen as providing an opportunity to reassure France on security matters without totally excluding Germany from the calculus. Absent French pressure, the United States could have chosen from a range of possible responses to the Soviet Union. But NATO provided a framework that met three oft-mentioned objectives: keeping the Soviet Union out (of Western Europe), the United States in, and Germany down.

⁹² Sachar, *A History of Israel*, p. 620.

The NATO example does not conform to my triangular A-B-C model outlined above.⁹³ France, a member of NATO, felt that a re-built Germany still could pose a threat to France. But ultimately France accepted the U.S. argument that the best way to deal with this threat was by bringing Germany into the alliance rather than directing the alliance against Germany.

On March 17, 1948, the same day that France, Britain, and others signed the Brussels Treaty forming a West European security alliance without Germany, President Truman told the U.S. Congress that "I am sure that the determination of the free countries of Europe to protect themselves will be matched by an equal determination on our part to help them protect themselves."⁹⁴ Soon thereafter, U.S. and European officials began to meet to consider ways to implement Truman's pledge. His pledge could have meant a number of things: doctrinal changes and rhetorical support; a multilateral treaty; bilateral treaties; and/or military assistance.

Although the NATO treaty was signed on April 4, 1949, without German membership, the three major NATO players all foresaw German involvement or came to accept it over the next year. On June 28, 1948, a U.S. National Security Council staff report advocated eventual German membership in the Brussels pact.⁹⁵ Upon becoming Secretary of State in 1949, Dean Acheson argued that Germany must be included in an Atlantic alignment, but he was aware that France wanted to keep Germany out

⁹³ Germany, crushed by the end of WWII, was not equal in strength in the late 1940s. But the French were looking toward the future and feared Germany's potential for economic renewal and military aggression.

⁹⁴ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry Truman 1948* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), pp. 182-186.

⁹⁵ Timothy P. Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance: the origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981). See also Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 85-86 and 91-98.

permanently.⁹⁶ As for Britain, in January, 1948, in a draft of a treaty of 'Western union', Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin envisaged German participation.⁹⁷ But the treaty was also aimed at preventing renewed German aggression. The United States saw these two points as contradictory and pushed for a treaty that envisioned German inclusion and did not specifically target Germany (or any one state).⁹⁸

The French were the last to support German inclusion; French opposition to a rejuvenated Germany had been a persistent post-war theme. At the end of July, 1948, Paris "expressed grave doubts about the idea of the eventual inclusion of West Germany."⁹⁹ When the French assembly approved the treaty on July 27, 1949, they attached several reservations, including one calling for assembly approval of any new NATO members.¹⁰⁰ This reservation could have been used to try to block German inclusion. However, in September 1950, Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister, proposed eventual German participation in NATO instead of re-armament.¹⁰¹

One could argue that since France did not envision that Germany would come into the treaty (or at least did not do so until after the treaty was signed), in the French case it was not an alliance that was based on restraint of an *ally* – Germany would never

⁹⁶ Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance*, pp. 109, 186.

⁹⁷ Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance*, pp. 63, fn 59, 68.

⁹⁸ Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance*, pp. 64-64, fn 64. See also fn 73, fn 75 and p. 75. The United States favored the idea that any attack activated the treaty. See p. 67.

⁹⁹ Sir Nicholas Henderson, *The Birth of NATO* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), p. 49.

¹⁰⁰ Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁰¹ Ireland, *Creating the entangling alliance*, p. 196. Wallander further argues that certain aspects of NATO were developed with the idea of keeping Germany down: "[M]any of NATO's distinctive features had nothing to do with coping with the Soviet threat at all and were a result of NATO's more subtle purpose of preventing a cycle of mistrust, competition, and instability in security relations among its members. NATO therefore developed specific assets for coping with risks among its members – primarily but not exclusively with Germany in mind. These features include mechanisms for political-military integration, multinationality of alliance structures, supranational defense policy, and the principles and procedures of civilian democratic control of defense affairs." Wallander later claims that "NATO's existence constrained Germany from acquiring nuclear weapons or creating a general staff." Celeste A. Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War," *International Organization* 54, no. 4, autumn 2000, pp. 705-735 at 716 and 732.

be an ally. But Britain and the United States did see a place for Germany in NATO and thus the acceptance that NATO would help contain Germany was acceptance of the idea of restraining an ally.

