

FIGHTING FOR MORE: THE SOURCES OF EXPANDING WAR AIMS

by

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Submitted to the Department of Political Science
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored why war aims expand in some wars but not in others. Nine different hypotheses, drawn from the domestic politics and realist schools of international relations broadly defined, of expanding war aims were presented. They were then tested against four historical case studies: Prussian war aims in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars, U.S. war aims in the Korean War, and British War aims in the First World War.

The results of the tests and case studies include the following: 1. The problem of expanding war aims is a common phenomenon in international history. 2. The expansion of war aims is better explained by the incentives and constraints of the international system, rather than the domestic political systems of individual states. 3. War aims were sometimes difficult to contract, even when it was prudent to do so. 4. The difficulty of contracting war aims, however, is often better explained by the incentives and constraints of a state's domestic political system, rather than those of the international system.

The implications of this study and its conclusions for international relations theory, civil-military relations, and U.S. foreign policy were assessed.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Barry R. Posen

Title: Professor of Political Science

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM OF EXPANDING WAR AIMS

"The beginning of wisdom in human as well as international affairs was knowing when to stop."

-- Henry A. Kissinger

1.1 WAR AND EXPANDING WAR AIMS

War aims are the political objectives for which a state engages in military conflict. They are the "ends" in a state's grand strategy or national security policy when it moves from peace to war. The "means" are weapons, troops, doctrines, and strategies which states employ to achieve their war aims. Each antagonist begins a war with some political objective or objectives in mind. At a minimum, states have defensive war aims which usually include preserving their territorial integrity and government. At a maximum, states have offensive war aims in which the objective is the conquest of the enemy's land, the overthrow of its government, or rarely, the extermination of a people--a Carthaginian Peace.¹ Between these two extremes are many possible permutations of war aims.

The war aims of both sides will not remain constant throughout a war. The objectives of antagonists, of course, are incompatible, for if they were not, there would be no reason for war. At least one side must yield on its war aims to end the conflict. That is not too surprising since one side will usually lose the war. Nevertheless, sometimes both sides adjust their aims to reach peace. This may occur because both antagonists exhaust their resources without a decisive battlefield outcome. In effect, they decide that they can live with less than what they originally wanted.

¹ This phrase refers to the one-sided Third Punic War in which Rome conquered its ancient enemy, Carthage, killed all Carthaginian adult males, sold all the women and children into slavery, and sowed the land of Carthage with salt to ensure nothing would rise there ever again.

A more interesting and important phenomenon, however, is the tendency for states to expand their war aims during the course of a war. For nearly 3000 years, philosophers and historians have observed this phenomenon. During the Peloponnesian War Thucydides wrote that the Athenians, after winning an important victory over Sparta at Pylos, refused peace terms they themselves had once sought and "aimed at winning still more."² Writing in 15th century Florence, Machiavelli warned that "wise Princes and Republics should content themselves with victory; for when they aim at more, they generally lose."³ In the 1800s, the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz noted that "...the original political objects can greatly alter during the course of the war and may finally change entirely *since they are influenced by events and their probable consequences.*"⁴

The problem of expanding war aims is the primary focus of this study. But what exactly does that mean? Consider in more detail the distinction between "defensive" war aims and "offensive" war aims. Jay Kaplan is succinct:

Values or benefits may be measured in terms of the achievement of the defensive and offensive goals of the war. Defensive goals relate to narrowly conceived identity, integrity, and security of the antagonists. Offensive goals concern values which a contestant would seek to impose upon or extract from the vanquished enemy and the international environment.⁵

Both sides in war begin with defensive war aims. Usually the aggressor also has a set of offensive war aims which may range from demanding a small slice of territory or a minor

² Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner and intro. M.I. Finley (New York: Penguin, 1983). Book IV:Chapter 21. All citations to Thucydides will use Thucydides' designation of book and chapter in abbreviated form. In this case, it would be, "IV:21."

³ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*, intro. Max Lerner (New York: Random House's Modern Library, 1950), p. 375.

⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 92. Emphasis in original.

⁵ Jay L. Kaplan, "Victor and Vanquished," in Stuart Albert and Edward C. Luck, eds., *On the Endings of Wars* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1980), p. 73.

political concession to pursuing the complete destruction of the enemy's military, the overthrow of its government, or its unconditional surrender. The defender may have only the defensive goals of survival and territorial integrity.⁶ Expanding war aims, then, refers to moving from defensive aims to offensive aims or from moderate offensive war aims to greater offensive war aims.

The Peloponnesian War provides an incisive illustration. At the outbreak of war, Spartan war aims were unlimited. They included destroying Athenian power and the Athenian empire, pulling down Athens' Long Walls which protected it from Sparta's formidable infantry, eliminating the Athenian navy which was the very foundation of Athenian power, and forcing Athens to accept once and for all Sparta's hegemony in Greece.⁷ Athens' initial aims were to stand on the defensive, protect the city, and avoid any new ambitious projects for expansion.⁸ In a pointed analysis of Athenian strategy, Donald Kagan characterized Athenian war aims as *psychological*. Pericles, Athens' senior statesman and leader, planned no major offensive action, only defensive moves. The objective was to wear down Sparta by demonstrating that Athens could carry on the war for years without any appreciable gain to Sparta or loss to Athens.⁹ It was the very essence of defensive war aims. But Athens later expanded its war aims, first when it wanted to conquer a few small neighbors to better protect its borders and, again, with the launching of the Sicilian

⁶ However, war is not only about one's own war aims, an enemy must be broken of its objectives as well. Thus, an essential, if implicit, war aim of every combatant is to force one's opponent to reduce its war aims down to the point where both sides' objectives are in agreement. That requires destroying an opponent's will even more than its fighting capacity--though both are usually required. At the same time, one must retain the ability to fulfill one's own war aims.

⁷ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, I:66-88. See also Donald Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 18-19.

⁸ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, I:140-144.

⁹ Kagan, *Archidamian War*, p. 24-38.

expedition. In the latter case, Athens coveted a western empire as large as its holdings in the Aegean Sea which had taken decades to acquire. Foolishly, the Athenians "were taking on a war of almost the same magnitude as their war against the Peloponnesians."¹⁰ It ended in disaster and Athens's ruin.

The problem of expanding war aims is not an isolated political question. Means and ends in war are connected. Clausewitz argued that means *should* be commensurate with and subordinate to ends. That is, fighting for its own sake is senseless; likewise excessive sacrifice for a minor political goal is folly. Where aims cannot be achieved with appropriate levels of force, the aims should be abandoned and peace concluded.¹¹ Yet, in reality the dynamic of means and ends in war is less straightforward. Sometimes success on the battlefield leads states to increase their aims. Other times, elevated aims result in more intense fighting. This is a difficult process to understand. As Richard Smoke writes: "whereas expansion of means and the elevation of objectives are readily distinguishable concepts, the relationship between actualities is ambiguous, complicated, and dynamic."¹² Untangling that dynamic is one objective of this study.

The Questions

There are three issues in the general domain of war aims which merit research and attention.¹³ First, why do war aims *expand in wartime*. What explains the widely-observed, general tendency toward the wartime expansion of political goals? This expansion

¹⁰ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, VI:1.

¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 92.

¹² Richard Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 14.

¹³ I wish to thank Stephen Van Evera for helping me clarify and frame these questions.

can occur at two different times: in the *midst of war* and at the *outset of war*. Second, why do states adopt *large* war aims? That is, what explains the embrace of large goals either in the midst of war or at the outset of war? Third, why do states adopt *overly-large* war aims? In other words, why do states adopt prior to war, at the outset of war, or in the midst of war objectives which are beyond their means to fulfill or war aims that encompass goals of little value?¹⁴ Each of these questions is important *and* largely unexplored within international relations. Space and time constrain me from exploring all three questions; I shall only address only the first--why states expand their war aims in the midst of war and at the outset of war. Nevertheless, the hypotheses of expanding war aims which I propose in chapter two address somewhat the issues of why states sometimes adopt large aims and overly-large aims.

My central research question is: *Why do war aims expand in some wars but not in others?* War aims do not expand in every war. Expanding war aims is a common phenomenon but not a universal one. This suggests two sets of binary research questions. First and most important, when and why do war aims expand? When and why do war aims contract? Second and corollary, when do states contract war aims rather than escalate means? When do states escalate means rather than contract aims? Despite innumerable volumes in the social sciences on the many facets of war, few scholars have ever attempted to understand the causes and consequences of expanding and contracting war aims. My primary effort, however, will be devoted to the study of expanding war aims, the more dangerous and interesting phenomenon. No systematic study attempting to explain the dynamics of expanding and contracting war aims exists. Several good empirical studies on individual wars

¹⁴ Jack Snyder addressed the problem of "imperial over-expansion." He defined this term to mean counter-productive expansion--expansion beyond the imaginary line that defines the outer boundary of profitable empire. See *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). A lesser concept included within Snyder's framework is "wartime over-aiming," defined here as the adoption of war aims that are unachievable or, if they are achievable, are not worth the cost of their attainment.

have been done, notably on the First World War, but no scholar has attempted to explain the phenomenon across time and place.

Examples of Expanding War Aims

History offers many cases where the war aims of one antagonist or both have expanded during the course of a war. These expansions take place under many different circumstances. Sometimes war aims expand at the beginning of a war, sometimes at the end, sometimes throughout its entire course. Sometimes war aims expand before military victory, sometimes after military victory. States may expand war aims because they expect to win; others may expand war aims because they fear they might lose. The following examples illustrate this complicated phenomenon.

During the 3rd century B.C. Punic Wars, the war aims of Rome and Carthage spiralled into total war. Carthage, who initiated the titanic struggle, began with moderate offensive war aims and expanded them until it tried to conquer Rome. Similarly, Rome moved from defensive war aims to moderate offensive war aims to the total offensive war aims of Roman senator Cato the Elder's Carthaginian Peace.¹⁵

In 1814, after moderate military success against the United States during the War of 1812, Great Britain engaged in a mild expansion of war aims. While initially fighting only to defend Canada and repel a U.S. invasion, Britain later decided that it wanted more. Britain sought a slice of territory from the U.S.'s northern border and a few forts to better protect the Canadian frontier from perceived American aggression. These war aims were given up, however, after Washington's military fortunes improved and peace was desired by

¹⁵ After the Second Punic War, Cato was famous for ending every speech, whatever the topic, with the phrase, "Carthage must be destroyed!" (*Delenda est Carthago*).

both sides as quickly as possible.¹⁶ At the outbreak of the Crimean War, before shots were fired between the main antagonists, Britain and France expanded their war aims against Russia with their program to conquer the Crimea. They gained the objective after two years of siege and trench warfare.¹⁷

During the American Civil War, Northern war aims expanded from the relatively limited aim of bringing the South back into the Union to include the emancipation of slaves and the destruction and transformation of Southern society. While it is difficult to classify the Union's initial war aims, its new objectives were clearly offensive and total. At the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, the North had yet to win a major victory against Confederate armies.¹⁸ Nor is this phenomenon limited to wars between two individual antagonists. In the Thirty Years' War, the war aims of many participants expanded considerably and thereby contributed to giving the war its name.¹⁹ In the First World War, the aims of several major and minor powers expanded during the war.²⁰

Yet, there are many examples where the war aims of both antagonists did not expand. The Mexican-American War, the Danish War of 1864, the Austro-Prussian War, the Russo-Japanese War, the recent Gulf War, and many of the wars of the eighteenth century are just such examples.

¹⁶ T. Harry Williams, *The History of American Wars from 1745 to 1918* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), pp. 93-109.

¹⁷ See Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 147-194.

¹⁸ See Brooks D. Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 32-36.

¹⁹ See Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (New York: Military Heritage Press, 1987), chapters 4-5.

²⁰ See David Stevenson, *The First World War and International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 87-138.

One point needs clarification. States can begin wars with limited aims or "total" aims.²¹ For example, in declaring war on Mexico, President Polk launched a war of limited aggression. He sought the annexation of Texas and the conquest of California and New Mexico, not the complete conquest of Mexico.²² Conversely, Hitler's goal at the outset of his June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union was the complete conquest and overthrow of the Soviet state. As Norman Rich writes: "The Third Reich intended to resume the Germanic expansionist program where it had stopped six hundred years ago, and to press once again over the routes of the medieval crusading orders into the lands of the east."²³

Nor are the aims of total conquest a 20th century phenomenon. In setting out to destroy Frederick the Great and the power of Prussia at the start of the Seven Years' War, the Empresses Elizabeth of Russia and Maria-Theresa of Austria declared: "It being impossible for the peace of Europe to be assured unless the King of Prussia is deprived of the means of troubling it, Their Imperial Majesties will make every effort to do this service to humanity."²⁴ Austrian Grand Duke Francis expected that "this devil could be crushed at one blow and so reduced that we need never fear from him again."²⁵ They aimed at overthrowing Frederick and dismembering the Prussian state.

²¹ "Total war aims" is an amorphous phrase that must be defined specifically with each case. Generally, it refers to the complete destruction of enemy military forces and the overthrow of its government, the total conquest of the enemy states, or, as in Rome's extreme Carthaginian peace, the extermination of a nation and a people. "Limited aims" usually refer to a slice of land or a political concession (both of which can vary considerably in size before one reaches the category of total aims).

²² See David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1973), pp. 385-392.

²³ Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi States, and the Course of Expansion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 6-7.

²⁴ Quoted in G.P. Gooch, *Frederick the Great* (New York: Dorset Press, 1947), p. 43.

²⁵ Quoted in Pierre Gaxotte, *Frederick the Great*, trans. R. A. Bell (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 113.

Similarly, defenders may pursue limited or total aims at the outset of war. Israel's aims during the 1973 Yom Kippur War remained limited and defensive despite the successful conclusion of the conflict.²⁶ Conversely, the British and French ultimatum in September 1939 demanding Germany's withdrawal from Poland was a pretext for initiating total war. As British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain told the House of Commons: "There is only one thing left for me to do: that is, devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much...I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been reestablished."²⁷ He added that making peace with the "present German Government" was impossible.²⁸

1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPANDING WAR AIMS

Understanding why war aims expand in some wars but not in others is important for several reasons. First, the problem of expanding war aims belongs under the general rubric of escalation in war. Escalation may take five different forms: use of weapons, classes of targets, forms of warfare, the widening of war, and expanded war aims. None of these are mutually exclusive. Second, the expansion of war aims makes war termination more difficult. Third, the theoretical implications of this analysis have direct consequences for U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War world.

²⁶ Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1978), pp. 261-311.

²⁷ Quoted in William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960), p. 619.

²⁸ Quoted in Eleanor M. Gates, *End of the Affair: The Collapse of the Anglo-French Alliance, 1939-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 20-25.

1. New or different types of *weapons* may be employed. During war new innovations may create new weapons which are quickly put to use. The atom bomb at Hiroshima was the most famous example of this development. It joined a long list which included poison gas and the tank in the First World War or the iron-clad warship and the repeating rifle in the American civil war.

2. Different classes of *targets* may be attacked. A decision to attack civilians in war is regarded as an escalation over attacking only military targets. World War II was a "total war" in part because civilians and the cities they inhabited became prime targets for military forces. With respect to targeting, further escalation was not possible by 1944. Similarly, Prussian forces in the Franco-Prussian War shelled Paris and its civilian inhabitants until the French government capitulated and sued for peace. Europe had not witnessed such an event in sixty years.²⁹

3. Escalation may occur by the employment of new *forms of warfare*. This might mean escalating from guerilla tactics to conventional warfare or from conventional warfare to guerilla tactics. In either case, the conflict would enter a new dimension. Wars may start as conflicts between professional armies and escalate on one side or both into national crusades. Smoke, for example, maintains that at least two separate escalations occurred during the Franco-Prussian War. First, France employed guerilla forces against the Prussian occupying garrison. Second, the Government for National Defense reintroduced nationalist warfare to Europe by mobilizing France into a "nation in arms."³⁰

4. *Wars may widen*. A war is escalating if noncombatant states are being drawn into

²⁹ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 121-122.

³⁰ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 121-122.

the conflict or new geographical areas are being opened to the fighting. The Seven Years' War began as a struggle between Britain and France on the North American continent. Within a few years, it had become a continent-wide war in Europe and a global colonial struggle between the British and the French. The historian Reginald Savory describes it:

Fighting took place in the Philippines, India, and the Mediterranean, Spain, Portugal, and West Africa; in Germany, Austria and on the coast of France; in North America, the Caribbean, and Cuba; by sea and on land. All the great powers were involved... This wide geographical spread; this involvement of the major powers; this loss of life and outpouring of treasure; marked the greatest upheaval the world had yet seen. The Seven Years War may well claim to be the First World War.³¹

War between two individual antagonists may also widen. In its war against Mexico in 1847, the U.S. widened a geographically limited conflict to force the Mexican government to come to terms. The U.S. had possession of the territories it wanted but the Mexican government refused to agree to peace. So the U.S. marched on Mexico City and forced an end to the war.³²

5. Finally, wars may escalate when one or both sides of a conflict *expand their war aims*. The expansion of war aims often, though not always, causes the other forms of escalation. At a general level, the more a state wants from the international system, the harder it must fight, the more armies it must build, and the more territory it must conquer. Even if a state is fighting for an abstract political goal, it must defeat its opponent's armies or conquer parts of its territory or both to force its enemy to make the necessary concessions. If that political goal is enlarged, the means to achieve it must be correspondingly greater. War, thus, is a chaotic and highly competitive process. Threats loom larger. Enemies appear more dangerous. The greater the threat, the greater the willingness on the part of states to employ any means necessary to survive and to win. States become more resourceful

³¹ Quoted in Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 196-197.

³² Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation*, pp. 439-484.

during war. They marshal and mobilize a society's military, economic, and intellectual resources and harness them to the war effort. New weapons and tactics are developed and used. New strategies are innovated and employed. At the same time, a state will try to prevent its opponent from doing the same. It may attack civilians in an effort to undermine their morale, terrorize them into wanting peace, or otherwise inhibit their usefulness to the enemy. During war states become extremely sensitive to the balance of power. Wars widen because states take steps to weaken their enemies' relative power. This may mean attacking their enemies' allies with whom they are not yet at war, neutral states which aid their enemies, or geographic areas they had hoped to leave undisturbed. This enlarging of immediate objectives, thus, becomes a means by which states may achieve their ultimate objectives. The problem is, however, these very activities are likely to convince an opponent that the threat it faces is greater than it had anticipated. It may then expand its own aims or engage in its own escalations in response to those of its antagonist. A spiral of expanding war aims and military escalation ensues.

For example, in the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln's primary war aim was the preservation of the Union--by any means necessary. In 1862 he enlarged his war aims to include the emancipation of the slaves. This was a means to that end. He hoped it would inspire slave uprisings in the South and weaken Confederate power. At the same time, this new objective required the invasion of the South and the destruction of the Confederate economy and society. Civilians suffered most, especially in Sherman's March to the Sea. In short, this new war aim caused the war to widen, new targets--civilians--were attacked, and new forms of warfare were employed. (At the outbreak of war Lincoln had hoped that he would not have to fight such an utterly total war.) History provides more examples. Athens's attempt to conquer Sicily widened the geographical expanse of the war and increased

the numbers of states involved. With this new aim, Athens doubled in one stroke the number of enemies arraigned against it. This evident ambition made Athens' opponents even more determined to crush Athenian power and make sure it never rose again.³³ Consider also the escalations of the Franco-Prussian War. As Smoke writes, guerilla warfare, the siege of Paris, and the "national" war "were a consequence in one way or another of the Germans' decision to elevate their war objectives to include Alsace-Lorraine."³⁴ Had Bismarck not insisted on keeping the two provinces, peace might have been concluded after Sedan and Napoleon's overthrow. The new republic would not have encouraged guerilla warfare, Paris would not have been assaulted, and while the war would still have had a "national" character, the mutual hatred might not have been so bitter, deep, and long-lasting.

War Aims and War Termination

Decisions to expand war aims almost always precipitate a longer, more intense war. When states elevate their political objectives, war termination is harder. The more states demand from their opponents, the more difficult it is to conclude peace.³⁵ If states fight only for a small province or a relatively minor point of policy, then they are unlikely to sacrifice the blood or treasure of an entire generation. "The smaller the penalty you demand

³³ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Book VI.

³⁴ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 121.

³⁵ See, for example, Leon V. Sigal, *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), chapter 3. For other works on war termination, see Francis Beer and Thomas Mayer, "Why wars end," *Review of International Studies* 12 (1986): 95-106; Gordon Craig and Alexander George, *Force and Statecraft*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); William Fox, ed., *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, special issue on war termination, 392 (November 1970); Fred C. Ikle, *Every War Must End* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); Paul Kecskemeti, *Strategic Surrender: The Politics of Victory and Defeat* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958); Frank Lingberg, "Predicting the Termination of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 10 (June 1966): 129-171; C.R. Mitchell and Michael Nicholson, "Rational Models and the Ending of Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27 (September 1983): 495-520; and Paul Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try to deny it to you....Moreover, the more modest your own political aim, the less importance you attach to it and the less reluctantly you will abandon it if you must."³⁶ In addition, when larger war aims cause wars to widen, the problem of war termination is a practical one. More parties to a conflict means there are more voices which must be accommodated to produce a peace. To get ten states, with their conflicting priorities, objectives, and ambitions, to talk about and agree on peace terms is much more difficult and will take longer than binary wars where only two states must agree to end a conflict. Moreover, states which have had civilian targets attacked are more likely to fight to a finish and avoid a negotiated peace than one which has not. New weapons or forms of war used to win a new set of aims evoke a similar response. The more viciously a state is attacked, the more it will respond in kind. Negotiated peace is more difficult to achieve because each state in such a conflict regards its opponent as increasingly deadly. Compromise therefore is viewed as something which will harm the security of the state. As Clausewitz stated: "If war is a part of policy, policy will determine its character. As policy becomes more ambitious and vigorous, so will war, and this may reach the point where war obtains its absolute form."³⁷

Thus, Athens's decision to attack Sicily in the Peloponnesian War convinced her opponents that Athenian ambitions would not end until she conquered the entire Mediterranean world. Peace on sensible terms became impossible: Athens's enemies were determined to fight on until the Athenians' unconditional surrender and the overthrow of their democratic government.³⁸ Similarly, during the Iran-Iraq War, the expansion in Iranian war

³⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 81.

³⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 606.

³⁸ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book VII-VIII.

aims to include the overthrow of Saddam Hussein led to a brutal eight-year war.³⁹ Understandably, Hussein would not make peace on those terms. Nevertheless, even moderate expansions in aims may have unforeseen effects and unforeseen costs. Expecting a quick, cheap victory, the British and French decision to take the Crimea in 1854 ended two years and thousands of casualties later.

This discussion of the difficulty of war termination makes several assumptions. First, it assumes that both sides of a conflict do not have strictly defensive aims. At least one side must have offensive aims and if both do, then the intensity of war and the difficulty of war termination will be even greater. Second, one state must not already be exhausted from the war. Where a state has expended all its resources and its opponent's war aims rise, war termination will probably not be much more difficult than if objectives had remained the same.

United States Foreign Policy

The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War do not make this study less relevant for U.S. foreign policy. Unless one is prepared to argue that war is now a phenomenon of the past, the problem of expanding war aims will remain for U.S. policymakers--as the Gulf War and its aftermath vividly illustrated. The U.S. did not expand its war aims in that conflict even though many argued then and argue now that it should have. Thus, in the first major conflict of the post-Cold War era, a debate on expanding war aims reared its head. Moreover, the United States does not have to be a belligerent in a conflict for this study to be useful. As the sole superpower--temporarily, at least--the United States

³⁹ See John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *The Gulf War: Its Origins, History, and Consequences* (London: Methuen, 1989), p. 103; and Stephen R. Grummon, *The Iran-Iraq War: Islam Embattled* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1982), p. 16.

frequently is called on to take a leading role in mediating third party wars. The war in the former Yugoslavia is the current example. Thus, understanding the causes and consequences of expanding war aims will be essential if U.S. officials, serving as mediators, want to keep a war limited and, ultimately, to terminate it.

Surveying the world today, only Western Europe, North America, and South America appear likely to remain peaceful for the foreseeable future. Great instabilities and trouble-spots remain in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. Wars are underway in those regions even now. And where there is war, there will be expanding war aims.

1.3 THE ESCALATION AND LIMITED WAR LITERATURE

Historians and political scientists alike are interested in the relationship between war and politics. A perusal of the appropriate library shelves of universities will find hundreds of volumes with obviously named titles: *War and Strategy*, *Politics and War*, *Strategy and War*, *War and Diplomacy*, and the like. The paucity of work on war aims represents a surprising gap in this literature. Nevertheless, it will be useful to review some works that bear on the problem of expanding war aims, especially the literature on escalation and limited war. However, I begin with Clausewitz. His treatise framed the relationship between war and politics for succeeding generations of scholars.

The central organizing principle of Clausewitz's theory of war is that war and politics are intimately related, with the former subordinate to the latter. States do not fight simply for the sake of fighting; they fight for a political objective: "The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose."⁴⁰ Policy must guide war and generals must remain subordinate to political leaders:

That the political view should wholly cease to count on the outbreak of war is hardly conceivable unless pure hatred made all wars a struggle for life and death.... Subordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that has created war. Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa. No other possibility exists, then, than to subordinate the military point of view to the political.⁴¹

War thus is a means to carry out policy, the same way that diplomacy is a means to carry out policy. Indeed, to Clausewitz war is simply a "stronger form of diplomacy."⁴²

Clausewitz's attention to the fact that war is subordinate to politics made him the original advocate of limited war. Means, he argued, should be proportionate to ends:

Since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in *magnitude* and also in *duration*. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced and peace must follow.⁴³

Clausewitz maintained this principle on the upside as well. Clausewitz recognized that military defeat as well as military success could change one's prospects and political

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 87. For intelligent and useful treatments of Clausewitz's writings, see Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*, trans. Christine Booker and Norman Stone (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983); Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: MacMillan, 1973); Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). See also, Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Peter Paret and Daniel Moran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁴¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 607.

⁴² Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 590.

⁴³ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 92.

objectives. A series of irreversible military defeats would inevitably force a state to reduce its war aims because the means available proved insufficient for the meeting the political objectives. But to be ever expanding one's war aims after each military victory would be an inversion of his famous dictum that war is the continuation of policy by other means. That would subordinate policy to war.

Clausewitz does not have an explicit discussion of the causes of expanding war aims. However, some sections of his work are insightful. In Clausewitz's theoretical abstractions, the competitive nature of warfare might cause expanding war aims. Since warfare tends to be a binary phenomenon, it spirals upward in intensity. One side in a conflict will at first fight with greater intensity than its opponent. "But the enemy will do the same; competition will again result and, in pure theory, it must again force you both to extremes."⁴⁴ However, Clausewitz modifies this abstraction by stating that in the real world, other factors, such as the political nature of war or domestic politics, usually intervene to limit the upward spiral of violence.⁴⁵

Clausewitz also argues that warfare in a particular historical epoch will influence the probability of expanding war aims. For example, prior to the French Revolution the nature of warfare and society limited the war aims of states. Wars were fought by oligarchic and monarchical governments and by professional armies. The expense of raising and maintaining such organizations meant that they were limited in size and judiciously used. States with limited means could not fight unlimited wars:

The enemy's cash resources, his treasury and his credit, were all approximately known; so was the size of his fighting forces. No great expansion was feasible at the outbreak of war. Knowing the limits of the enemy's strength, men knew they were reasonably safe from total ruin; and being aware of their own limitations, they

⁴⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 77.

⁴⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 78-81, 582-586.

were compelled to restrict their own aims in turn.⁴⁶

If by some catastrophe a state's army were destroyed, it would have no choice but to sue for peace. It did not have the means to extract a new army from its society and thus lacked the wherewithal to continue the fight. States were not yet nations and were not organized for war mobilization. The transformation of warfare brought on by the French Revolution, however, removed this structural limitation. The harnessing of an entire people to a war effort made total war and total aims possible. "Since Bonaparte, then, war, first among the French and subsequently among their enemies, again became the concern of the people as a whole, took on an entirely different character, or rather closely approached its true character, its absolute perfection....The sole aim of war was to overthrow the opponent."⁴⁷ Thus, to some degree at least, Clausewitz recognized that the means available to a state govern the war aims it adopts.

Clausewitz did not develop his ideas on war aims further. He tended to attribute the problem of expanding war aims to the changing opportunities and dynamics of the battlefield and political leadership. Precisely what those opportunities and dynamics are and how they work he left unclear. The literature on war since Clausewitz did not improve much on his analysis. It focused primarily on discovering the causes of war--without definitive success. But the escalation and limited war literature is helpful.

⁴⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 590.

⁴⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 592-593.

The scholarship on limited war and escalation arose in the shadow of the Second World War and the development of atomic weaponry. Its purpose was prescriptive. The large-scale deployment of nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union would have made total war between the superpowers suicide. Yet, many scholars and policy-makers recognized the need for a doctrine which would allow the practical and limited application of force in support of U.S. interests, especially for containment.⁴⁸ As Robert E Osgood, a pioneer in this literature, stated: "The contemporary interest in limited war springs partly from a determination to avoid World War III."⁴⁹

The literature on escalation and limited war is large, but mostly policy specific. Hundreds of articles and books explain how NATO should fight a limited war or how the U.S. should fight a limited war in the Third World, and so forth. A smaller yet substantial theoretical literature exists as well.⁵⁰ The problem with these works is that while they

⁴⁸ See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), especially chapters 2-3.

⁴⁹ Robert E. Osgood, "The Reappraisal of Limited War," in *Problems of Modern Strategy, Studies in International Security*: 14 (London: Chatto & Windus for the Institute for Strategic Studies, 1970), p. 93.

⁵⁰ For the best and major works, see Bernard Brodie, *Escalation and the Nuclear Option* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); idem, "More About Limited War," *World Politics*, Vol. X, No. 3 (October 1957), pp. 112-122; idem, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); idem, "Unlimited Weapons and Limited War," *The Reporter*, XI (November 18, 1954), pp. 16-21; Morton Halperin, *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963); Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957); idem, *The Necessity of Choice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961); Robert McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); idem, *Limited War Revisited* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1979); Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); idem, *Arms and Influence* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976, originally published by Yale University Press, 1966).

For other useful works on limited war and escalation, see Ian Clark, *Limited Nuclear War* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982); Ole R. Holsti, *Crisis, Escalation, War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972); Herman Kahn, *On Escalation* (New York: Praeger, 1965); William V. O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (New York: Praeger, 1981); Quincy Wright, "The Escalation of International Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 9 (1965), pp. 434-449. For a theoretical mathematical modelling approach to escalation, see Thomas V. Bonoma, *Conflict: Escalation and Deescalation*, Professional Papers in International Studies, Series/Number 02-033 (London: Sage Publications, 1975). For policy-oriented studies on escalation,

recognize that limited aims are integral to a limited war doctrine, they treat that requirement as an assumption and focus on the means alone. Brodie, surprisingly, was the most adamant in this regard:

Limited war has sometimes been defined as "a war fought to achieve a limited objective,"...but it distorts dangerously the character of the relationship. It diverts attention from the crucial fact that the restraint necessary to keep wars limited is primarily a restraint on means, not ends.⁵¹

This is understandable, perhaps, since Brodie was concerned with preventing the use of nuclear weapons. Yet, the need for limited aims was an *a priori* assumption for Brodie.⁵²

Perhaps that is easier said than done. Osgood was more even-handed. He stressed that limiting both means *and* ends is important to limiting war and controlling escalation:

Statesmen should scrupulously limit the controlling political objectives of war and clearly communicate the limited nature of these objectives to the enemy. The reason for this is that nations tend to observe a rough proportion between the scope of their objectives and the scale of their military effort; that is, they tend to exert a degree of force proportionate to the value they ascribe to the objectives at stake. Therefore, the more ambitious the objectives of one belligerent, the more important it is to the other belligerent to deny those objectives and the greater the scale of force both belligerents will undertake in order to gain their own objectives and frustrate the enemy's. In this manner a spiral of expanding objectives and mounting force may drive warfare beyond the bounds of political control.⁵³

Yet, this is as far as Osgood went. He concentrated only on the means side of Clausewitz's means-ends chain. He did not explain the problem of expanding war aims or offer remedies to it.

see Stephen J. Cimbala, *NATO Strategy and Nuclear Escalation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989); Arthur R. Day and Michael W. Doyle, *Escalation and Intervention: Multilateral Security and Its Alternatives* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986); Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. and Amoretta M. Hoeber, *Conventional War and Escalation: the Soviet View* (New York: Crane, Russak, & Co., 1981); Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Franz Schurmann, Peter Dale Scott, and Reginald Zelnik, *The Politics of Escalation in Vietnam*, Foreword by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Summary and Conclusions by Carl E. Schorske (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

⁵¹ Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, p. 312.

⁵² Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, p. 313.

⁵³ Osgood, *Limited War*, p. 24.

One author who recognized the complex dynamic between means and ends in war was Richard Smoke. In his book, *War: Controlling Escalation*, Smoke observed:

It was not difficult to arrive at the distinction between the *objectives* of war and the *means* of war (weapons, categories of targets, troop levels)...The ends-means differentiation proved troublesome in practice, however, because it was discovered that comparatively unlimited wars could be and had been fought, at least at first, for quite limited objectives. World War I was the obvious example...⁵⁴

Having recognized the problem, Smoke did not try to explain the causes of expanding war aims. Smoke realized that sometimes new aims cause states to escalate means and that the escalation of means sometimes leads states to new aims. But having already achieved much in his impressive study, he did not pursue this problem, specify conditions, or prescribe solutions.

To control escalation these scholars prescribed a limited war doctrine. That is, the United States should develop the method and means to fight a limited war, to have an alternative to "the dread alternatives of surrender or suicide."⁵⁵ This meant that the U.S. should adopt limited aims and means in any conflict with the Soviet Union or its proxies. Refraining from using nuclear weapons was the most important restraint on means. The suggestion of limited aims, however, was exhortive only. After all, what more can be said than--"Limit Your Aims!"? Nevertheless, the dynamic between means and ends that Clausewitz mentioned was not addressed. We are left wondering why aims expand or how we control aims during the high-pressure and dynamic process of war.

⁵⁴ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 89.

1.4 THE SOURCES OF EXPANDING WAR AIMS

In this dissertation, I present nine hypotheses of expanding war aims. 1. The blood price hypothesis: The higher the level of casualties a state suffers, the more it will expand war aims. 2. Social mobilization: The greater the need to mobilize its society and the more war-resistant it is, the more a state's war aims will expand. 3. The Cleon problem: The greater the influence, prestige, and political power of a state's leading generals, the more its war aims will expand. 4. Threats to security: The more a state's perception of an enemy threat increases during war, the more its war aims will expand. 5. Opportunistic expansion: The more the balance of power changes in favor of a state, the more its war aims will expand. 6. Cumulative resources and preventive expansion: The greater a state's need to reduce the power of an enemy, the more its war aims will expand in order to reduce that power. 7. Collective action problems and quid pro quo expansion: The greater the need for additional power, the more a state's war aims will expand by making promises to win new allies. 8. The collective action problem and alliance management: The greater the potential for contributory disputes among members of a coalition, the greater the likelihood coalition war aims will expand to an absolute level. 9. Systemic constraints: The greater the likelihood of third-party intervention in a war, the less likely a state's war aims will expand.⁵⁶ Table 1.1 specifies the independent variable for each hypothesis.