X. Conclusion

In four cases in this chapter, restraint was as important or more important a factor than a threat from an adversary in explaining the formation of an alliance: Britain-Japan, U.S.-South Korea, U.S.-Taiwan, and Egypt-Syria. In a fifth case, the Austro-German alliance of 1879, restraint was the second factor behind Germany's interest in precluding Austria from allying elsewhere. In a sixth case, NATO, the US/French/British desire to keep Germany 'down' (restrained) was probably secondary to the desire to address the Soviet threat to the West (although France may have been more concerned about Germany than the Soviet Union).(see Table 6.1)

This is not to suggest that threat theory is either secondary in general or unrelated to the issue of restraint. As noted, a threat from a mutual adversary often makes restraint necessary for a member of an alliance who fears that its ally might provoke that exiting threat. To re-state an earlier claim, State A forms a formal alliance with State B ostensibly against C not because of any new threat by State C, but because it fears that its ally (B) will act recklessly, provoke C, and drag A needlessly into a war of state A and B against state C.

But even if external threats play a role, the importance of the dynamic between the allies should not be underestimated. When the study of alliance formation has so

often been fixed on how states react to external parties, alliance restraint is one of several dynamics that emphasize the intra-ally dimension of alliance formation. Control, restraint, tethering, or efforts to ally in order to promote more aggressive policies all are first and foremost about the parties to the alliance rather than their adversary. The external *and* internal motivations for alliance formation deserve a seat at the table.

Table 6.1: Cases of Alliance Formation and Restraint

	Restrainer	Restrainee	Adversary	Model	Restrainer's motivation
1879	Germany	Austria	several	triangular	1. preclusion* 2. restraint
1902	Britain	Japan	Russia	triangular	restraint & threat
1949	NATO	Germany	--	??	1. threat (USSR) 2. restraint (Germany)
1953	United States	S. Korea	N. Korea+	triangular	restraint
1954	United States	Taiwan	China (PRC)	triangular	restraint
1964	Egypt	Syria	Israel	triangular	restraint

*The German desire to preclude an Austrian alliance with a state other than Germany.

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Chapter Seven: Conclusion

I. Introduction

This dissertation has three central conclusions:

A. On both a conceptual and empirical level, the alliance restraint dynamic means that alliances can be a stabilizing and peace-promoting influence on the international system. When calculating the net effect of alliances on international peace and stability, scholars should account for restraint, not just chainganging, buckpassing, and other pathological (destabilizing) alliance dynamics.

B. The success or failure of restraint efforts is best explained by rational restraint theory, a combination of capabilities, interests, and communication. This provides a better explanation than ones based on power, alliance norms, or domestic opinion. I summarize the performance of each explanation in section two below.

C. Some states form alliances with the express purpose of restraining their new ally. This serves a reminder that the primary reason for a given alliance may be the policies and interactions of the allies themselves rather than those of an adversary. Such *internal* motivations as controlling, restraining, or re-making an ally are better explanations for the origin of some alliances than *external* motivations such as balancing against one's adversary based on considerations of power or threat.

In the next section, I summarize the findings of the three Anglo-American case studies with regard to the question of what explains the success or failure of restraint policies. Sections three and four turn to future research questions related to restraint, including the study of alliances as institutions. In section five, I offer some insights for policymaking based on this dissertation.

II. Success and Failure: A Summary of the Cases

What hypothesis best explains the success or failure of restraint efforts? The three cases of Anglo-American alliance decisionmaking all support an explanation for the success or failure of restraint issues based on rational restraint theory (a theory based on rational deterrence

theory). Explanations based on power or alliance norms are insufficient. The evidence for an explanation based on domestic opinion is not as conclusive, but an opinion-based explanation also was not supported.

Rational restraint theory provides a strong explanation for each case. In Iran in 1951, The United States (twice) succeeded in restraining British military intervention because Washington was more powerful, equally interested, and communicated clearly with London. In Indochina in 1954, the United States was more powerful. But the U.S. Congress and the Eisenhower administration were divided about how important saving (or replacing) the French in Indochina was for the United States. Given this U.S. split, Britain was able to restrain the United States. The U.S. interest was 'divided' or watered down; unlike in this 1954 case, a strong interest is both deeply *and* widely agreed upon by policymakers. In the 1956 Suez crisis, the United States at first failed to rein in Britain and prevent an attack on Egypt because Washington failed to communicate to London the costs of ignoring the U.S. restraint effort. When the United States pushed for a cease-fire and withdrawal, the United States was clear about communicating the costs and Britain complied; communication distinguished one part of the Suez case from the other.