⁵⁶ The systemic constraints hypothesis is framed as a negative, because the reverse is at best a permissive condition. The *absence* of systemic constraints may *permit* war aims to expand, but it does not by any means automatically *cause* them.

Table 1.1 Hypotheses and Their Independent Variables

Hypothesis	Independent Variable
The Blood Price	Increasing casualty rates and the concern this causes in the high councils of a state.
Social Mobilization	The need to mobilize a society for war and the degree to which it is war resistant.
Cleon Problem	The prestige and influence of the military and its preference for wider war aims than civilians.
Threats to Security	The perception of an enemy threat.
Opportunistic Expansion	A perceived favorable change in the balance of power.
Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion	The perceived need to weaken the power of an enemy state.
Collective Action Problems and Quid Pro Quo Expansion	The need to acquire allies.
Collective Action Problems and Alliance Management	The need to avoid disputes within a coalition.
Systemic Constraints	The likelihood of outside intervention in a conflict.

The dependent variables are decisions to expand, hold steady, or contract war aims. Overall, the blood price, social mobilization, Cleon problem, threats to security, opportunistic expansion, and systemic constraints hypotheses are primarily what are being tested here. Broadly speaking, the first three fall under the domestic politics school of international relations, while the latter three belong in the realist tradition. The first three hypotheses are *loosely* derived from diversionary war theory, imperial overexpansion theory, and bureaucratic and organization theory. The threats to security hypothesis (which actually

incorporates a number of subsidiary hypotheses) is adapted from Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory. The opportunistic expansion and systemic constraints hypotheses (as well as the others) are derived from Kenneth Waltz's balance of power theory. Each is explained in detail in chapter two.

I found that the threats to security and opportunistic expansion hypotheses provide the strongest explanation of why states expand their war aims. It may be a bit of an oversimplification to say that states enlarge their goals when they are *scared* and when they are *winning*, but not much. Moreover, the absence of systemic constraints--i.e., there is little danger that outside powers will intervene in a conflict--is a *necessary condition* for war aims to expand. This is not to argue that the blood price, social mobilization, or Cleon problem hypotheses were unimportant or showed no explanatory power. On the contrary, civilian elites were concerned with costs and public support for their war aims. In every case controlling the state's leading generals and their war aims were serious problems which civilians had to confront. But more often than not, the incentives and constraints of the international system dominated internal debates on war aims. The generals usually lost these debates.⁵⁷ In no case did the casualties a state suffered, the need for social mobilization, or the influence of the leading generals *cause* a state's war aims to expand.

On the other hand, the cases in this study indicated that war aims are sometimes difficult to contract when the incentives and constraints of the international system suggest that they should. These instances are rare, and are usually at points where those incentives and constraints are open somewhat to interpretation. For example, where casualties have been excessively high (in the absence of defeat), states may not expand war aims but they are

⁵⁷ Of course, where the opinions of generals coincided with the incentives and constraints of the system, their war aims were adopted.

unwilling to reduce them. Policy-makers are reluctant to leave a war with less than what they had expected. Furthermore, generals resist the contraction of war aims if it means *voluntarily* surrendering objectives they have won on the battlefield. And in those circumstances, civilians were remarkably unwilling to challenge military opinion. Often these two influences go hand-in-hand: The military was unwilling to give up objectives for which it had fought hard and lost many soldiers to win. If, however, *military defeat* forced a retreat, then, assuming the appropriate incentives and constraints of the international system, civilians were more likely to contract aims, whatever the military opinion.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS AND CASE SELECTION

To test my hypotheses, I have chosen the comparative case study method.⁵⁸ The case study method was the only conceivable choice for this investigation. Explaining why war aims expand or why they are held steady requires examining the thoughts and decisions of policy-makers. This demands direct evidence of what influences their perceptions and motivations. Finding such evidence for a large-*n* statistical analysis is an impossible task for one researcher. Anecdotal evidence is inadequate for testing competing hypotheses because it does not provide a method to determine which hypotheses are the most important or the most powerful.

In this study, I use the three methods of case study analysis to test the hypotheses of expanding war aims. First, the hypotheses are tested by a "disciplined-configurative"

⁵⁸ Alexander L. George, "Case Study and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches* (New York: Free Press, 1977), pp. 43-63; Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision-making," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, Vol. 2 (JAI Press, 1985): 21-58. See also, Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7: *Strategies of Political Inquiry* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 79-137; Arend Lijphart, "II. The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (July 1975): 158-175.

analysis. This approach "describes and analyzes the case in terms of theoretically relevant general variables."⁵⁹ The theoretically relevant general variables are determined first by the central question of the study--why do war aims expand--but more specifically by predictions made for each case by the hypotheses. These hypotheses are then evaluated by how well their predictions correlate with the outcomes of each case. This is a simple congruence-procedure test.

Second, because a more thorough explanation of events is more satisfying than simple correlations, I use a process-tracing method to explore the inner workings of each case. That is, do actors perceive, speak, and behave as a hypothesis predicts they would? The greater the similarity between the predictions of a specific hypothesis and the actual details and decision-making processes in a case, the greater the explanatory power that hypothesis has, the more valid and credible it appears to be. For process-tracing to be successful, each hypothesis must make detailed and specific predictions regarding the actual motives of political elites, processes of decision-making, and outcomes in the cases. This is done at the beginning of each case chapter.

Third, this project is conceived as a "structured, focused comparison" where the researcher asks standardized "general questions to guide the data collection and analysis" across a group of cases. "These questions must be of a general nature, not couched in overly specific terms relevant to only one or another case but applicable to all cases within the class of events in question."⁶⁰ In this study, the cases are framed by the following questions:

1. What were the war aims of the political leaders of the state at the moment war is declared or begun?
2. Did war aims expand?
3. If war aims did not expand, what were the factors

⁵⁹ George, "Case Studies and Theory," p. 51.

⁶⁰ George, "Case Studies and Theory," pp. 61-62.

and motivations that were not conducive to an expansion in war aims? 4. If war aims did expand, what motivations and factors lead the policy elites to expand their war aims? 5. To what extent did strategic considerations influence decision-makers to expand war aims? 6. To what extent did domestic political pressures influence decision-makers to expand war aims? These questions, when combined with the specific predictions of the process-tracing method, allow us to conduct a powerful cross-case study of why war aims expand. While the congruence-procedure and process-tracing tests are performed within each individual case, the results from the cross-case comparison are assessed in the concluding chapter.

Four major cases are used to test the hypotheses of expanding war aims: 1. Prussian decision-making and war aims in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866; 2. Prussian decision-making and war aims in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71; 3. U.S. decision-making and war aims in the Korean War; and 4. British decision-making and war aims in the First World War. Reasonably full and accurate information on war aims can be found for each case. Secondary histories provided the majority of my information. On important points or questions of interpretation, the historical consensus was followed where there was one. Where there were differences among historians, multiple sources were employed, including primary materials. Opposing views and my reasons for rejecting them, however, will be found in footnotes. Moreover, as the research progressed more and more primary sources were used to investigate and document key points and decisions.

The cases examined here are substantively important. The united Germany Bismarck forged in the wars of German unification dominated European diplomacy for the next century. The war aims Prussia adopted in 1866 and 1870 influenced the character of the European alliance system prior to 1914 and thereby contributed to the outbreak of the First World War. The consequences of the American decision to expand its war aims in the late

summer of 1950 to include unifying the Korean Peninsula profoundly influenced millions of people and shaped the Cold War in Asia for decades. Many diplomatic historians argue that the decision was a critical blunder, leading to a much longer and bloodier war.⁶¹ Similarly, in 1914 Great Britain declared war on Germany to preserve Belgium's neutrality and to preserve the balance of power. These were limited aims. By 1918 Britain was fighting a total war and demanded Germany's capitulation. These new aims required Britain to mobilize its society for a bloody, extended attrition war. British leaders mobilized all of the country's resources to the fullest to serve the war effort. Conscription was introduced for the first time. This effort profoundly influenced British society, government, and people. Appeasement of Nazism in the 1930s was a direct outgrowth of the intense desire of the British government and people not to fight another First World War. Indeed, Britain never recovered its prewar strength and eventually lost its empire.

Nevertheless, this sample of cases has weaknesses. First, the states in the cases are western. We run the risk, therefore, of ethno-centricity in that our eventual explanations may only apply to the conduct of European or American wars. Second, these countries exist in the era of the modern bureaucratic nation-state. I do not study in detail a pre-nationalism case. This may limit the findings of my analysis to states of the modern era. However, few of my hypotheses are abstractly limited by this condition. The central theoretical work, therefore, may be tested against other types of cases.

In selecting cases I employed John Stuart Mill's two methods of criteria: The

⁶¹ See, for example, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times, 1988); Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 (Princeton University Press, 1990); Rosemary Foote, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

"Method of Difference" and the "Method of Agreement."⁶² The Method of Difference is where one selects cases where background characteristics are similar but the dependent variable (the outcome) varies across the cases. Conversely, the Method of Agreement means cases are selected according to divergent background characteristics but the dependent variable does not vary. Overall, the results of the cross-case comparison using both methods provided strong support for the "realist" hypotheses.

The two Prussian cases represented a comparison employing the Method of Difference. Since I focused on Prussian decision-making in both cases, they represented a good controlled comparison. Prussia started both wars and won quick, overwhelming victories. The same government and people were in power in Prussia during both wars. Of the six major hypotheses, the independent variables of the blood price, social mobilization, Cleon problem, and opportunistic expansion hypotheses did *not* vary across the cases. Yet, Prussia expanded its aims only in the Franco-Prussian War in annexing Alsace-Lorraine, not in the 1866 war against Austria. The independent variables of the systemic constraints and, to a lesser degree, the threats to security hypotheses varied with the dependent variable. Accordingly, these two hypotheses provided the strongest explanation of the variance in the dependent variable across the two cases.

Similarly, in the Korean War there were two separate changes in U.S. war aims, one expansion and one contraction. The first was the decision to expand aims and unify Korea by force in September 1950. The second, coming after the Chinese intervention in November 1950, was the simultaneous decision not to expand aims further *and* to contract war aims back to the initial objective of a *status quo ante bellum*. The independent variables

⁶² See John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Ibis, 1980), pp. 278-284. I thank Stephen Van Evera for pointing out and explaining this method to me. See also, George and McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories," pp. 26-28.

of the blood price, social mobilization, Cleon problem, and threats to security hypotheses did not vary across the two decisions within this comparison. Conversely, the independent variables of the opportunistic expansion and, to a lesser degree, the systemic constraints hypothesis did vary across the two decisions.⁶³ Thus, these hypotheses provided the best explanation for the variance in the dependent variable across the two decisions.

A third Method of Difference test was in the British case. The Cabinet adopted the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism in 1914. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, support the new objective. But in 1918 Lloyd George the prime minister abandoned it. The only independent variable which varied with dependent variable in this comparison was that of the opportunistic expansion hypothesis.

Nevertheless, selection according to the Method of Agreement represented the primary thrust of this study. I compare three cases: Prussian war aims in the Franco-Prussian War, U.S. war aims in the Korean War, and British war aims in World War I. War aims expanded in every case. The explanatory power of the independent variables of the six major hypotheses, however, varied considerably--and along the domestic politics-realism fault line. The independent variables of the blood price, social mobilization, and Cleon problem hypotheses varied across the cases, whereas those of the threats to security, opportunistic expansion, and systemic constraints hypotheses did not.

Using both the Method of Difference and the Method of Agreement ensured that our results would not be skewed by a spurious factor. If the Method of Agreement alone were employed, then we might observe one factor causing the expansion of war aims in every case. But by looking at a divergent case--with the Method of Difference--one has a

⁶³ There is some ambiguity regarding the explanatory power of systemic constraints hypothesis in this case. See chapter five.

"control." If the causal factor is found to be present in that case, then the relationship between it and the expansion of war aims is spurious. Hence, the combination of the two methods provides an even stronger case for the "realist" hypotheses. As a group, they were not spurious. The absence of systemic constraints (or at least the perceived absence of systemic constraints) is a *necessary condition* for war aims to expand. Prussian war aims were restrained in the Austro-Prussian War because Bismarck feared French intervention. In the other three cases, political elites for different reasons did not fear outside intervention. Where the necessary condition exists, *either* a perceived greater threat or a perceived opportunity will likely cause a state to expand its war aims. Where *both* a perceived greater threat and opportunity exist, war aims will almost certainly expand. Moreover, the combination of these two causal factors may even be enough to overcome the need for the necessary condition. Consider the Korean War. After Inchon the Truman administration ignored or discounted Chinese warnings of intervention. Systemic constraints were tightening; the systemic opportunity was diminishing. Yet, the Communist threat in Korea and the decisive military victory created at Inchon mesmerized MacArthur *and* Washington's decision-makers. War aims were allowed to expand when they should have been restrained.

Research Difficulties and Measuring Problems

Some barriers to my research proved troublesome but not insurmountable. First, determining if war aims expand at the outset of war can be difficult. In some cases the war aims of states are not always clearly defined at the outset of a war (or historians do not always clearly specify them). Sometimes states stumble into war, unsure of what specific aims they are fighting for. This made it difficult to measure the change in war aims during the transition from peace to war. To solve this measuring problem, I identified the reasons

for which a state intervened in a conflict or declared war on an enemy. These were its *initial* war aims. In making this determination, I placed more weight on the reasons or goals specified in *internal* documents and memoranda, and less on publicly stated rationales.

Second, sometimes what decision-makers told their people what they were fighting for and what the statesmen themselves thought they were fighting for were quite different. Generally, I was more concerned with the latter. Of course, to the extent that propaganda or public war aims influence real war aims--and I believe these differences are uncommon and minor--I included both in the analysis.

Third, measuring the value of the critical independent variables was a problem. There did not seem to me to be any way of defining *ex ante* concepts such as "opportunity" or "constraint" or, especially, a high "blood price." What looks like an opportunity to one person may be a constraint to another. What is a "high blood price" to a Roosevelt or Churchill may be "cheap" to a Hitler or Stalin. I attempt in chapter two to provide definitions for these concepts. However, where my definitions are open to question, my method of measuring the critical variables was case-specific. That is, I relied on the statements and expressed perceptions of the relevant decision-makers to make this determination.

Fourth, some cases of expanding war aims are overdetermined. That is, several factors cause a state to widen its objectives in a particular case. However, that is not necessarily a problem. Multiple causes of an event are not usual and such an observation is useful and important. Nevertheless, I tried to distinguish between causal factors by emphasizing crucial points which support one hypothesis while excluding others. More importantly, I included direct evidence from decision-makers who identify which causal factors were most important. To minimize propaganda and selective memory, I relied more

on internal or private contemporaneous sources for elite testimony.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The plan of this dissertation is as follows. Chapter two proposes and explains the hypotheses of expanding war aims. Chapters three through six present the major cases: Prussian war aims in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars, U.S. war aims in the Korean War, and British war aims in World War I. Chapter seven suggests theoretical conclusions and policy implications.

CHAPTER TWO: EXPLAINING EXPANDING WAR AIMS

"Bred on imperatives, the military temperament is astonished by the number of pretenses which the statesman has to indulge. The terrible simplicities of war are in strong contrast to the devious methods demanded by the art of government."

--Charles de Gaulle

2.1 HYPOTHESES OF EXPANDING AND CONTRACTING WAR AIMS

In this chapter I introduce nine hypotheses which purport to explain when and why states expand their war aims. Logically, some of these hypotheses are better suited for explaining why war aims expand during war, such as the blood price hypothesis; others, the social mobilization hypothesis for example, are more likely explain why war aims expand at the outset of war. Most, however, should in principle be able to explain both phenomena.

After identifying and explaining each hypothesis, I specify a number of *general* predictions that a particular hypothesis makes. These predictions are used to conduct a cross-case comparison in the concluding chapter. Each case study chapter will be introduced with case-specific predictions made by each hypothesis to determine its strength in the individual case.

A. The Blood Price Hypothesis (or The Tyranny of Sunk Costs): *The higher the level of casualties a state suffers, the more it will expand war aims.* This may explain why war aims widen long after a war is under way. In a desperate war, more ambitious aims are adopted to justify the ever-increasing sacrifice of men, resources, and other values (such as domestic welfare and freedoms). This is the tyranny of sunk costs. As Kaplan writes: "[P]ressures for the enlargement of the victory program are frequently a function of the

magnitude of suffering which a nation or alliance undergoes, one indicator of which is the extent to which threats to security values force sacrifices in welfare values. The greater the deprivation, as a rule, the greater will be the pressures for an expansive victory program."¹ During Desert Shield, the allied military buildup to the Persian Gulf War, several commentators warned that it would be difficult for the United States to limit its war aims as casualties increase once the war began. That point of course became moot by the fourth day of the ground war. But it does illustrate the force this untested hypothesis has in national debates on important security issues.

There are two variants to this hypothesis. One is a "First Image" hypothesis based on dissonance theory. The other is a "Second Image" hypothesis which has its roots in issues of domestic legitimacy.² The following paragraphs elaborate on both.

The first variant of the blood price hypothesis, based on dissonance theory, is *psychological*. Proposed by Robert Jervis, it expects that individuals want to see and do see their actions as rational and consistent. "If a person is to see his own decisions as wise and his behavior as consistent, he will have to believe that his gains are proportionate to the resources expended."³ Thus, statesmen in wartime who have made decisions which have had great costs in men and material must justify to themselves that the gain was worth the sacrifice. This may take the form of placing an exaggerated value on the gain achieved. Or statesmen may expand war aims to bring gains or expected gains into line with sacrifices and expenditures. For example, in 1941, Prime Minister Tojo seemed to justify Japan's

¹ Kaplan, "Victor and Vanquished," p. 75.

² For broader exploration and elaboration on "images" in international relations, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

³ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 393.

continued operations in China in these terms: "[The war] has cost us well over 100,000 men dead and wounded, [the grief of] their bereaved families, hardship for four years, and a national expenditure of several tens of billions of yen. We must by all means get satisfactory results from this."⁴

The second variant of the blood price hypothesis is based on *domestic legitimacy*. This version applies mostly, though not exclusively, to the era of modern mass politics in which leaders, politicians, and even dictators depend on the support of a large part of the population for their political positions.⁵ Leaders who take a nation to war depend on their populations or at least certain constituencies for support. Presumably, they tell their constituencies that the war would cost a reasonably specified amount of money and men, promising in return specified gains. If, however, their armies do not achieve the gains within allowable costs, the political elites, this hypothesis suggests, will expand their war aims rather than admit failure or that they were wrong. The new war aims justify the extraction of additional resources from the society in order to achieve both the original and new objectives. The new aims make legitimate the additional costs and thereby maintain the power and stability of the government which had sold its people the bill of goods in the first place.⁶

While this dynamic may afflict all types of regimes, it follows that democratic

⁴ Quoted in Jervis, *Perception, Misperception*, p. 398.

⁵ While no scholarly work examines this issue, the literature on diversionary theories of war is related and suggestive. This body of work tests whether statesmen start wars to solidify and strengthen their domestic political position. For major works, see Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Arno Mayer, "Internal Causes and Purposes of War in Europe, 1870-1956," *Journal of Modern History* 41 (September 1969): 291-303; John Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1973); Joseph Scolnick, Jr., "An Appraisal of Studies of the Linkages between Domestic and International Conflict," *Comparative Political Studies* 6 (1974): 485-509; Arthur Stein, "Conflict and Cohesion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 20 (March 1976): 143-172. For interesting critiques, see Blainey, *Causes of War*, chapter 5; Jack S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989): 259-288; and John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 208-210.

⁶ See Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 74.

governments would be more susceptible to this phenomenon. In democratic states, the government depends more on a wide base of support for legitimacy and thus may require wider aims to keep all the different groups satisfied than a government dependent on a narrower constituency. They must maintain support by winning elections, delivering on promises, and persuading the population to cooperate in achieving their objectives. Democratic governments are generally restricted from employing excessively coercive measures to maintain political support. Though more dictatorial regimes must still rely on public support for their political positions, they have more tools to employ to ensure continued support. They can crush early dissent, shut down opposition newspapers, arrest political opponents and thereby stem the tide of opposition easier than more democratic governments.⁷ They must rely much more on the successful execution of policy for maintaining legitimacy and authority. Thus repetitive failure, especially on the battlefield, will undermine a democratic regime more quickly than a dictatorial one, but both will eventually be susceptible to the disappointment of their respective populations.

One should add that these two variations of the blood price hypothesis are not mutually exclusive. They can be reinforcing. Both employ sunk-cost dynamics. Justifying aims to oneself and to one's supporters can be a reinforcing exercise.

In addition, the fear of losing legitimacy may help explain why war aims sometimes are difficult to contract. Renouncing war aims after great sacrifices would undermine the domestic political position of the policy-makers who advocated and led the war. This helps explain why governments often fall after a lost war. Prior to final defeat, they keep

⁷ However, even weak authoritarian regimes, ones that perhaps have already made a number of mistakes, will take measures and pursue policies to try to build popular support for their governments. This will make them more sensitive to the costs their people are bearing in order to prevent further erosion of their legitimacy more quickly than strong authoritarian governments. Thus, sometimes weak authoritarian and democratic governments may behave similarly.

expanding their aims in the hope of recovering their losses, not unlike the failed blackjack player who keeps doubling his bets to recover money already lost. But when peace is made, the broken promises and structure of lies are revealed for all to see.⁸ Thus, even if statesmen do not expand war aims, a worthwhile value must still be gained from the sacrifice. As Fred Ikle writes: "Those officials who are identified with the initiation of the war or its early conduct are apt to fear that they would in fact be criticizing and undermining themselves as government leaders if they considered any conclusion to the war that did not achieve the principal war aims."⁹

The oft-cited case for this hypothesis is the First World War. Raymond Aron is concise:

The war had not been started in order to bring about the triumph of particular views of life and society; but as the cost of operations mounted these views were felt to be essential to inflate the prospective profits of victory. It was declared that peace would be durable only if it were dictated unconditionally after crushing the enemy. The demand for total victory was not so much the expression of a political philosophy as a reflex reaction to total war.¹⁰

Kaplan similarly describes the war aims of Germany and the Allies in these terms: "These aims were designed to justify the unexpected degree of carnage and to imbue the emerging Pyrrhic victory with meaning."¹¹ He meant this both ways: imbuing the victory with meaning both to the statesmen and to their populations. However, whether World War I provides support for what I call the blood price hypothesis has not been empirically tested.

⁸ For a related discussion, see George W. Downs, "The Lessons of Disengagement," in Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson, and Larry Berman, *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992): 285-300. Political leaders engaged in risky interventions engage in a behavior which Downs calls "gambling for resurrection." That is the "phenomenon whereby individuals engage in increasingly high payoff, low probability wagers to salvage past losses." (p. 287). This strongly resembles the domestic legitimacy side of the Blood Price hypothesis.

⁹ Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 74.

¹⁰ Raymond Aron, *A Century of Total War*, (New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 28.

¹¹ Kaplan, "Victor and Vanquished," p. 85.

There is, however, an inconsistency in this argument. Logically, if casualties continue to mount, war aims should rise with them. There should be a never-ending spiral of casualties and war aims in each war such that it ends in total war and the utter of destruction of one side. But this rarely happens. The Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage may indeed be the only historical example where it has. Ikle agrees that in reality there are two sides to this coin: "[A]fter months or years of fighting, many citizens will come to feel that the outcome of the war must 'justify' past sacrifices.... Prolonged fighting, of course, also affects a nation's war aims in the opposite direction. As the costs of the war mount, people become less willing to incur future sacrifices merely to justify past ones."¹²

The key question is under what *conditions* do high costs and sacrifices drive aims up and when do they force aims to shrink? The answer, I think, depends on whether the initial expectations were met. That is, where objectives are met and costs are as expected, this "blood price" dynamic would not operate. Conversely, where a nation has finally exhausted itself in war, this dynamic also would not operate. The desire to end the war becomes overwhelming and war aims contract. But where initial aims are not fulfilled and the state still has much latent fighting capability, the tyranny of sunk costs would dominate war aims policy. To justify the sacrifices already made, new war aims would be proposed.

Predictions: We can infer a number of general predictions from the blood price hypothesis with respect to the relationship between wars and war aims. **First, as each month and year goes by and casualties and costs mount, a state's war aims should expand.** At its core, this hypothesis is a cumulative argument. As costs go higher, more (higher aims) is required for justification and compensation. **Second, the biggest and most intense wars**

¹² Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 12.

should see the combatants with the largest war aims. Because the largest wars have the highest casualties, it is logical to assume that such wars will generally see the antagonists fighting for larger aims than those in wars in which casualties are relatively low. Thus, world wars should be fought for the highest stakes relative to other types of war. Third, **within a world war, the country with the heaviest losses should have the largest aims.** The same logic applies here as with the previous prediction. Fourth, **societal groups which pay the blood price will favor wider aims than other segments of society.** This carries the same prediction down to the societal level. Simply put, the groups which have paid the most will favor the highest war aims. Thus, the families of veterans and the military will be especially inclined to expand war aims. Fifth, **only when a state is on the brink of collapse will its war aims shrink.** This prediction is perhaps a matter of common sense. When a state can fight no more, it sues for peace. Nevertheless, it reflects the fact that this hypothesis predicts that states will often fight to the finish. Sixth, **in internal policy discussions, political elites should be expressing concern at the human and material costs of the war.** Simply put, if political leaders care about the blood price they are paying, then we should find evidence of them caring about the blood price they are paying. Seventh, **we should expect that political and military leaders will justify additional aims in terms of the blood price.** This is not necessarily a strong prediction. Elites may not realize they are thinking in these terms. Even when they do think in these terms, they may be unwilling to say so publicly. Nevertheless, where this prediction comes true will be particularly strong evidence to support it.

B. Social Mobilization: *The greater a state's need to mobilize its society and the more war-resistant it is, the more it will expand war aims toward universalistic goals.* War, especially a major war, is a difficult task for a society to undertake. It requires enormous sacrifices in time, money, and lives. Nearly everyone is affected by it in one way or another. To achieve the required sacrifice from society, statesmen will frame the objectives of the war in terms which most members of society will agree on and thus be willing to fight and pay for them. Where these objectives are only tangentially related to the causes of war or are entirely different from initial goals, a state has expanded its war aims. Elites may magnify the objective for which the state is fighting, exaggerate the threat it faces, and polarize the differences between itself and the enemy. As Harold Lasswell observed:

So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations that every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor. There must be no ambiguity about whom the public is to hate. The war must not be due to a world system of conducting international affairs, nor to the stupidity or malevolence of all governing classes, but to the rapacity of the enemy. Guilt and guilelessness must be assessed geographically, and all the guilt must be on the other side of the frontier.¹³

This hypothesis is more likely to explain the expansion of war aims at the outset or early stages of war. It is at that stage that a society needs to be mobilized and resources mustered. Nevertheless, this hypothesis may explain expansions in war aims during a war. If a war is not going well, in order to improve their fortunes policy elites may expand their aims in order to extract even more resources from the society.

The promulgation of NSC-68, a policy document outlining a plan for the global containment of the Soviet Union in 1950, is illustrative of this process. As Dean Acheson writes: "If we made our points clearer than the truth, we did not differ from most other educators and could hardly do otherwise....The purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the

¹³ Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1938), p. 47. Vasquez makes a similar argument with respect to arms races. See Vasquez, *War Puzzle*, p. 178.

mass mind of 'top government' that not only could the President make a decision but that the decision could be carried out."¹⁴ Paul Nitze, who headed the State Department committee which drafted NSC-68, shared this sentiment. The world, he argued, was divided between the "free" and the "slave." Nitze justified this language on the grounds that "if we had objectives only for the purpose of repelling invasion and not to create a better world, the will to fight would be lessened."¹⁵ Moreover, Stephen Walt has observed that revolutionary states often frame their ideologies in universalistic terms. Such states may then fight wars under the guise of grand objectives. "During the French Revolution, for example, the prowar faction led by Brissot de Warville called for a 'universal crusade of human liberty,' arguing that the 'liberty of the entire world' was worth a few thousand deaths."¹⁶

A corollary to this hypothesis is that sometimes elites find they have done their job of selling the war policy too well and the populace demands wider aims. When policy elites exaggerate a threat or the differences with an enemy, they sometimes find themselves trapped in their own political rhetoric. If the government is pursuing a moderate set of war aims but is using extreme propaganda to bolster its case, then strong domestic political pressure may force elites to expand war aims. After all, if the enemy is as bad as the elites claim, why fight for moderate terms. This is especially the problem where political elites have achieved power or are maintaining it by advocating a vigorous prosecution of the war. Snyder writes: "To stay in power and to keep central policy objectives intact, elites may have to accept some unintended consequences of their imperial sales pitch."¹⁷ President George Bush nearly fell

¹⁴ Quoted in Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 42. See also, Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 126.

¹⁵ Quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 108.

¹⁶ Stephen Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics* 44 (April 1992), p. 339.

¹⁷ Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 42,

into this social mobilization trap during the Gulf War. In trying to win support for the war, Bush's description of Saddam Hussein--comparing him to Adolph Hitler--created pressure for a much more extensive set of war aims once the success of the U.S.-led coalition against the Iraqi military became clear.

The social mobilization hypothesis, like the blood price hypothesis, would most likely apply to the era of modern mass politics. A state's population must feel some sort of group loyalty and cohesion. In these types of societies, political leaders, even dictators, must take their policies to the public in some way and win their support, especially for war. Naturally, this condition would apply mostly to modern, nationalism-infused countries. However, it might also apply to the ancient Greek city-states in which the citizens of the state felt a group loyalty with each other and support from the citizen assembly was often required to implement policy. This hypothesis would not apply to the governmental entities of medieval Europe or the early modern European state system. To fight wars, governments of those periods relied on small elites or mercenary armies and the question of public support or sacrifice for the war rarely arose. On the other hand, regime type is not overly significant in the operation of this hypothesis. The populations of democracies, oligarchies, and dictatorships must be mobilized to fight a major war. This requires more than simply a government's monopoly of violence and the willingness to use it. The aristocratic and monarchical states of Europe after the French Revolution needed nationalist appeals and grand objectives to muster the resources and armies required to defeat Napoleon. Even Adolph Hitler, one of history's most total dictators, needed and used effectively nationalist appeals and propaganda to mobilize his nation and lead it to war. Still, democracies should

be somewhat more susceptible to this problem than more authoritarian regimes.¹⁸

Predictions: We can infer several general predictions from the social mobilization hypothesis. First, **war aims are more likely to expand at the outset or early stages of war.** When fighting begins, a state needs to mobilize resources early. Second, **the more resistant a state's population is to war in general or to the specific war in particular, the more war aims will expand toward universalistic goals in order to create majority support for the war.** Populations tend to be more willing to fight for grand visions or great ideas than for the balance of power. Thus, where the war is being fought for an unpopular goal, a government often must find a popular goal for which the people will fight. Third, **where a war policy enjoys wide popular support, political elites are unlikely to expand war aims.** This prediction is self-explanatory. When the public enthusiastically supports a war policy, it is simply unnecessary to expand aims in order build majority support for the war. Majority support already exists. Fourth, **assuming states engage in mass mobilization, wars of limited aims should be rare.** If states are expanding their war aims toward universalistic goals, then the wars will often be more intense, fought for high stakes, and closely resemble total war. Fifth, **authoritarian states will be more likely to fight wars of limited aims than democracies.** To the extent that wars of limited aims are fought, they will be more likely to be conducted by states which rely somewhat less on popular support for political stability and employ coercive and repressive measures to maintain power. Sixth, **elites should, in their internal policy discussions, defend the enunciation of a messianic**

¹⁸ See Theodore Lowi, "Making Democracy Safe for the World: On Fighting the Next War," in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Boston: Scott, Foresman, 1989): 258-292. Lowi documents the tendency of American foreign policy makers to oversell all kinds of policies, including remedies and threats. See also, Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, p. 61. Mearsheimer notes that the increasing democratization of modern societies makes pursuing limited aims strategies more difficult. The reasons for this are quite similar to the social mobilization hypothesis.

war aims in order to energize and mobilize public support for the war. This may not be a particularly strong prediction since it would reveal a dark side to policy deliberations; but it would provide strong support for the hypothesis if confirming evidence of this type can be found.

C. **The Cleon Problem:** *The greater the influence, prestige, and political power of a state's leading generals, the more its war aims will expand.* This hypothesis is a two-step argument. The first part is drawn from the literature on bureaucratic politics and civil-military relations and explains why military men gain influence in war. The second is drawn from organization theory and explains why military officers often favor wider war aims.

The first part, the bureaucratic argument, derives logically from premises about how states fight wars. When war breaks out, different people and organizations move to the center of power within a state to conduct the war effort.¹⁹ The most powerful of these organizations is the professional military. Military leaders are a government's experts on war and it is logical that their influence would rise when the character of interstate relations is war. By contrast, diplomats and foreign ministries are the experts of interstate relations during peacetime. In war their influence wanes. As Ikle writes: "At the very moment that the diplomats are being expelled from the enemy capitals, the military leaders come to

¹⁹ For major works, see Graham T. Allison, *Essence of a Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); and Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," in *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 378-408. For critiques of this approach, see Stephen D. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)"; and Robert J. Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," in *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 419-458. In addition, see the literature on civil-military relations: Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977); Clausewitz, *On War*; Samuel Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 2nd edition (London: Methuen, 1961); Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1957); Alfred Vagts, *Defense and Diplomacy: The Soldier and the Conduct of Foreign Relations* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950); idem, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military* (New York: Free Press, 1959).

command a vastly increased segment of national resources."²⁰ In ancient Rome, for example, a general in times of crisis was elected "dictator" for a six month period.

The grasp on power by the "experts of war" begins immediately from the outbreak of war but it is not total or complete. Generals first find themselves dictating the resource and manpower requirements to fulfill strategy and achieve success on the battlefield. Civilian officials work to meet those goals. But as the war progresses, military men are more and more brought directly into the process of administration and governing. The hierarchy and organizational efficiency of the military is viewed as necessary for the mobilization of resources.

In addition, public morale and support for the war is often raised and better sustained when military men assume greater direction of the war effort. As the experts on war, the public has confidence in military men to guide the war effort better than the civilians because the former "know what they are doing." This in turn creates an incentive on the part of civilian leaders to give more authority to the military in part to sustain the political base of the government.

Initially, the military will have the greatest influence over military strategy. However, as Clausewitz has pointed out, military strategy and political aims are inseparable in practice. Strategy influences political ends; political ends influence strategy. Consequently, the military voice in the political ends of the war--often cloaked by the requirements or limitations of strategy--will grow. For these reasons, the Cleon problem is more likely to explain cases where war aims expand during the course of a war, rather than at its outset. As the military acquires more and more domestic political power, it is in an increasingly strong position to adopt wider aims.

²⁰ Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 13.

The most well-known and extreme example of this phenomenon was Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's ascendancy to a "silent dictatorship" in Germany during the First World War. The power these men wielded prevented any reduction in war aims in order to achieve a compromise peace.²¹ There is historical debate as to whether they favored greater aims than their civilian counterparts. However, the rise to power of these men did have the effect of inspiring public morale and restoring confidence in the German government.²²

The second part of this hypothesis, why military men tend to favor expanded war aims, is drawn largely from the literature on organization theory and military organizations.²³ This literature argues that military organizations prefer offensive doctrines in order to increase their size, wealth, and autonomy. In wartime debates over political objectives, this organizational motivation may cause military men to advocate expanding war aims for several reasons.

First, the very drive for size, wealth, and autonomy leads to advocacy of expanded war aims. Wider objectives gives the military a greater share of resources and military means. Simply put, the larger the objective, the larger the armies, navies, and air forces required to fulfill it.