Why did the United States succeed in stopping British intervention in Iran in 1951 but not in Egypt in 1956? The answer involves comparing both the interests at stake and the communication between the two allies. Though it is hard to provide definitive measures, Britain probably was more interested in Suez (Egypt) than in Iran. The Suez Canal was more central to the British economy than was Iranian oil. In addition, if the military objectives of each operation are any guide, Britain's fear of what Egypt's Nasser could do to Western interests if left untouched was greater than that of Iran's Mossadeq. Whereas Britain hoped to topple Nasser in

1956, in 1951 it would have been content to gain control of the refinery at Abadan and the oilfields even if Mossadeq remained in power in Tehran.

Meanwhile, the United States may have had the reverse rankings for Iran and Egypt. U.S. officials may have been slightly more concerned about stopping a war in Iran because it bordered on the Soviet Union and therefore the risk of escalation and global war as a result of British intervention seemed greater. Though, the Czech (Soviet) arms deal with Egypt in 1955 set the stage for further Soviet meddling in Egypt, the prospect of Soviet forces dropping into Egypt may have seemed more remote than rolling across Iran's northern border.

Differences in communication and the clarity of the American message are the second important part of understanding the differences between Iran (1951) and Suez, part one (1956). In 1951, Washington repeatedly stated its opposition, never expressed second thoughts, and highlighted the fact that British defiance of the US warning was a matter of "grave concern." In NSC 107, U.S. officials decided that British intervention was so serious that the United States would have to decide its response at that time. The wording of NSC 107 meant that U.S. support for Britain was not automatic as had often been the case between the two allies in discussion of possible confrontations with the Soviet Union.

In 1956, Washington also repeatedly stated its opposition to British intervention. But in contrast with 1951, the United States never stated how it would penalize Britain if Britain went ahead with the intervention against US advice. The United States never suggested that it might not back Britain at the end of the day. The United States did not say that it would take steps against Britain if the intervention went forward. Furthermore, the frequent U.S. calls for restraint may have been undermined by other small signals like the August commitment to replenish British military equipment in an emergency, Dulles's early statement calling on Nasser to

disgorge the canal, and the U.S. commitment to deter Soviet intervention in the event Britain and France went into Egypt. In short, in 1956 the United States not only failed to flesh out the possible penalty for defiance but also hinted that when push came to shove, defiance might be tolerated. (and, as events unfolded, the United States stood by Britain and France in the face of the Soviet ultimatum of November 5, 1956) That said, Britain also had at least a minor hearing problem during this phase, with misunderstandings over the policy implications of the term 'disgorge', the intent of the Suez Canal Users' Association, and the inaccurate conclusions Macmillan drew about U.S. policy from his trip to the United States in late September 1956.

With regard to alternative explanations for the Anglo-American cases, the more powerful state does not always prevail in restraint disputes. In Iran in 1951 and in the second part of the Suez case, the more powerful ally, the United States, did prevail. But in Indochina in 1954 and in the first part of the Suez crisis, Britain, the weaker state, got its way. This result makes some intuitive sense. Although we know that power matters, we also know that the most powerful do not always get their way across a range of issues, from the personal to the international. As noted with regard to Indochina and Suez, other issues get in the way of success based solely power: a weaker actor may feel it has more at stake (the balance of interests), a state may fail to communicate its interests or policy, a more powerful state may be unwilling to use its leverage (power) to get its way, or policymakers in a powerful state may disagree about the best policy for achieving a state's interest on a given issue.

Another way to look at the cases is that more powerful allies may fail because of their own shortcomings. In the first part of the Suez case of 1956, the key shortcoming was the U.S. failure to communicate. In the case of Indochina and United Action in 1954, the 'failure' in the more powerful state (the United States) was the failure of Congressional and executive branch

leaders to present a unified view of the importance to the United States of United Action. Most of the time these failures on the part of the greater power are probably not intentional. But some fissure or failing emerges in the more powerful state and creates an opening for the less powerful state involved in the restraint dispute to prevail.