Second, militaries often exaggerate the likelihood of the victory during war. This leads civilians to leave the military alone in its conduct of the war because they have no reasons to quarrel with the (apparent) success. At the same time, however, it encourages both civilians and soldiers to contemplate greater war aims. With victory so easy, they

²¹Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 299-300. See also Vagts, *A History of Militarism*.

²² Craig, *Politics of Prussian Army*, pp. 307-308.

²³ In this section, I have relied most heavily on Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*; Van Evera, "Causes of War"; Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*; and Snyder, *Ideology of the Offensive*.

reason, why not take more?

Third, militaries argue that conquest is easy and security is scarce. This argument serves the organization because it ensures that the military receives more resources to protect the state. During war, however, this argument provides a double reason for expanding war aims. On the one hand, if conquest is easy, then expanding aims and conquering more will also be easy. On the other, if security is scarce, one must conquer before one is conquered. Security is more difficult to come by, therefore greater aims and greater conquest are needed in order to achieve security. War aims spiral upward.

Fourth, militaries argue that resources are cumulative. This enhances the military's size and wealth because when resources are cumulative, all of a nation's assets must be protected. "If the defense of everything depends on the defense of everything else, then everything must be defended."²⁴ This encourages military men and civilians to adopt greater aims both to strengthen one's own state by conquering more and to prevent an enemy from acquiring those same resources.

Fifth, generals do not have to favor wider aims for their actions to cause expanding war aims. They tend to favor and advise military escalation during war. Officers see a dichotomy between policy and the use of force. Once the reason, time, and place for using force is determined by civilians, the soldiers believe they should run the war and that usually means using the full capabilities available to them. This in turn may then cause war aims to expand. Enemies will counter-escalate, leading to a malign view of their intentions, encouraging wider aims in order defend against an apparently more dangerous adversary. War aims thus spiral upward. Alternatively, more massive means may make victory more likely and thus seem easier, encouraging states to fight for more. In either case, escalating

²⁴ Van Evera, "Causes of War," p. 340.

means may lead to expanding aims. Thus even if militaries are given autonomy over means and they do not purvey ideas of expanding war aims, the greater means may lead to more ambitious ends.

Sixth, victory imbues individual generals and the officer corps with greater prestige. They enjoy it for its intrinsic value and at the same time the organization benefits because it is more difficult to make budget cuts or interfere with an organization held in high esteem by the public. Thus during war, generals advocate wider aims in order to win more victories and thus gain more prestige.²⁵

In addition, this hypothesis can apply to holding war aims steady or contracting war aims. When military men gain influence and advocate *reduced* war aims, then war aims will likely contract. Similarly, if the generals do not want to contract war aims (even though they are not expanding them), then war aims will not contract. For example, in 1943 the commander of the Finnish armed forces, Carl Gustav Mannerheim, prevented his government from signing a pact with Germany prohibiting a separate peace with the allies. Later, he led the effort to make a separate peace with Russia, explaining to his German ex-allies: "If this nation of barely four million be defeated militarily, there can be no doubt that it will be driven into exile or exterminated. I cannot expose my people to such a risk."²⁶

Predictions: First, military officers will generally favor larger war aims than civilians. This means, of course, that military officers will be consistent advocates for wider

²⁵ One caveat here is that an individual general seeking more prestige through higher war aims does not have to apply only to the era of the professional military. It theoretically could apply at any point in history. This "prestige" only hypothesis deserves more research and much more thorough testing than I am doing here. To truly test its validity, one would at least need to include several cases from the era of the pre-professional military.

²⁶ Quoted in Ikle, *Every War Must End*, pp. 65-66.

war aims. Second, as the prestige of the military rises, war aims should increase. The military's influence will rise with its prestige. If the military favors wider war aims, the state should expand war aims. Third, generals are more likely to favor wider war aims after military victory. Successful generals may develop a "victory disease." That is, military victory, because it brings glory, prestige, and confidence, and is intoxicating in its own right, causes successful generals to advocate wider war aims in order to win more victories. Fourth, the domestic political power of the military establishment generally increases as the war progresses. Fifth, senior officers will favor *military* escalation. Unless they are granted complete and unrestricted use of all the military capability available to the state, the military will favor means escalation, regardless of their views on war aims. Sixth, civilians are more likely to see the unintended political consequences of escalation than the military who will discount them. As members of a professional organization whose purpose is the destruction of enemy forces, military officers will favor and pursue activities which will make military victory more likely. Civilian elites, because they are responsible for the broader conduct of policy, will take into account the potential reaction of other states to an act of military escalation.

D. Threats to Security: *The more a state's perception of an enemy threat increases during war, the more its war aims will expand.* Decisions to expand war aims are justified, if not determined, by security needs. States expand war aims in response to threats posed by other states and the feelings of insecurity that they engender. When policy-makers expand their war aims from initial objectives to demanding an additional slice of land, a new political concession, or even the destruction of the enemy's military infrastructure or regime, they do so because they believe that the future security of their own state is at stake.

There is a certain logic to this. Threat breeds fear, fear breeds insecurity, insecurity breeds a desire to be secure. If states think new war aims will bring them security, then those aims look extremely tempting. As Robert Jervis has observed: "Actors are apt to be especially sensitive to evidence of grave danger if they think they can take action to protect themselves against the menace once it has been detected."²⁷ A mild threat produces only mild fear and mild insecurity. Expansions in war aims do not occur or are small. Conversely, a major or total threat causes states to demand total security. Expansions in war aims are large or total.

Yet, this hypothesis has a logical opposite: As the perception of threat of an enemy increases, a state's aims shrink. Rather than expand its war aims in the face of threat, a state may attempt to appease its opponent by yielding some or all of its war aims. Examples of states contracting their war aims to appease a threat during war seem extremely rare. Nevertheless, decision-makers sometimes believe otherwise. They devise war aims with the expectation of forcing their enemy to contract its own. For example, Japan's war plan in World War II aimed at making quick conquests and inflicting a series of demoralizing defeats on the United States. Japanese leaders hoped that the U.S. would give up its policy of opposing Japanese expansion and sue for peace. In effect, Japan hoped its military strategy would cause the U.S. to reduce its aims and accept as fact the East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.²⁸

This hypothesis raises an important question: How do states determine threat during

²⁷ Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," in *American Foreign Policy*, p 466.

²⁸ See Scott Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 323-352. Similarly, and with more success, Bismarck in the Austro-Prussian War threatened to stoke the fires of Hungarian nationalism and revolution to topple the Austro-Hungarian government if it did not agree to his peace terms. See Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of the German Empire: The Period of Unification, 1815-1871* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

war? Once a war has broken out determining the level of threat posed by an enemy is important and essential to a war effort. Is it a minor threat, interested in making a point or a rectifying a minor frontier? Or is it a major, or even total threat, bent on its enemy's destruction or achieving some sort of regional or global hegemony? A state's war aims are influenced by such an assessment.

The existing literature on threat is of little help in this matter.²⁹ Stephen Walt's "balance of threat" theory, however, provides some insight.³⁰ In his book, *The Origins of Alliances*, Walt argues that in forming alliances states do not simply balance power, they balance "threat." Walt further argues that states look at several factors to determine threat, including aggregate power, geography, offensive power, and aggressive intentions.³¹ This approach can be used to develop an argument of expanding war aims. All four factors that Walt mentioned are conditions which will increase a state's feelings of insecurity and heighten its sense of threat and thereby encourage expansions in war aims in order to redress the danger.

²⁹ See Raymond Cohen, *Threat Perception in International Crisis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979); D. A. Baldwin, "Thinking About Threats," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 15 (1971): 71-78; Klaus Knorr, "Threat Perception," in *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, ed. Klaus Knorr (Wichita, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 78-119; Thomas W. Milburn and Kenneth H. Watman, *On the Nature of Threat: A Social Psychological Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1981); Dina A. Zinnes, Robert C. North, and Howard E. Koch, Jr. "Capability, Threat, and the Outbreak of War," in *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), pp. 469-482; Dina A. Zinnes et al., "The Expression and Perception of Hostility in Prewar Crisis: 1914," in *Quantitative International Politics*, ed. J. D. Singer (New York, 1968), pp. 85-119. For an emphasis on the cognitive problems in perceiving threat, see Jervis, *Perception, Misperception*.

³⁰ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

³¹ Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 22-25.

The stronger an enemy is perceived to be, the more dangerous he appears. As Walt writes, "All else being equal, the greater a state's total resources (e.g. population, industrial and military capability, and technological prowess), the greater a potential threat it can pose to others."³² During war, therefore, strong enemies are naturally greater threats than weak ones. A state is more likely to expand war aims against a strong enemy than a weak one. Aggregate power in this context is not a constant, at least not perceptually, and therefore may change during the course of a war. Since war is an inherently competitive process, a state marshals resources in ways it did not dream of during peacetime. Thus a state's latent power becomes apparent in war and may cause its opponent to expand its war aims. The concern is a simple one: "The enemy is stronger than we thought, our existing objectives will not make us secure, we must expand our war aims."

Of course, the opposite may be true as well. A state may contract its war aims if it enters a war and then realizes that it has bitten off more than it can chew. Saddam Hussein discovered this in his 1979 attack on Iran. He thought he was attacking a paper tiger, beset by revolution and economic collapse. He adopted an ambitious program of war aims. But when Iran demonstrated that its latent power was much greater than he anticipated, Hussein contracted his war aims and fought only to preserve the status quo prior to the war.

Thus, under what conditions does an apparently stronger enemy lead a state to expand its war aims, rather than contract them? Generally, this should happen earlier in war, when the state facing the stronger foe is still powerful itself. When the state starts to lose the war and then discovers his enemy is even stronger than expected, it will shrink its war aims in an effort to end the war before it is destroyed. The difference is when the state still has the

³² Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 22.

power to act and when it does not.

Offensive Advantage

Where military technology makes it easier to attack and conquer than to defend and hold, a state's feeling of insecurity will rise as will its perception of threat posed by an enemy.³³ Geographic proximity, which I discuss in the next section, also helps make the offense easier. Thus in wars in which states think that attacking is easier than defending, war aims by the combatants are likely to expand. Believing that it is easier for an enemy to attack heightens a state's feeling of insecurity and sense of threat. It expands war aims in order to secure itself better in the post-war world. Prior to the war and at the war's outbreak, states will only *perceive* the offense or defense as being stronger.³⁴ Thus, at the early stages, it is the perception of offense and defense which will influence threat perception. During war, however, the reality of battle should have made it abundantly clear to the combatants whether the offense has the advantage. This may partly explain why the Soviet Union sought a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. The quickness and decisiveness with which Germany was able to conquer large tracts of Soviet territory may have helped convince Soviet leaders that they required a buffer space between themselves and a (possibly) resurgent reich.

³³ See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 24-25. See also, Van Evera, "Causes of War"; Snyder, *Myths of Empire*; George Quester, *Offense and Defense in the International System* (New York: John Wiley, 1977); and Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chained gangs and passed bucks: predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity," *International Organization* 44 (Spring 1990): 137-168. For critiques of the argument that one can usefully distinguish when the prevailing technology favors the defense or offense, see Jack S. Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis," *International Studies Quarterly* 28 (June 1984): 219-238; John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 25-27; and Jonathan Shimshoni, "Technology, Military Advantage, and World War I: A Case for Military Entrepreneurship," *International Security* 15 (Winter 1991): 187-215.

³⁴ For a full explanation as to why states may misperceive the true advantage of offense or defense, see Van Evera, "Causes of War."

Geography

Because the projection of power over great distances is a difficult task for states to undertake, states are more likely to consider states that are closer greater threats than those far away.³⁵ Thus during war, a state is more likely to expand its war aims against an enemy that is nearby than a state fighting against an adversary far away. Similarly, states surrounded by enemies are more likely to expand war aims in order to create a more secure post-war world. Thus, chronically insecure states would be more inclined to expand war aims than would a more secure state. The insecure state, knowing that after the existing war it will continue to have security problems, expands its power as much as possible in preparation for the next test of arms. In addition, this factor is closely related to the issue of offensive advantage. Generally, it is easier to attack and conquer a neighbor than it is to do the same to an enemy far away.

To some degree, this helps to explain France's behavior during the Armistice negotiations at the end of the First World War. It sought harsh terms from Germany, its nearest neighbor, partly because it was the second time in half a century that it fought a bloody war with the Germans, losing the first, winning only a narrow victory in the second, and expecting a third.³⁶

³⁵ Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 23-24. See also Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, pp. 65-67; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 127-129.

³⁶ See Stevenson, *French War Aims*, pp. 201-202.

Walt argues that aggressive intentions "are likely to play an especially crucial role in alliance choices" and, by implication, in threat perception.³⁷ In effect, power has a lot less to do with threat perception than how that power is wielded or how it is perceived to be wielded. Walt does not help us determine how policy-makers assess aggressive intentions. He does not identify which *factors* states use in determining whether their opponents have "aggressive intentions." In wartime, of course, states know that their opponent is hostile, because they are fighting it. Nevertheless, not all opponents are the same; not all wars are the same. Some are more intense, more dangerous than others. But as Walt has noted, intentions are crucial. Thus, the extent of an opponent's aggressive intent contributes to the assessment of threat and to expansions in war aims. What do states look at to assess intentions? How do statesmen determine the magnitude of aggressive intent posed by a warring state?³⁸ What follows is my attempt to identify the crucial factors, conditions, or behaviors which illuminate a state's intentions, and particularly how they may cause a state to reassess the danger posed by an enemy such that it widens its war aims.

Initiation of War. The very act of initiating war often signals a greater threat than states anticipated. Conflicts of interest are not unusual in the international system. States expect them. They realize that conflicts of interest may lead to crises which sometimes end in war. Nevertheless, since war is the ultimate means for a state to get its way, states willing to use force may be regarded differently by their neighbors. As Harold Lasswell has noted,

³⁷ Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 25.

³⁸ Sometimes, of course, he will tell you. Frederick the Great, before he launched his campaign to conquer Silesia, proposed to Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa that "he would guarantee all possessions of the house of Austria in Germany, form a close alliance with the court of Vienna, Russia, and the maritime powers, use all his influence to procure the election of her husband the Duke of Lorraine as [Holy Roman] Emperor, and supply two or even three million florins" in return for her cessation of all of Silesia. When Maria Theresa refused, Frederick marched and took the province by force. See Gooch, *Frederick the Great*, p. 7.

the enemy "invariably mobilizes first, in the days of a crisis (either openly or secretly), and commits acts of war, and by doing so, reveals a criminal anxiety to press matters to a finish."³⁹ This will have a greater impact if war is begun by surprise attack.⁴⁰ Of course, this sub-variant applies only to cases where war aims expand at the outset of war.

Rhetoric and Propaganda. An enemy's rhetoric and propaganda during the war influence threat perception. The more hostile, violent, and nationalist sounding an enemy's rhetoric and propaganda, the more threatening it appears. When a state describes its opponent as the root of all evil which cannot be compromised with, as they often do in their propaganda and mobilization rhetoric, it may intensify its antagonist's threat perception in two ways. First, the state using the harsh rhetoric looks meaner and more dangerous; its antagonist may think that compromise will be impossible and, therefore, prepare to fight to the finish. Second, propaganda and rhetoric may intensify the fighting on the battlefield. If a state's domestic propaganda has succeeded in mobilizing its population for war, its army will fight harder and thus appear more dangerous to its enemy. As John Dower observed, the extreme racist propaganda used by the United States and Japan to caricature each other contributed to making the Pacific War a "war without mercy."⁴¹

Wartime Conduct. The conduct of a state's military and political operations during war may intensify its opponent's threat perception. The more vicious its methods of war or the more repressive its occupation procedures, the more threatening it appears, the more

³⁹ Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ Richard Betts, for example, has argued that while states may gain tactical initiative with a surprise attack, they ultimately lose because of the hostility and balancing coalition which they create from their action. See Richard Betts, "Conventional Deterrence: Predictive Uncertainty and Policy Confidence," *World Politics* 37 (January 1985): 153-179.

⁴¹ See John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

surely it must be destroyed. During World War II the viciousness of German tactics and occupation of Russian territory intensified the Soviets' perception of the German threat. Likewise when tables were turned, Russian conduct had a similar effect on the Germans.⁴² Similarly, the Bataan Death March contributed to energizing the United States for total war and Japan's destruction.⁴³

Military strategy. Perhaps the most important is the nature of enemy military strategy. The strategy a state chooses reveals a great deal to its opponent about the nature of its war aims and, consequently, the level of threat it poses. Strategies of offensive unlimited war convey a great threat.⁴⁴ Defensive or limited aims strategies convey a lesser threat. Moreover, an offensive strategy exacerbates the impact of the three previous factors. The act of war, rhetoric and propaganda, and wartime conduct look worse when it becomes apparent that the enemy is an *offensive* threat. A state which stands on the defensive and does not initiate offensive operations does not look nearly as dangerous--no matter what the rhetoric--as a state with hostile rhetoric that is coming to get you. Finally, brutal occupation procedures combined with an offensive strategy look especially intimidating and frightening.

Thus Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, destroying or damaging most of the United States Pacific Fleet, emphasized to the American government and people the Japanese threat to U.S. security. The Japanese attack convinced many in the American government and society that Japan would soon invade Hawaii and attack the West Coast of

⁴² Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, *Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present*, trans. Phyllis B. Carlos (New York: Summit Books, 1986), pp. 389-399.

⁴³ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁴ A blitzkrieg is an offensive, total war strategy. Or states may employ a total war attrition strategy. The latter could be employed defensively by sitting behind entrenched fortifications, waiting for the enemy to attack and wear himself down, as the British and French did on the Western front in 1939-1940. See Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 67-98. See also, Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, pp. 16-17.

the United States.⁴⁵ Unconditional surrender became the American war aim in public and private.⁴⁶

Conversely, a more limited strategy reflects more limited aims, conveying a lesser threat, requiring only a moderate response. For example, in the War of 1812 the United States sought to conquer Canada, part of the British Empire. This relatively limited aim led Great Britain to expand its initial defensive aims of maintaining Canada's integrity to preserving the "ultimate security" of British North America. Britain did not propose to conquer the United States, but intended to seize and retain key forts and strips of land in Michigan and New York which would have given it a more secure defensive line.⁴⁷ The limited aims of the United States caused only a limited expansion in British war aims.