An explanation based on alliance norms also does not explain restraint success or failure. By norms, I mean norms of consultation and consensus – procedural norms of intra-alliance decisionmaking. In all three cases, leaders did not attribute their decisions to a need to respect the opposition of their ally, the restrainee. The policymaking process in each case did not reflect a norm of consensus decisionmaking even when some consultation took place. In fact, the cases in 1954 (Indochina) and 1956 (Suez) contain several examples of a ‘counter-norm’: when your ally disagrees with you, deception, circumvention, and misunderstandings are the norm if you want to proceed with the policy. With Indochina in 1954, the United States tried to circumvent British opposition by forming United Action without Britain and possibly by talking with the Soviets as way to create pressure on Britain to conform. Furthermore, Eden and Dulles had a major misunderstanding in mid-April 1954 about when and where the two allies would discuss the future of United Action. With the Suez crisis in 1956, Britain stopped consulting with the United States at the end of October 1956 after Britain had decided to go to war against Egypt. Washington feared it was being kept in the dark by its British ally.

One caveat is important with regard to a norms-based explanation. The situation could change over time. U.S.-British interactions in the 1990s might be qualitatively different from those in the 1950s, the period I studied. Procedural norms may develop over time in a long-running alliance.¹

¹ Wallander argued that by the 1990s, NATO was committed to consultation and consensus. Celeste A. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War,” *International Organization* 54, no. 4, autumn

An explanation based on domestic opinion in the restrainee was not supported by the cases, but the evidence is not decisive. Was the decisionmaking process in the restrainee driven by domestic opinion as measured by polling data? In all three cases, the evidence does not suggest that the restrainee's decisionmaking process was driven by domestic opinion. A domestic opinion explanation was not consistent with evidence from the policymaking processes. Was domestic opinion consistent with the outcome in each case? The consistency of the case outcomes and public opinion data was mixed: it was unknown in one case (Iran 1951), inconsistent in a second (Suez 1956, part one), consistent in a third (Suez 1956, part two), and consistent but with the presence of an elite-level interlocutor in a fourth case (Indochina/United Action 1954). In 1951, I did not find sufficient polling data to make a judgment. In 1956, the British people opposed intervention in Egypt, but the Eden government went ahead and intervened (Suez, part one). The public did support British acceptance of the withdrawal and cease-fire after the intervention had begun (Suez, part two). In 1954, the U.S. public opposed sending ground troops to Indochina. To the extent that United Action would have sent ground troops, the rejection of United Action is consistent with an explanation based on domestic opinion. Yet in this case, mass opinion was represented by an elite actor, the U.S. Congress. Absent Congressional pressure, the Eisenhower administration was perfectly willing to defy the majority preference of the American people.

2000, pp. 705-735 at 724. Also, I acknowledge the possibility that the absence of norms in these cases could mean a norm exists but was inoperative in these cases. Distinguishing between the absence of a norm and its failure to operate in a given case is difficult. I favor the absence in my cases in part because of the general lack of evidence even hinting at it in each individual case and in part because of the consistent absence across the cases.

III. Future Research Questions on restraint

This dissertation suggests a number of possible avenues for future research. These possibilities are in addition to deepening the aspects of restraint already under study in this dissertation. One developing aspect of studying the success and failure of restraint efforts (or any other foreign policy instrument) is the role of policies based on the anticipated rather than actual reactions of one's allies. Other issues areas include the significance of the timing (proximity) of restraint attempts, the impact of different policy instruments on restraint success or failure, and the relationship, if any, between the closeness of the allies and the frequency of restraint attempts.

Anticipated restraint. In chapter two, I also raised another aspect of the study of the success or failure of alliance restraint and other foreign policy instruments. How should researchers deal with cases where states anticipate the reaction of an ally and change plans accordingly? If one ally never proposes a policy because it fears being restrained successfully, is that an example of restraint success? If one ally fears its restraint effort will not succeed and therefore does not even attempt to restrain, is that an example of restraint failure? While I did not directly address these questions in my empirical work, I did find hints of these issues in my cases. In Indochina in 1954, the United States may have backed away from the idea of using nuclear weapons in part due to British opposition to the idea. In the Suez crisis in 1956, some have suggested that Britain kept the United States in the dark in late October about its plans for intervention so as to avoid U.S. restraint efforts. Further research could address these and other

examples of anticipated restraint to see if anticipated restraint functions in the same manner as the examples of actual restraint I have studied thus far.²

Timing. Does it matter how many times one state tries to restrain a second state? Does restraint get harder with a series of crises? One possibility is that restraint only works for so long; eventually the restrainee feels it can be put off no longer and pushes to implement the contested military policy. Time may also reveal to the restrainee that other non-military options are not working and/or will not work. For instance, did the crises that preceded World War I, such as the Morocco crisis (1905), the Bosnia crisis (1908-09), Agadir (1911), and the Balkan wars (1912-1913), sap the strength of parties favoring restraint such that by 1914 the forces seeking to stop a wider war had little influence left?

Though they were not in the context of alliance decisionmaking, the words of former Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharett capture the timing issue very well. In the mid-1950s, Sharett advanced a moderate Israeli foreign policy in the face of other ministers who sought an activist, retaliatory one. In late 1954 and early 1955, he restrained his colleagues on several military issues but eventually gave in, as he explained in his diary: "In recent months I stopped and checked a great deal, I prevented several explosive acts and caused the public to become tense. I must not strain its patience beyond endurance. An outlet must be provided, otherwise there will be an outburst of fury, with many of my friends joining in."³ Whether due to public demands, as Sharett suggests, or some other factor, the dam of restraint may only be able to hold back the tide of military action for so long.

² A third possible case is the Egyptian decision in 1972 to expel the Soviet military advisors from Egypt. Egypt did this in part to prevent the Soviet Union from blocking Egypt's decision to launch a war against Israel (which ultimately became the 1973 Arab-Israeli War). Egypt did not want to be restrained by the Soviet Union. A fourth possible case is Germany's decision to avoid an alliance with Russia in the late 1870s out of fear that Germany would be unable to block or reject alliance policies proposed by Russia (see chapter six).

³ Sharett's diary as cited in Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 116.

The timing issue may also work in both directions. Forces within an alliance who advocate the use of force or some other military policy may grind down opposition over time as repeated crises weaken the restrainers ability to put on the brakes. At the same time, efforts to stall through diplomacy, international conferences, or other political efforts may delay military action long enough that the pressure for an aggressive response begins to dissipate. In either case, the use of time to get one's way may or may not be intended.

Types of restraint. Restrainers may try to restrain in a number of different ways. They can use a variety of different policy instruments. Some instruments are coercive while others are persuasive. States may also offer incentives to achieve restraint. They might try to link one issue to another and seek a trade-off. Which types or combinations do restrainers tend to use? Does the choice of instrument affect the success of the restraint effort?

One important element in many restraint efforts is the use of diplomacy to drag out alliance decisionmaking and prevent the use of force. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, restrainers seek to keep the parties talking and keep the diplomatic option alive. The obvious hope is that if a diplomatic resolution materializes, the restrainee no longer needs to pursue the proposed military option. In addition, the delay itself may take the energy out of the push for the military policy. The United States used diplomacy in an attempt to delay British military action in July 1951 in Iran and again during the Suez crisis in 1956. In Iran in 1951, the U.S. tactic worked and pushed Britain back to the bargaining table and away from the brink of military intervention in July. In Suez in 1956, the U.S. tactic was ultimately unsuccessful although diplomacy was given a number of opportunities to resolve the conflict.⁴

⁴ The United States is a major diplomatic player. Not every state might be interested in or capable of a U.S.-style diplomatic full-court press.

Closeness of the allies. Are closer or more committed allies more or less likely to restrain? Perhaps they are more likely to restrain because they have less fear that voicing criticism will lead to an alliance breakup. Efforts to restrain might assume some common strategic interest. For instance, maybe the United States and Britain felt comfortable restraining each other because of their joint commitment to contain and fight the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Or, maybe the United States and Britain felt they needed to restrain each other to keep the restrainee focused on their joint commitment to contain and fight the Soviet Union. Alternatively, perhaps close allies are less likely to restrain because they have less disagreements.

IV. Institutions

One additional and potentially fruitful line of future research involves the role of alliances as institutions. Why talk about alliances as institutions? First, the institutional literature suggests ways that alliances differ from regular international diplomacy. In other words, it helps us answer the following question: how are restraint attempts within alliances any different from restraint attempts outside of alliances? Why not study restraint as a general phenomena? For instance, none of the components of rational restraint theory are unique to *alliance* restraint. One could in theory study a situation among two non-allies and look at capabilities, interests, and communication (as has long been done with rational deterrence theory).