Regime Structure. During war, a state may come to regard the structure of an enemy's regime as a cause of alarm, intensifying its sense of threat and driving its war aims up.⁴⁸ In other words, a state's insecurity results from having neighbors whose internal

⁴⁵ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun* (New York: Free Press, 1985), pp. 100-101.

⁴⁶ Ironically, Japan was pursuing a limited aims strategy to partition the Pacific region. See John Costello, *The Pacific War* (New York: Rawson, Wade, 1981), pp. 149-153.

⁴⁷ Williams, *History of American Wars*, pp. 128-129. These new war aims were not maintained in the wake of subsequent American victories. Yet, misinterpretation is possible. Some status quo states may believe that a highly offensive military strategy is required for survival. Opponents may conclude that such a state has aggressive aims. For example, "some scholars suggest that before the 1967 Mideast war Israel had no aggressive aims, but that the Arabs believed otherwise because they mistook aggressive Israeli tactics for aggressive aims." Van Evera, "Causes of War," p. 85. Van Evera is citing Nadar Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 235-237.

⁴⁸ For literature that is suggestive of this point, see Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, pp. 80-123; Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," pp. 83-90; Edward Vose Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982, reprint), pp. 19-24; Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). Some of these ideas are also suggested by the Marxist and Liberal approaches to international relations. For reviews of the Marxist literature and thinkers who make this argument, see Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Tony Smith, *Thinking Like A Communist: State and Legitimacy in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (W.W. Norton, 1987). For major Liberal works, see Steve Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall... Are the Democratic States More Pacific?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28 (December 1984): 617-648; Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80 (December 1986): 1151-1169; idem, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12

structure is different from its own. Enemies are different and thus appear dangerous, requiring that they be destroyed. Sameness is valued; difference is abhorred. Thus, in a war between two different types of regimes, one side (or both) may expand its war aims to include overthrowing the enemy and changing its government in order to achieve permanent peace and security. Diversity in domestic orders breeds more aggressive aims. As Raymond Aron observed:

The types of war correspond to the types of regime. The strategy suitable to one type would be contrary to the nature of the other. Choice between types of war is not the outcome of the governing will of one of the belligerents, let alone of both. It is the political situation that dictates the main lines of the hostilities, and they are determined in advance by the nature of the relationship between and inside the states.⁴⁹

This causal mechanism may operate in three different ways. First, it may arise out of a latent theory held by the political elites of one state that the cause of war is "bad" governments, i.e., those that are different from its own. During war this theory comes to the forefront in the minds of policy-makers and in their propaganda and thus may cause war aims to expand. The more policy-makers believe this, the more likely and the higher they will expand their war aims. Second, the enemy's political structure may change during war and thus represent an even greater menace than had hitherto existed. A democracy may become a military dictatorship or a monarchy may be overthrown and become a revolutionary

(Summer 1983): 205-235; idem "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 2," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Fall 1983): 323-353; Zeev Maoz and Nasrin Abdolai, "Regime Types and International Conflict, 1816-1976," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33 (March 1989): 3-35; Rudolph J. Rummel, "Libertarianism and International Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27 (March 1983): 27-71; Melvin Small and J. David Singer, "The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 1 (Summer 1976): 50-69; Erich Weede, "Democracy and War Involvement," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28 (December 1984): 649-664.

⁴⁹ Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 232. Of course, states may start wars with the aim of overthrowing and replacing the structure of an enemy state. For example, the First Coalition in the French Revolutionary wars was assembled with the precise objective of attacking and overthrowing the young French Republic. Coalition statesmen believed that only by strangling republican government in the cradle would their own security be assured. Stephen T. Ross, *European Diplomatic History 1789-1815: France Against Europe* (Malabar Fl.: Robert E. Krieger, 1981), pp. 60-70.

state. Third, a state's *perception* of an opposing regime may change during war. A government which in the prewar period or early stages of war thinks it is dealing with "doves" may, once the war is truly under way, believe that in reality its enemy is governed by "hawks," even though there may be no apparent change in government. This will only happen where the regimes of the antagonists are different.

One finds historical evidence to support this argument. During the Russo-Polish War of 1920-1921, initial Soviet war aims were to repel Poland's attack on the young Communist regime. After Moscow's armies achieved that objective, Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin made the deliberate decision to expand his war aims against Poland. He believed that the only way to ensure security for the young Soviet regime was to communize Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ Similar sentiments were expressed by Iran's fundamentalist Muslim government when it demonized Hussein's secular Ba'athist regime.⁵¹

Predictions: Because this hypothesis encompasses a number of factors, we can infer many general predictions. First, **where a state's estimate of the threat posed by an enemy has increased during the war, a state will generally expand its war aims.** This is the central prediction of the hypothesis. Second, **as the enemy appears stronger, a state's war aims widen.** This reflects the aggregate power component of the hypothesis. Third, **wars between enemies who neighbor each other should see larger aims than wars between adversaries separated by great distances.** If geography matters in wartime threat perception, then wars fought between neighbors will have the largest aims. Fourth, **wars in**

⁵⁰ Quoted in Heller and Nekrich, *Utopia in Power*, p. 96. See also, Piotr S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations, 1917-1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

⁵¹ See Stephen R. Grummon, *The Iran-Iraq War: Islam Embattled* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1982); and Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988).

which military technology is perceived to favor the offense should see larger aims than wars where technology favors the defense. Simply, when states believe it is easy to attack and conquer, security will be more scarce; states will expand their war aims in order to make themselves more secure in the post-war world. **Fifth, states that have been attacked or had their vital interests attacked should be more likely to expand war aims than states which initiated the fighting.** States that are the object of another's aggression or, at the very least, perceive themselves as such, are much more likely to expand their objectives from defensive war aims of survival and territorial integrity to offensive war aims that are designed to enhance their security. At a minimum, states aim to make the next war with the same enemy more difficult than the present one. At a maximum, they seek "permanent" security--the elimination of the enemy as a political and military force in the international system for all time. **Sixth, wars with the most intense and hostile propaganda should have the largest aims.** If rhetoric and propaganda contribute to a state's threat perception, then all other things being equal wars in which the propaganda is the most virulent should see the largest war aims. **Seventh, wars in which the participants engage in the most brutal conduct should have the largest aims.** The same point applies here. Wars in which the behavior of armies in battle and in occupation is more humane should see smaller aims than wars in which the opposite is the case. **Eighth, wars involving different regime types should have larger war aims than those between states with similar regime types.** If regime type matters, wars between structurally different governments should be more violent and afflicted with higher war aims than wars between governments with similar structures. **Ninth, wars between "primary" adversaries should see larger aims than wars between secondary adversaries or wars fought by proxy.** This prediction reflects an intuitive observation that many states in history have a primary adversary or rival with which they are competitive,

closely matched in power terms, and (usually) geographically proximate.⁵² Since primary adversaries by definition pose the greatest threats to each other, such wars should see the largest aims. Tenth, **policy elites, in both internal discussions and public declarations, should justify additional aims by stating that the enemy is a greater threat than they realized.**

E. Opportunistic Expansion: *The more the balance of power changes in favor of a state during war, the more its war aims will expand.* This hypothesis operates along three related, but different dimensions. First, the acquisition of new allies or the conquest of additional territory or resources may lead to expanding war aims. Simply put, the more power a state has, the more it wants to extract from the war. Geoffrey Blainey, an Australian economic historian, observes: "A government's aims are strongly influenced by its assessment of whether it has sufficient strength to achieve these aims....A government's short-term aims, and its assessment of its ability to implement them, are always in some kind of harmony."⁵³ With more allies or resources, a state can expand its war aims and still maintain the harmony between war aims and the ability to implement them to which Blainey referred.

Second, a decisive military victory may change the balance of power between states and thereby create the opportunity to expand war aims. War and battle are a competitive process. Consequently, the fortunes of war for both sides of a conflict may fluctuate dramatically. These fluctuations are changes in the capabilities relationship between two

⁵² Examples would be Athens-Sparta, Greece-Persia, Rome-Carthage, France-England, England-Russia, England-Germany, the United States-the Soviet Union, Israel-Egypt, Pakistan-India, Argentina-Brazil, Somalia-Ethiopia, and so forth.

⁵³ Blainey, *Causes of War*, p. 151.

opponents. As that relationship evolves, war aims, to some degree, will evolve with it. Thus, military victory alters the capabilities relationship in favor of one state. It may then expand war aims based on a new assessment of its relative power. As Morgenthau writes:

When a nation is engaged in war with another nation, it is very likely that the nation which anticipates victory will pursue a policy that seeks a permanent change of the power relations with the defeated enemy. The nation will pursue this policy regardless of what the objectives were at the outbreak of the war. It is the objective of this policy of change to transform the relation between the victor and vanquished which happens to exist at the end of the war into a new status quo of the peace settlement.⁵⁴

For example, during the Peloponnesian War, victories at Pylos led the Athenians to reject a Spartan offer of truce that they themselves had sought weeks earlier. According to Thucydides, the Athenians "aimed at winning still more."⁵⁵ Similarly, Gustavus Adolphus's military campaign in central Europe in 1630-1632 was marked by a succession of military victories and subsequent expansions in war aims. Each victory led to more ambitious goals--all in the name of Swedish and Protestant security. When he landed at Peenemunde in 1630, the Swedish King's aims were to provide security for the north German states, and thereby Sweden and Protestantism. After progressive military victories over Catholic powers, Gustavus Adolphus's war aims grew until he intended the conquest of Bavaria and Austria. As one scholar writes: "Gustavus Adolphus could scarcely have envisaged this mighty plan when he landed at Peenemunde. To assure the security of Sweden and the safety of Protestantism, it was now necessary to conquer the whole of Germany and the [Holy Roman] emperor's homeland!"⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 67.

⁵⁵ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, IV: 21.

⁵⁶ E. A. Beller, "The Thirty Years War," in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. IV, *The Decline of Spain and the Thirty Years War 1609-48/59*, ed. J.P. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 334.

Third, when the perceived costs of expanding war aims are low, a state may expand its war aims. Costs, as John Mearsheimer has pointed out, are an important factor in the decision-making of policy-makers. In developing his theory of conventional deterrence, Mearsheimer argues that how much a war is expected to cost in lives, money, and resources influences the ultimate decision to make war:

Conventional deterrence is directly related to military strategy, or more specifically, to the matter of how a nation's armed forces are employed to achieve specific battlefield objectives. Decision makers are primarily concerned with determining how their forces are going to be used on the battlefield and with probable outcomes when the attacking forces meet the defending forces. In other words, decision makers attempt to foresee the nature of war. Does the plan of attack--the proposed strategy--promise success at a reasonable cost?⁵⁷

Mearsheimer argues that where states can only avail themselves of a costly, drawn-out attrition strategy, they will likely be deterred from attacking their opponent, whether they are aggressors or defenders. However, where states can employ a blitzkrieg strategy, thinking they can win a quick cheap victory, deterrence is likely to fail.⁵⁸ This argument applies to decisions to expand war aims as well. The low cost of war is an opportunity for expansion. If the perceived costs of expanding one's war aims are low, a state would be strongly inclined to expand its war aims. For example, at the outbreak of the Crimean War, Russia withdrew from two disputed Turkish provinces, fulfilling the initial war aims of Turkey's allies, Britain and France. Yet, the two western powers expanded their war aims to include taking the Crimea and Sebastopol partly because they expected a quick, cheap victory using their superior naval power. In his book on war and escalation, Smoke writes:

[T]he Allied War Council decision to strike at Sebastopol was adopted in the expectation that the operation could be accomplished easily, cheaply, and quickly. The Crimean peninsula is attached to the Russian mainland by only a very narrow neck of land....It seemed evident that, with their total command of the sea, French

⁵⁷ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁸ See Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, chapter 2.

and British squadrons deployed on both sides of this neck could sweep it with their guns and effectively choke off the peninsula, which at this point was only lightly garrisoned with Russian forces. The joint army expedition, landed amphibiously on the peninsula, could then readily approach Sebastopol, at this time almost undefended from the landward side. The British and French commanders fully expected to capture the city and the Russian Black Sea fleet harbored there in just a few weeks--certainly before the early Russian winter arrived.⁵⁹

Of course, the question of costs is often largely a function of relative power and military victory. When a state becomes stronger, the costs of war often appear lower. Similarly, when a state has scored a decisive victory, the costs of continuing to fight usually appear lower than prior to that victory. Nevertheless, there may be occasions where policy-makers change their cost calculations independent of a change in relative power or military victory.

The three dimensions of this hypothesis are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact, closely related. The acquisition of allies may redistribute the costs of fighting and make a new set of aims appear cheaper than they were prior to the new alliance. A military victory may make the expected costs of continued fighting seem less than what they appeared to be prior to that battle. And yet, a state may feel the costs of additional program of war aims are low, even without the acquisition of more power or military victory.

Furthermore, even when these "opportunities" are in reality not all that great, they often affect the perceptions of policy elites as to what they can and cannot accomplish. For example, a moderate military victory or a small acquisition of resources may cause statesmen to believe that they have a more favorable balance of power--and thus a greater opportunity--than what a more sober analysis of the facts would conclude. Small changes in the power balance sometimes cause large expansions in war aims. This phenomenon may help explain why there appear to be many historical cases where a state expands its war aims and then finds itself overextended or in a much more difficult fight than it anticipated.

⁵⁹ Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation*, p. 191.

Predictions: First, war aims should expand after a state acquires new allies. Second, war aims should expand after a state has conquered new material resources. Third, war aims should expand after decisive military victories. The more decisive the victory, the larger the expansion. Fourth, war aims should expand if a state revises downward its cost estimate for prolonging the war. These are simple but important sequence predictions. Since this hypothesis predicts that states respond to opportunities, these opportunities must exist before states expand their war aims. Fifth, states may expand war aims in the regions where success is most promising and the cost of fighting is perceived to be the lowest. In other words, states will expand into power vacuums because that is where opportunities are greatest.

F. Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion: *The greater the need to reduce the power of an enemy, the more a state's war aims will expand to do so.* In other words, action to deprive an opponent of allies, strategic strong-points, or access to resources often forces an expansion in war aims.⁶⁰ Resources are said to be "cumulative" where states can make themselves stronger through the acquisition of additional resources--land, people, and natural resources.⁶¹ Thus states have an incentive to conquer and conquer more. During war, this provides a powerful incentive for states to expand war aims. With more power, states are more secure. Conversely, if they do not compete for resources, opponents

⁶⁰ This hypothesis is suggested in part by the literature on limited war. See Jack S. Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics* 40 (October 1987): 82-107; Richard Ned Lebow, "Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump through Them?" *International Security* 9 (Summer 1984): 147-186; idem, *Between Peace and War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Jack L. Snyder, "Perceptions of the Security Dilemma in 1914," in Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, eds., *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Randall L. Schweller, "Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics* 44 (January 1992): 255-269; and Stephen Van Evera, "Causes of War" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1984).

⁶¹ Van Evera, "Causes of War"; Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pp. 24-25.

will win them and become stronger, posing a greater threat to themselves. Thus, when resources are cumulative, states will expand their war aims to deprive an enemy of resources and capture them for themselves. In short, states expand war aims because conquest pays.⁶²

In some cases, attacking a potential ally of an opposing state--perhaps a neutral that is favorably disposed to and aiding one's opponent--leads to expansions in war aims. For example, Hitler conceived of his attack on Russia as part of an effort to deprive Great Britain of allies and hope. Hitler wrote in an August 22, 1941 memorandum: "The aim of this campaign is to eliminate Russia definitely as a continental power allied to Great Britain and thereby deprive England of all hope to change its fate with the help of the last major power left."⁶³ Ironically, the French had the same idea. On March 25, 1940, French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud advocated a preemptive attack on the Soviet Union to deprive Germany of the resources in the Black Sea region. The operation was intended

not only to impede the German army supplies, but above all to paralyze the economy of the USSR before Germany succeeds in mobilizing it for its own profit.... The absence of a state of war between the Allies and Russia is perhaps being conceded by the British Government as a juridical obstacle to this enterprise.... The French Government is ready, if the British Government judges it necessary for military action in the Caucasus, immediately to examine...the best justification [for ending our diplomatic relations with the USSR].⁶⁴

In other situations, a state may expand war aims in order to preempt an enemy from seizing more strategic ground and thereby threaten its position. For example, Hitler did not include the Scandinavian countries in his original plan of conquest. He thought the Nordic

⁶² If resources are not cumulative, that is, states cannot make themselves stronger and more secure by conquering more land, people, and resources, then states have no incentive to expand war aims. For an assessment of the cumulativeness of resources in the modern industrial era, see Peter Liberman, "The Spoils of Conquest," *International Security* 18 (Fall 1993): 125-153.

⁶³ Quoted in Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 57.

countries could eventually be persuaded to join some future greater German political organization without resort to conquest. But the course of the western front campaign changed Hitler's perspective. He feared the British would secure Norway and then threaten the northern flank of his greater reich. Hearing of a planned British invasion of Norway, he attacked first. Norman Rich, author of an important study on Hitler's war aims, writes:

Hitler was convinced that such a move had to be forestalled at all costs, for if the British succeeded in establishing themselves in Norway they would be in a position to close the entrance to the Baltic and dominate the entire German sea coast, including all German naval bases. Germany's capacity to wage submarine warfare against Britain would be paralyzed, the British would be poised to launch air and naval strikes against vital German military and economic installations, or even to mount an actual invasion of German territory.⁶⁵

By expanding his war aims and attacking first, Hitler preempted the British, avoided a potentially serious problem on his northern flank, and added Norway to the list of occupied countries.