Second, the literature on institutions offers guidance on how to talk about and categorize the effects of alliances that bear on restraint efforts. In the rest of this section, I speculate about five different but overlapping categories. Alliances change constraints on state action. Alliances

create a mechanism for the exchange of information. Alliances facilitate costly signaling.

Alliances change state capacities. Alliances shape expectations.

Alliances change constraints on state action. Whereas outside of an alliance an state may feel free to stand aside from a potential confrontation, as a member of the alliance with something at stake, this same state may no longer have the option of standing aside without incurring additional costs such as being drawn into conflict against its wishes. Joining the alliance constrained the ability of the state to do nothing in the face of a possible confrontation.

The United States might have left Britain and France make their own decision about intervention in Egypt in 1956 if Washington was not allied with the two states. The alliance meant that in the eyes of the world, and especially the Third World, the United States was associated, fairly or not, with whatever action Britain and France took. If that action was seen as colonial and imperial, the United States would be tarred as well. The alliance also meant that Washington would be expected to protect its two allies if the Soviet side came to Egypt's aid.

Alliances create a mechanism for the exchange of information. Alliances may serve as a channel for sharing information about oneself and one's adversaries. Furthermore, that information may be seen as more credible if it comes in an alliance framework. As a result of sharing information, allies may come to understand each other differently. The exchange of information may provide each ally the opportunity to clarify the other's capabilities and interests as well as characterize their own capabilities and interests for the other as well.⁵

A number of mechanisms could be used to share information but some are not unique to alliances. This includes the general sharing of information, military coordination, and policy coordination. Non-allies could also share and coordinate, though might assume it will be deeper

or more substantive in an alliance. Alternatively, an alliance might create more channels for information exchange if it has more regular diplomatic or summit meetings, sets up an infrastructure of contact points (e.g. military-to-military), or leads to joint military planning and the integration of military resources. Britain, for instance, set up a mission in Washington to coordinate military matters just after WWII. The two sides also, for example, developed a joint plan for the defense of the Middle East in the 1950s. One should remember, too, that alliance mechanisms for the exchange of information can be blocked, as was the case just before the Suez war.

The exchange of information can occur at two levels in an alliance. On one level, two allies may not actually know each others interests and policy preferences. They learn about each other from the exchange of information within the alliance. At a second level, they may already be aware of the other's interests or capabilities but unsure of how soft or steadfast the beliefs are held. So when the alliance faces a real situation, this may serve as a test of just how serious each ally is about its prior claims regarding interests and policies. For example, Washington was most likely aware of British hesitance to get involved in Vietnam in 1954, but may have still sought British support for a multilateral coalition to see just how serious Britain was about its opposition. For various reasons, allies may believe they can overcome apparent opposition to a policy when the time actually arrives to decide one way or the other.

Alliances facilitate costly signaling. The exchange of information may allow the restrainer to demonstrate the seriousness or credibility of its policy by allowing it to send a costly signal (of restraint). A restraint effort may be rendered costly and thus more credible in the eyes of the restrainee "when the act of sending it incurs or creates some cost that the sender would be

⁵ On informational models of institutions, see Lisa L. Martin and Beth A. Simmons, "Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions," *International Organization* 52, no. 4, autumn 1998, pp. 729-757; and

disinclined to incur or create if he or she were in fact *not* willing to carry out the” restraint effort.⁶

What kinds of costs do restrainers incur that demonstrate seriousness about the restraint effort and are received as costly signals by the restrainee? One example of a cost is a willingness on the part of the restrainer to jeopardize alliance relations on other issues, especially if the other issues are seen as more vital. The more allies are aware of and discuss possible damage to the alliance from the restraint dispute, the more the restrainee is likely to see the restraint effort as serious.

A second example is a willingness on the part of the restrainer to invite adversarial probes as a result of the adversary learning of disagreements over restraint within the alliance and sensing that such disagreements are a sign of division and weakness. The restrainee might assume alliance unity: “We have to stand together on this military intervention or the Soviets will exploit our disagreement.” But the restrainer can send a costly signal in its response: “I don’t care what the Soviets do, we will not support this intervention.” Wow, thinks the restrainee, if the restrainer is willing to risk Soviet meddling as the price for stopping the interventionist alliance policy I have proposed, the restrainer must be very serious about stopping my proposed intervention.