On the other hand, this same logic may cause a state to contract its war aims. In order to lure it away from an opposing coalition--and thus weaken the power of that coalition--a state may alter or reduce war aims which are targeted at one particular enemy. For example, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed that war aims against Italy be reduced to something less than unconditional surrender as part of an effort to persuade Italy to leave the war.⁶⁶

This hypothesis probably will not often explain cases of expanding war aims at the outbreak of war. In a conflict's early stages, other states in the international system are still in the process choosing sides or declaring neutrality. Thus, a state is unlikely to engage in

⁶⁵ Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, pp. 133-134.

⁶⁶ Sigal, *Fighting to a Finishing*, p. 90.

preventive expansion until it has some idea how other states are lining up. Exceptions may include cases where a state is supplier of war material to one side or holds a strategic, geographic location.

Predictions: First, during war a state will act before letting its enemy grow stronger. This prediction is perhaps a matter of common sense, but it nevertheless belongs under the cumulative resources hypothesis. Second, a state involved in war will attack neutrals, especially if they are supporting or aiding its opponent. This is a close corollary to the first prediction. If neutrals are serving as a source of strength for an enemy, a state will not stand idly by. It will act and try to cut off that source of support, even if it means attacking the neutral state directly. Third, small wars tend to grow into large ones. This follows from the second prediction. If states are acting to deprive enemies of support and this involves attacks on neutral states, wars will inevitably grow wider, involving increasingly larger numbers of states or expanses of territory. Fourth, political elites, in their internal policy discussions, will justify wider war aims (e.g. attacking a neutral state or expanding hostilities into a new area) on the grounds that failing to do so strengthens the enemy or risks losing the opportunity to control a strategic position.

G. Collective Action Problems and Quid Pro Quo Expansion: *The greater a state's need for additional power, the more its war aims will expand by making promises to win new allies.* This trade-off results in an expansion of war aims. Prospective allies of a warring state demand that the spoils be divided before victory is assured. In order to get allies, the state which is fighting agrees to do so.

This is a variant of the collective action problem in international relations.⁶⁷ In multipolar systems (more than two great powers), the provision of collective goods, such as opposing an aggressor or strengthening an alliance, are provided with great difficulty--if at all. States argue over whose responsibility it is to oppose an aspiring hegemon or bicker over the relative costs and risks within an alliance. States want to "free-ride": they try to get other states to bear a greater burden of opposing aggression. This disagreement makes the formation of defensive alliances more difficult and hampers their effectiveness once formed. Moreover, states are preoccupied with possible spoils even before victory is won. "No state wants to lose more than the others. No state wants the others to gain more than itself."⁶⁸ By forcing an ally to agree to its terms before joining the fight, a state "guarantees" its gains and the collective action problem is temporarily ameliorated.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See Waltz, *Theory*, pp. 196-197; Mancur Olson, Jr., and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," in Bruce M. Russett, ed., *Economic Theories of International Politics* (Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1968); Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965). For a useful summary of the problems of collective action under international anarchy, see Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, pp. 63-64. For further examples of the collective action approach to international relations, see James Murdock and Todd Sandler, "A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of NATO," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26 (June 1982): 237-65; and Bruce M. Russett, "Alliances and the Price of Primacy," in Bruce M. Russett, ed., *What Price Vigilance? The Burdens of National Defense* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970): 91-127. For a review of the collective action approach, see Wallace Thies, "Alliances and Collective Goods: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31 (June 1987): 298-332.

⁶⁸ Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, p. 64.

⁶⁹ Of course, this problem will surface again if the contracting parties do not live up to their bargains or the suitor has promised more than it can reasonably or responsibly deliver or it has promised the same goods to two different parties.

In the First World War, the Western Allies tried several times to secure a separate peace with Austria. One of those attempts failed because promises of Austrian territory had already been made to Italy in order to get Rome to declare war on the Central Powers. Thus, according to Fred Ikle, a separate peace was thwarted because France had permitted Italy "to cast a veto. For it was the Italian annexationists who would have had to be disappointed if Austria were drawn away from Germany."⁷⁰ Similarly, British leaders made contradictory promises of kingdoms and independence to Arab sheiks and Jewish Zionists to encourage them to attack Turkey, Germany's ally.⁷¹

Predictions: First, states will try to persuade neutral states to join a war. This is the fundamental prediction of the hypothesis. Often this exercise in promise-making will be waged by both sides of a conflict with respect to the same neutral and a bidding war ensues. Usually these promises constitute territorial side-payments. We should see observable evidence of these side-payments, such as negotiating documents and treaties. Post-war border reshuffling should also reflect and hence reveal these side-payments. Second, wars between coalitions should see larger aims than wars between two individual antagonists. If states are making additional promises in order to get neutral states into the fight, the war aims of the coalition that forms will logically be larger than the war aims of the individual state alone. Third, the larger the coalition, the larger the war aims. Fourth, political leaders, in internal policy discussions, should cite the need to acquire allies or keep existing allies to justify promises of territorial side-payments.

⁷⁰ Ikle, *Every War Must End*, pp. 92-93.

⁷¹ See Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, passim. Fromkin's entire book is largely devoted to web of British promises--contradictory and eventually broken--made to Arab and Jewish leaders.

H. Collective Action Problems and Alliance Management: *The greater the potential for contributory disputes among members of a coalition, the greater the likelihood coalition war aims will expand to an absolute level.* Total aims, such as unconditional surrender, may make life easier for a coalition. The war aim of unconditional surrender makes a coalition easy to manage in that the contributions of its individual members are easy to measure. Anything less than a total effort is easily detected. It prevents one partner to a coalition from believing that it may be contributing more to the war effort and therefore sacrificing more for its prospective gains. Disputes are thus easier to avoid. Fred Ikle argues: "In World War II, the agreement between the United States, Great Britain, and Russia to accept nothing short of an unconditional surrender from the Axis Powers was meant primarily to prevent a split in the uneasy alliance of the Western Powers with Russia."⁷²

Disputes are more likely to occur when there is a diversity in regime types among coalition members. Democracies in alliance with more autocratic states are more likely to accuse each other of not doing their fair share in the war effort. Geography also contributes to disputes among coalition members. States that are farther away from a common enemy have a greater tendency to "buck-pass" the responsibility of fighting that enemy to a coalition member which is closer to it.⁷³ Thus ideologically diverse and geographically widespread coalitions are more likely to expand war aims to an absolute level than those without these attributes.

On the other hand, the fear that an ally is growing disproportionately stronger from the war may lead to reduced war aims. Disproportionate gains by one party to an alliance

⁷² Ikle, *Every War Must End*, p. 86.

⁷³ On the phenomenon of buck-passing in international relations, see Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, pp. 63-64; and Christensen and Snyder, "Chained gangs and passed bucks."

will lead to efforts by other parties to redress the gain, even if it means reducing aims and ending the conflict quickly. This was Metternich's motive in offering Napoleon generous peace terms as the Fifth Coalition advanced on France. The Austrian chancellor began to fear Russian domination more than the dying French hegemony.⁷⁴

This hypothesis generally will apply to the expansion of war aims relatively early in the life of a coalition. Political elites will move quickly to resolve any potential disputes over contributions by coalition members. When that coalition is formed will determine when war aims will most likely expand. In addition, this hypothesis should only apply to coalitions of relative equals that are fighting large wars. Where one state dominates a coalition by virtue of vastly superior strength, its will bear most of the burden.⁷⁵ In small wars fought by coalitions, a total effort by any state is unnecessary to achieve the required objective. Disputes over contributions may still occur, but solving them through total mobilization is considered impractical.

Predictions: First, the members of a coalition will have frequent discussions and disputes over the contributions each member is making to the war effort. Because each state is concerned that its coalition partners are not contributing their fair share to the war effort, differences will periodically emerge. One member may complain that its partners are not doing all that they can to defeat the common enemy. Second, wars between coalitions should see larger aims than wars between two individual antagonists. Simply, if coalitions have an incentive to set war aims at the highest levels, it is only logical that the war aims of coalitions will be greater than the war aims of an individual state in a war

⁷⁴ Ross, *European Diplomatic History*, pp. 341-342.

⁷⁵ See Olson and Zeckhauser, "Economic Theory of Alliances."

involving only two antagonists. Third, **the larger the coalitions, the larger the war aims.** The larger the coalition, the greater are the problems of collective action. There are more opportunities to free-ride and pass on responsibilities. Consequently, the larger the coalition, the greater the incentive of its members to set war aims at unconditional surrender or some appropriate equivalent.

I. Systemic Constraints: *The greater the likelihood of third-party intervention in a war, the less likely a state's war aims will expand.*⁷⁶ The fear that other states may defect from one's coalition or may ally with one's opponent may force a state to restrain desires for wider war aims. In other words, if expanding war aims itself could cause an unfavorable change in the balance of power, a state will not do so.⁷⁷ As Blainey writes: "Every decision to wage war is influenced by predictions of how outside nations will affect the course of war."⁷⁸ For example, during the Gulf War, while President Bush had several reasons to keep his war aims limited, the opposition and possible defection of key Arab allies probably contributed to his apparent reluctance to expand war aims and overthrow Saddam Hussein.⁷⁹ During the World War I, France feared that the United States would acquire this kind of leverage if it formally joined the Allied side. Paris preferred that Washington remain

⁷⁶ The systemic constraints hypothesis is framed as a negative, because the reverse is at best a permissive condition. The *absence* of constraints may *permit* war aims to expand, but it does not by any means automatically *cause* them to expand.

⁷⁷ I have included this hypothesis separately, even though it is not a hypothesis of expanding war aims, because it appears to be quite powerful historically and intuitively.

⁷⁸ Blainey, *Causes of War*, p. 57.

⁷⁹ U.S. News and World Report Staff, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1992), pp. 395-396.

neutral.⁸⁰

Predictions: First, where they can, states will act to preserve the balance of power. Third parties to a conflict are often concerned that one antagonist should not become too strong and decisively crush its opponent. Thus they will intervene or threaten to intervene if one warring state looks like it will win a decisive victory. Second, threats of intervention by powerful neutral powers will cause a state to moderate its war aims. This is the core prediction of the hypothesis. Third, wars of unlimited aims--such unconditional surrender or total conquest--between two individual antagonists should be rare. Third party neutrals will intervene or threaten to intervene to stop such conflicts before they permanently unhinge the balance of power.⁸¹ Fourth, policy elites, in their internal discussions, should express concern that other states will intervene in the war if they expand their war aims.

⁸⁰ Stevenson, *French War Aims*, pp 13-14.

⁸¹ Thomas Baily makes a similar point when he observes that states will pay much more attention to international law and norms because "they are restrained in part by a desire to enlist support of the rest of the world, or at least not to alienate it." In total wars, however, states will feel unconstrained by the international system and international law because all major powers are already involved in the conflict. See Thomas A. Baily, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 567-568. I thank Stephen Van Evera for bringing this to my attention.

2.2 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES AND GENERAL CROSS-CASE PREDICTIONS

- A. **Blood Price:** The higher the level of casualties a state suffers, the more it will expand war aims.

Predictions:

1. As time and casualties mount, a state's war aims should expand.
2. The biggest and most intense wars should see the largest aims.
3. Within a world war, the country with the heaviest losses should have the largest aims.
4. Societal groups which pay the blood price, should favor the largest aims.
5. Only when a state is on the brink of collapse will its war aims shrink.
6. In internal policy discussions, political elites should be expressing concern over the human and material costs of the war.
7. We should find political and military leaders justifying additional aims in language that refers to the human costs of the war.

- B. **Social Mobilization:** The greater a state's need to mobilize its society and the more war-resistant it is, the more it will expand war aims toward universalistic goals.

Predictions:

1. War aims are more likely to expand at the outset or early stages of a war.
2. The more war resistant a state's population, the more war aims will expand toward universalistic goals.
3. Where a war policy enjoys wide support, war aims are unlikely to expand.
4. Wars of limited aims should be rare.
5. Authoritarian states will be more likely to fight wars of limited aims than democracies.
6. Political elites, in their internal policy discussions, should defend the enunciation of messianic war aims in order to energize and mobilize public support for the war.

- C. **The Cleon Problem:** The greater the influence, the prestige, and political power of a state's leading generals, the more it will expand war aims.

Predictions:

1. Military officers will generally favor larger war aims than civilians.
2. As the prestige of the military rises, war aims should increase.
3. Military officers are most likely to favor wider aims after military victory.
4. The domestic political power of the military establishment general increases as the war progresses.
5. Military officers generally will favor military escalation.
6. Policy elites will be more likely to see the unintended political consequences of military escalation than the military who will discount them.

D. Threats to Security: The more a state's perception of an enemy threat increases during war, the more its war aims will expand.

D.1. As an enemy grows or appears stronger during war, the more a state will expand its war aims.

D.2. The more military technology favors or is perceived to favor the offense, the more a state will expand its war aims.

D.3. The nearer an enemy is, the more likely a state will expand its war aims.

D.4. The more malign an enemy's perceived intentions, the more a state will expand its war aims. States are perceived as more malign if they initiate the war, use harsh propaganda and rhetoric, engage in brutal wartime conduct, employ an offensive military strategy, and have a different regime structure.

Predictions:

1. Where a state's estimate of threat has increased during the war, it will generally expand its war aims.

2. As the enemy appears stronger, a state's war aims widen.

3. Wars between neighbors should see larger aims than wars between distant adversaries.

4. Wars in which military technology is perceived to favor the offense should see larger aims than wars where technology favors the defense.

5. States that have been attacked are more likely to expand war aims than states which initiated a war.

6. Wars with the most intense propaganda should see the largest aims.

7. Wars in which the participants engage in the most brutal conduct should see the largest aims.

8. Wars involving states with different political structures should see larger aims than wars between domestically similar regimes.

9. Wars between "primary" adversaries should see larger aims than wars between secondary adversaries.

10. Policy elites, in both internal discussions and public declarations, should justify additional aims by stating that the enemy is a greater threat.

E. Opportunistic Expansion: The greater the balance of power changes in favor of a state during war, the more its war aims will expand.

E.1. The more a state acquires allies, territory, or resources, the more it will expand its war aims.

E.2. The more decisive a military victory a state wins, the more likely a state will expand its war aims.

E.3. The cheaper implementing war aims appears to be, the more likely a state will expand them.

Predictions:

1. War aims should expand after a state acquires new allies.

2. War aims should expand after a state has conquered new material resources.

3. War aims should expand after decisive military victories. The more decisive the victory, the larger the expansion.

4. War aims should expand if a state revises downward its cost estimate for prolonging the war.
5. States should expand aims in regions of power vacuums.

F. Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion: The greater the need to reduce the power of enemy, the more a state's war aims will expand to do so.

Predictions:

1. A state will act before letting its enemy grow stronger.
2. A state will attack neutrals that are aiding its enemy.
3. Small wars will grow into large ones.
4. Political elites, in their internal discussions, will justify wider aims (e.g. attacking neutrals or expanding hostilities into a new area) on the grounds that failing to do so strengthens the enemy or risks losing an opportunity to control a strategic area.

G. Collective Action Problems and Quid Pro Quo Expansion: The greater a state's need for additional power, the more its war aims will expand by making promises to win new allies.

Predictions:

1. Warring states will try to persuade neutral states to join a war.
2. Wars between coalitions should see larger aims than wars between two individual antagonists.
3. The larger the coalition, the larger the war aims.
4. Political leaders, in internal discussions, should cite the need to acquire allies or keep existing ones to justify promises of territorial side-payments made to those states.

H. Collective Action Problems and Alliance Management: The greater the potential for contributory disputes among the members of a coalition, the greater the likelihood coalition war aims will expand to an absolute level.

Predictions:

1. Coalitions will be afflicted with frequent disputes over the contribution each member is making to the war effort.
2. Wars between coalitions should see larger aims than wars between individual antagonists.
3. The larger the coalitions, the larger the war aims.

- I. **Systemic Constraints:** The greater the likelihood of third-party intervention in a war, the less likely a state's war aims will expand.

Predictions:

1. Where they can, states will act to preserve the balance of power.
2. Threats of outside intervention should prevent a state from expanding its war aims.
3. Total wars between two individual antagonists should be rare.
4. Policy elites, in internal discussions, should express concern that other states will intervene in the war if they expand their war aims.

This chapter has presented a number of hypotheses which purport to explain why states expand their political objectives during war. Some of these hypotheses seem to be more powerful than others. For example, the blood price and social mobilization hypotheses are probably not as powerful as the Cleon problem. With respect to their predictions, even a cursory knowledge of diplomatic history reveals that war aims do shrink before a state has collapsed and wars of limited aims are not "rare." Conversely, generals often advocate wider war aims. Similarly, the coalition hypotheses will apply only to wars involving coalitions, whereas the threat, opportunity, and systemic constraints hypotheses apply to all types of wars. Nevertheless, each hypothesis may contribute to our understanding of war aims in some wars. For that reason alone, none should be neglected.

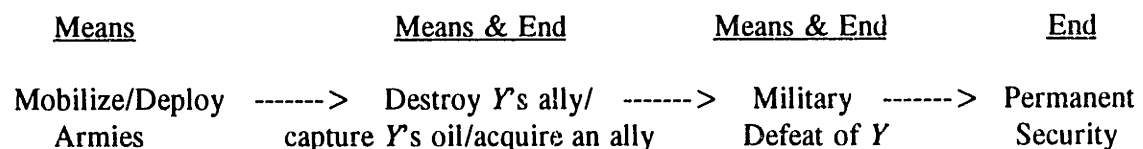
2.3 MEANS AND ENDS IN WAR

The hypotheses of expanding war aims help us form a more thorough understanding of strategy's means-ends chain whereby a state pursues and attempts to fulfill a particular political goal. Most of the hypotheses of expanding war aims explain the enlargement of a state's ultimate goal, the final political end in the means-ends chain. This is true for the blood price, social mobilization, Cleon problem, threats to security, and opportunity hypotheses. (The systemic constraints hypothesis, of course, explains how that final goal

may be prevented from becoming overly large.) The preventive expansion and quid pro quo hypotheses, however, explain the enlargement of intermediate war aims which are intended to enhance a state's power in order to help fulfill some other, more important objective. In that sense, those aims are both a means and an end.⁸² Consider the following illustration.