A third example involves a less significant cost (and thus a less costly signal): the restrainer’s public rhetoric. The restrainer could use such rhetoric to try to tie the alliance to a non-military or less aggressive solution than that proposed by the restrainee. But this cost is weak if domestic publics and opposition groups tend to be more angered by the failure to uphold a pledge to use force than by a pledge not to use force. Do leaders suffer more for joining a war

Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability,” p. 711.

after pledging not to join or for not joining a war after pledging to join? Fearon is focused on the latter situation – not escalating after pledging to escalate. The former situation could be characterized as escalating after pledging not to escalate. A fourth example, linked to this third one, involves a reference to domestic opposition or domestic audience costs (e.g., “I would love to support this intervention but the American people don’t support it, and I cannot afford to cross them”).

In any case, the thinking of the audience costs and costly signaling approach is that the restrainee concludes the following: if my ally is willing to incur these costs, my ally must be very serious about the restraint effort. Or at least this is what the restrainer *hopes* the restrainee will conclude.

Alliances change state capacities. Alliances may create dependent or interdependent relationships and make the threat of exit from the alliance meaningful. The threat to abandon another state will have greater salience when the resulting costs to the state left behind in the alliance are higher as is likely to be the case in a dependent or interdependent relationship. dependence and interdependence make the threat of exit a potent threat. This threat could be the leverage that some states use in a restraint dispute.

As noted already alliances may promote military and political coordination among the allies that results in greater security than a state could achieve on its own. This coordination may lead to improved results for the alliance. If the goal was to deter and defend, effective coordination will make that more likely; the sum is greater than the parts.⁷

Alliances shape expectations. Another way of framing the institutional issue is by focusing on expectations. The first three sub-sections above mention factors that shape and re-

⁶ James D. Fearon, “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1, February 1997, pp. 68-90 at 69.

shape expectations states have about when they should and should not expect support from their ally.

How and why might the expectations of each ally change? A rational approach, focusing on the shadow of the future, suggests that alliances increase the probability of a future interaction (at $t + 1$) and that knowledge influences the decision at present (at t). Iterated interactions have an impact on intra-alliance relations.⁸ A second, learning-based approach is similar to the idea of information exchange mentioned earlier. The repeated interaction among allies gives each one a better understanding of the other's interests, domestic system, capabilities, and policies. A third sociological approach emphasizes the way in which the alliance interactions ultimately start to shape definitions of 'self' and 'other.' The alliance creates or hardens boundaries between members and non-members of alliance; it proscribes certain policies and conduct; and may shape the roles of the members of the alliance itself.⁹

V. Policy Implications

What are the implications for policymakers of the alliance restraint dynamic? First, restraint is another angle to consider when assessing how an alliance will be perceived by your adversary or how you are understanding an alliance formed by your adversary. Second, Domestic and bureaucratic factors have an important impact on restraint and international alliances. Third, states may seek ways to manipulate and circumvent so as to avoid being

⁷ See Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability," p. 710.

⁸ See Kenneth A. Oye, editor, *Cooperation Under Anarchy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Martin and Simmons, "Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions."

⁹ See Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44, no. 5, December 1996, pp. 936-957 at 946-950.

restrained or to make restraint attempts more likely to succeed. Fourth, successful restraint requires a strong effort on the part of the restrainer.

First, policymakers should keep an eye out for restraint when analyzing alliance behavior. Mis-reading the motivations for a new alliance could lead to dramatically different policy decisions. A state may shift gears in one direction if it thinks the new alliance is directed against it. If, instead, the new alliance appears intended to restrain one of the alliance members, a state outside the alliance may actually be reassured by it and ignore any pressure to respond in kind with some security-enhancing (or aggressive, depending on one's perspective) measure. For instance, Britain may have realized that its 1902 alliance with Japan was, in part, about modifying Japanese policy but Russia, looking from the outside, cannot be blamed for seeing only a growing Anglo-Japanese threat.

If mis-reading motivations along these lines is common, this could go along way toward explaining an important source of the security dilemma.¹⁰ States that think the formation of a rival alliance is directed against them might take a corresponding action meant to enhance their security standing. If this sparks a series of steps that result in an overall decrease in security for both sides, mistaking a restraining alliance for a threatening one would have had significant consequences. If a rival state instead understood the true purpose of the new alliance, it might be more inclined to hold back on any counter-move and, as a result, reduce the possibility of an insecurity-enhancing, escalatory spiral. One empirical way to address this question would be to look at how all the states designated as adversaries in the case studies in chapter six viewed the

¹⁰ On the security dilemma, see "The Security Dilemma in the Atomic Age" in John H. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 231-243; and Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2, January 1978, pp. 167-214.

restraining alliances. In a policy sense, this raises the question of whether restrainers should signal their intent to adversaries observing the formation of the new alliance and if so, how.

Second, domestic factors are an integral part of the success or failure of restraint. Rather than a black box which one can ignore, the state apparatus is crucial to policies of restraint. Can a policy be clearly communicated? Is the bureaucracy conveying what the executive hope they are conveying? If different officials send out different signals, the restraint policy may fail. Furthermore, what is the level of support for a given interest? How does the machinery of the state solidify support behind an objective? An ally may look in and see bureaucratic differences as a sign, rightly or wrongly, that the state is not unified behind an objective. For instance, in 1967, different parts of the US government seemed to send Israel different messages about going to war (and different Israeli officials seemed to hear different messages).

Third, can states figure out ways to circumvent the theory? What kind of state learning can take place based on the restraint dynamic and how it works (rational restraint theory)? One possibility is using lobbying or other means to manipulate of the interest of one's allies. A second issue is how weaker powers might try to overcome stronger capabilities. What strategies might they develop? States might over-commit resources in the hopes that the share of financial or troop contributions will correlate with level of influence in policymaking. States might try to develop unique assets so they restrict use and access, such as with a geographic assets like a base. This could give states leverage when a great power like the United States, for instance, wants local bases to attack Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever. States might avoid some alliances altogether so as to avoid being restrained. Some Israeli analysts fear a formal alliance with the United States for fear of U.S. restraint efforts. When it formed the coalition against terrorism, the

United States might have kept some states at arm's length in order to avoid giving those states a role in coalition policymaking.

Fourth, restrainers have to be vigorous in attempting restraint if they hope to succeed. The message must be clear and backed up by the threat of some action if the restrainer's advice is ignored. Infrequent rhetorical efforts at restraint will likely be insufficient. In a sense, restraint is more likely to be successful if the restrainer is willing to treat its ally like the restrainer might treat an enemy.

Several of these policy factors highlight domestic-international linkages. Across both economic and political issues, scholars have noted a trend of growing interconnectedness. Most of the attention in this regard has been focused on globalization. Non-tariff barriers, issues that once seemed well-ensconced in the domestic arena, now take on international importance. But the study of political and military issues may also demonstrate the importance of considering the inter-relationship between domestic factors and international ones. State interests may be framed and re-interpreted by top officials in ways that move beyond the dictates of the international system. Communication among allies and adversaries may rise and fall based on domestic idiosyncrasies. At the same time, international factors may leave only a certain amount of wiggle room for the state. International factors, domestic factors, and the nexus between them will continue to be an issue of great interest.

Appendix

This is a non-random, non-comprehensive list of cases of restraint (excluding those cases explored in this dissertation).

Year	Restrainee	Restrainer	Type of military policy (or general)	Restraint success/failure?	Did more powerful prevail?
1885 (Serbo-Bulgarian War)	Serbia	Austria	war	failure	no
1895 (Bosporus)	Russia	France	show of force	success	
1896	Russia	France	military intervention	success	
1908 (annexation of Bosnia)	Russia (support for Serbia vs Austria)	France England	war	success	
1912 (war against Turkey)	Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia (the Balkan League)	Russia	war	failure	
1913 (Scutari crisis)	Austria (military)	Germany Austria (political)	war (enter renewed Balkan fighting)	success	yes
post-WWII	Japan	US	nuclear proliferation, full rearmament (general)	success	yes
1970s	S. Korea	US	nuclear proliferation (general)	success	yes
1972	(Egypt)	(USSR)	war	(failure)	(no)
1980s	US	W. Europe	deploy missile defense	success	no
1982	Israel	US	conduct of war (West Beirut)	success	yes

1991 (Gulf War)	Israel	US	military intervention (vs Iraqi SCUDS)	success	yes
2002	Israel	US	Israeli invasion of West Bank	(failure)	no

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