State *X* finds itself at war with enemy *Y*. During the conflict, *X* for a variety of reasons increasingly perceives *Y* as a greater threat than it had ever imagined. Consequently, as its ultimate end *X* pursues the total military and economic defeat of *Y* in order to achieve "permanent security." The mobilization and deployment of military forces are exclusively a means to that end. But *X* takes other steps to improve its balance of power with *Y* that are at once an expansion of war aims, but also a means to the ultimate end of *Y*'s defeat and permanent security. *X* attacks a neutral state which is giving aid to *Y*. *X* attacks *Y*'s oil colony half way around the globe to deprive it of oil supplies. *X* makes promises of territorial compensation in order to acquire them as allies. Each of these measures represent an enlargement of *X*'s war aims in order to bring about *Y*'s defeat.

Diagram 2.1 *X*'s Means-Ends Chain: Permanent Security is the Ultimate War Aim.



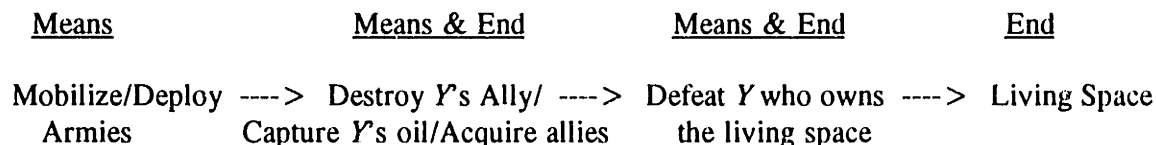
From this diagram, we see that *X*'s intermediate objectives are both means and ends. They become war aims of the state, but they are war aims harnessed to achieve the ultimate war

⁸² The collective action and alliance management hypothesis is unique in that it will explain the enlargement of war aims which are both the means *and* the ultimate end. A coalition agrees on unconditional surrender of a common enemy as their ultimate end precisely to ensure all members of the coalition devote their full resources to the war effort.

aim of security. The enlargement of *X*'s intermediate objectives is explained by the preventive expansion and quid pro quo expansion hypotheses.

Even if the goal is not security this framework applies. If the ultimate objective is not "security," but rather "living space," then the diagram looks the same:

Diagram 2.2 *X*'s Means-Ends Chain: Living Space is the Ultimate War Aim.



Again, the enlargement of intermediate objectives, explained by the preventive expansion and quid pro quo expansion hypotheses, are both ends in themselves for which *X* must fight and a means to the ultimate end of acquiring more living space. Moreover, at the level of grand strategy, this chain may be extended further. The living space is intended to cause *X*'s economic and population to grow for the purpose of making the state stronger and enhancing its prestige.

History provides abundant examples where certain war aims are both ultimate ends and intermediate objectives to other ends. For example, Hitler conceived of his attack on Russia as both a means to bring about the defeat of England (preventive expansion) and an ultimate objective its own right (living space). Twenty-five hundred years ago Athens, in launching the Sicilian expedition, sought both the glory of greater conquests in Sicily and the end of Sicilian support for Sparta and the Peloponnesian League. Interestingly, both powers were badly beaten.

CHAPTER THREE:

PRUSSIAN WAR AIMS IN THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR

"It is a political maxim after a victory not to enquire how much you can squeeze out of your opponent, but only to consider what is politically necessary."¹

-- Otto von Bismarck

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Prussian war aims did not expand during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In this chapter I examine the debate that took place within the Prussian leadership over whether war aims should be enlarged after the Prussian army's stunning victory over Austrian forces at Königgrätz. Primary attention will be given to Bismarck, the Prussian minister-president, who was the dominant figure in policy-making. But the views of other Prussian leaders, especially King Wilhelm I and Helmuth von Moltke, chief of the General Staff, will be discussed.

Bismarck wanted to impose a moderate peace on Austria which would not require any sacrifice of Austrian territory and make it pay only a small indemnity. After Königgrätz the king and his general staff favored an expansion in war aims.² Wilhelm and Moltke favored a march on Vienna and annexations of Austrian territory. Nevertheless, Bismarck successfully opposed elevating Prussian war aims.

¹ Otto von Bismarck, *Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman: The Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince von Bismarck Written and Dictated by Himself after His Retirement from Office*, vol. 2, trans. A. J. Butler (New York: Harper, 1899), pp. 42-43. Hereafter cited as "*Memoirs*."

² Norman Rich provides a nice summary. See his *The Age of Nationalism and Reform, 1850-1890* (New York: Norton, 1970), p. 94. For a valuable guide to the literature of this period, see Dieter K. Buse and Juergen C. Doerr, *German Nationalism: A Bibliographic Approach* (New York: Garland, 1985).

What do the Hypotheses Predict?

In this section, I infer predictions of how Prussia's war aims might evolve in the war from the competing hypotheses offered in chapter two. Each hypothesis makes two kinds of predictions and, therefore, can be tested by using two different methods. The first is congruence procedure which compares the outcome of a case with the predictions of a theory or hypothesis. Here each hypothesis makes a "core prediction" which is the central expectation as to whether Prussia will expand its war aims against Austria. Each core prediction is a simple congruence procedure test. The second method is process-tracing which tests the inner workings of a case. It asks whether the events of a case unfold and the actors speak and behave in accord with the predictions of a theory or hypothesis. The more the inner workings of a case correspond with a theory's predictions, the stronger the inference of causation. Below each hypothesis makes a number of "subsidiary predictions." These are the basis for the process-tracing test. Generally, these predictions and tests are more useful since they represent multiple tests of a theory or hypothesis within a single case. A theory which demonstrates that it can predict the outcome and inner workings of a case is more useful and more powerful than one which predicts the outcome alone.

The Blood Price:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will not expand its war aims.** This prediction is largely intuitive. The very essence of the blood price hypothesis holds that war aims expand as casualties increase, particularly as casualties exceed expectations and the perceived value of the gain. But there is no universal number or threshold which could predict the expansion of war aims in every case. Furthermore, in this case, none of the principal actors mentioned how much they expected the war to cost. Thus, I argue that the 10,000 casualties Prussia

suffered out of a mobilized army of 350,000 do not appear to be a high enough blood price to drive Prussian aims up.

*** Bismarck, in internal policy debates, should argue that Prussia has achieved gains from the war that are proportionate to its sacrifices.** Since Bismarck opposed wider war aims, we should find evidence that he was satisfied with the success and not preoccupied by the blood price.

*** Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy debates, should justify wider war aims in language which refers to the blood price.** Those who favor an expansion of war aims should be highly motivated by the casualties Prussia suffered in the war. Thus, Moltke and Wilhelm should be referring to the losses Prussia suffered in order to justify higher aims.

Social Mobilization:

*** Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims to include incorporating South Germany and German Austria.** A "nationalist" aim would be the most likely universal goal which Prussia might adopt to mobilize public opinion in favor of the war.

*** There should be evidence of Prussian leaders using nationalist propaganda to mobilize German and Prussian public opinion in favor of Prussia.** We should find evidence--in the form of public statements, speeches, fliers, or government-sponsored newspaper articles and editorials--that Prussia's leaders used the language of German nationalism to justify the war against Austria.

*** Bismarck should exaggerate the threat posed by Austria.** This is a prediction of the corollary hypothesis in which government leaders oversell a war policy in order to mobilize public support for the war.

*** Prussian public opinion demands wider war aims before Königgrätz.** This is

an important sequence prediction. We should see evidence that the Prussian public favors wider aims--German unity--because of propaganda, not military victory.

* **Prussian leaders, in internal policy debates, should debate the merits of achieving German unity immediately.**

The Cleon Problem:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.** This hypothesis almost always predicts expansions in war aims. Because the military gains greater political influence in war and because the military usually favors wider war aims than their civilian counterparts, it follows that Prussia will adopt wider war aims.

* **Moltke should favor wider war aims than Bismarck.** In light of the specification of this hypothesis, it is unlikely that Prussia's top civilian official and its most important military officer would share the same war aims during the conflict. Therefore, there should be a policy dispute between them that revolves around war aims.

* **Moltke's political influence should rise during the war.**

* **As Moltke's prestige rises, Prussia's war aims increase.** These are important sequence predictions which provide more specificity to the core prediction. If the Cleon problem is a powerful hypothesis, we should see Prussia's war aims linked to the political fortunes and vicissitudes of Prussia's most important military leader, Helmuth von Moltke.

* **Bismarck should grow more cautious about challenging or contradicting Moltke as the latter's prestige rises.**

Threats to Security:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will restrain its war aims.** In a nutshell, the Austrian

threat to Prussian security and interests had declined over the course of the war, because:

- Austria grew weaker during the war.
- Austria and Prussia were separated by great distances.
- Prussian policy-makers did not perceive the offense as the stronger form of war.
- Prussian leaders did not perceive Austrian intentions as increasingly aggressive, because:
 - + Prussian leaders did not perceive Austria as the initiator of war.
 - + Prussian leaders perceived Austrian propaganda and rhetoric as unthreatening.
 - + Prussian leaders perceived Austrian wartime conduct as civilized.
 - + Austria adopted a defensive strategy.
 - + Prussia and Austria shared a common regime structure.

*** A shift in the estimate of the Austrian threat by Prussian leaders should lead to a corresponding shift in Prussia's war aims. This prediction reflects the sequence of policy-making.**

*** Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should use language which demonstrates that he did not believe that the Austrian threat to Prussian interests and security increased during the war.**

*** Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy discussions, should use language which justifies wider war aims on the grounds that Austria is a greater threat.**

Opportunistic Expansion:

Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims, if one of the following conditions is true:

- Prussia was relatively stronger at the end of the war than at the beginning of the war.
- Prussia won a decisive military victory against Austria.
- Prussian political and military leaders expected that in continuing the war against Austria the Prussian army would not suffer high casualties.

*** Prussian leaders should expand their war aims after their estimate of opportunity rises. In other words, the decision of expanding Prussia's war aims should not be taken until the opportunity exists, or at least until the perceived opportunity exists.**

* Prussian leaders, in internal policy discussions, should justify wider war aims because of an opportunity.

* Prussian public opinion should support wider aims after Königgrätz.

Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion:

* **Core Prediction:** Prussia will expand the war to prevent Austria from growing stronger. This may take the form of attacking neutrals aiding Austria or widening the war to other areas from which Austria is receiving a benefit.

Quid Pro Quo Expansion:

* **Core Prediction:** Prussia will make promises to other states in order to get them to join the war. Prussia will have discussions along these lines with other European leaders.

Systemic Constraints:³

* **Core Prediction:** Prussia will restrain its war aims. Bismarck's fear of outside intervention, particularly from France, should force a moderation in Prussia's war aims.

* **Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should express the fear that French intervention should decisively shift the balance of power against Prussia.** If systemic constraints weigh on the minds of decision-makers, the danger of intervention by neutral

³ I shall offer no predictions for the hypothesis on alliance management. I believe it would be unfair and contrived to test this hypothesis against Prussian war aims in the Austro-Prussian War. While Prussia did fight the war in alliance with Italy, this could not be considered the kind of coalition for which the alliance management hypothesis was formulated. Italy and Prussia planned their wars against Austria separately, with the exception of timing. They fought on different fronts and there was almost no concern in either Prussia or Piedmont over whether its alliance partner achieved any of its aims. In a real sense, the Austro-Prussian War represented two *binary* wars.

parties should represent a material threat.

* **Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy discussions, should be unconcerned with the threat of foreign intervention.** If Moltke and Wilhelm advocated wider aims in the face of a threat of intervention by third parties, it must be because either they perceived that threat to be a bluff or they considered it to be militarily impotent.

* **The threat of foreign intervention should come before Prussia's final decision on war aims.** The sequence prediction.

Outline of the Chapter

Section 3.2 examines why Bismarck wanted war with Austria, how he went about getting it, and what his war aims were. Section 3.3 offers a brief summary of the war up until the victory at Königgrätz. Section 3.4 focuses on the crucial debate over war aims within the Prussian leadership after Königgrätz. Bismarck opposed expanding Prussia's aims. King Wilhelm I and Moltke favored it. Section 3.5 explains how and why Bismarck prevailed in this dispute. Section 3.6 evaluates the explanatory power of the hypotheses in light of the successes and failures of their predictions.

3.2 BISMARCK'S WAR AIMS AND THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

Bismarck's political objective in the 1860s was to unite Germany under the hegemony of Prussia. This meant that war with Austria was likely sooner or later. Prussia needed to break forever the strong influence Austria wielded in Germany. Bismarck did not shrink from war to achieve this objective. As A. J. P. Taylor put it: "Between 1862 and 1866 Bismarck steadily screwed up the pressure, despite occasional and perhaps genuine scruples;

unless the Austrians accepted his terms the repeated crises were bound to end in war."⁴

Background

On October 8, 1862, Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, appointed Otto von Bismarck Minister-President of the Prussian State. Bismarck assumed this high office with the intention of expanding Prussia's power in the center of Europe.⁵ By acquiring control of Germany, Bismarck hoped to transform Prussia from the weakest to one of the more powerful Great Powers. Achieving this objective required him to change the German system from a large collection of independent and small German states and two Great Powers--Prussia and Austria--to one of Prussian domination.

Prior to Napoleon's conquest of Germany in the early 1800s, Germany comprised some 300 petty states which were given life and guaranteed independence by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. They were organized together under the rubric of the Holy Roman Empire. The Habsburg rulers of Austria reigned as the Holy Roman Emperors.⁶

Napoleon, however, ended this system. In the aftermath of the battle of Austerlitz on July 17, 1806, the French emperor dissolved the Holy Roman Empire. After the Napoleonic wars, Germany reconstituted itself as a new confederation, consolidated to 33

⁴ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 201.

⁵ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 305-312. Studying Bismarck is fraught with dangers. No one yet has written a good biography of Bismarck. As Taylor wrote: "No one is ever likely to penetrate Bismarck's motives." See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 162. Nevertheless, I took my chances and relied on several useful works on Bismarck. See Count Friedreich von Beust, *Memoirs* (London: Remington, 1887); Moritz Busch, *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History*, 2 vols. (London: MacMillan, 1898); *Correspondence of William I and Bismarck*, trans. J. A. Ford, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1903); Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck* (New York: Penguin, 1983); Gordon A. Craig, *From Bismarck to Adenauer: Aspects of German Statecraft* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958); Theodore S. Hamerow, *Problems in European Civilization: Otto von Bismarck* (Boston: Heath, 1962); Emil Ludwig, *Bismarck* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1927); A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and The Statesman* (New York: Knopf, 1955).

⁶ William Harbutt Dawson, *The German Empire 1867-1914 and the Unity Movement*, vol. 1 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), pp. 1-2.

members. Its purpose was to maintain the internal and external security, independence, and inviolability of the German states. They retained independence but organized a Federal Diet--standing plenipotentiaries of the sovereigns of the German states and governments of Free Cities--to meet in Frankfurt. The Emperor of Austria, by virtue of his leadership in the old empire, became President of the Confederation. A Federal Army was created. Each state was to provide a contingent proportionate to its population. But there was no integration or efficiency in the army. In practice, the responsibility for protecting the entire confederation fell to Austria and Prussia, the two German Great Powers.⁷

This confederation afforded the small German states the best of all possible worlds. Prussia and Austria protected the small German states from external Great Power threats. At the same time, Prussia's and Austria's inability to cooperate and their desire for hegemony in Germany protected the small states from the German Great Powers themselves. As the British statesman Edmund Burke observed:

As long as the two princes [the King of Prussia and the Austrian Emperor] are at variance, so long the liberties of Germany are safe. But if ever they should so far understand one another as to be persuaded that they have a more direct and more certainly defined interest in proportioned mutual aggrandizement than in reciprocal reduction, that is, if they come to think that they are more likely to be enriched by a division of spoil than to be rendered secure by keeping the old policy of preventing others from being spoiled by either of them, from that moment the liberties of Germany are no more.⁸

For forty-five years, Prussia was unwilling to fight and expel Austria from Germany. Austria, content as chief executive and senior partner in the confederation, felt no need to make waves.⁹ If one of the German Great Powers appeared to be making a bid for

⁷ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 1-2.

⁸ Quoted in Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, 1981), p. 177.

⁹ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 9-10.

supremacy, the small German states would balance against it with the other.¹⁰

Yet, as Prussia grew stronger in the early 1860s, it became increasingly restless with this arrangement. Austria was conservative and content and its influence in Germany was not waning. With the South German states in particular, Austria's diplomatic influence grew stronger. To break this stagnation, Bismarck launched the first of what would become known as the Wars of German Unification.

The Danish (Schleswig-Holstein) War and Its Aftermath

Earlier in his life, Bismarck had concluded that a series of wars would probably be necessary for Prussia to dominate Germany. On his appointment to power, he moved to implement that program. The first, the Danish War, was actually fought in alliance with Austria. Bismarck intended to wrest control of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from the King of Denmark's hereditary control. Denmark lost the war badly. Governed for nearly a thousand years by the Danish monarchy, the duchies were shorn away from Denmark and turned over to Austria and Prussia.¹¹

Bismarck wanted to annex Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia. But formal annexation was not possible without the formal renunciation of the legitimate ruler's rights to the duchies. The King of Denmark did so only by the point of a bayonet. When the King of Denmark renounced his claims to the Schleswig and Holstein, however, he did so to Prussia and

¹⁰ See, for example, Robert D. Billinger, Jr., "The War Scare of 1831 and the Prussian-South German Plan for the End of Austrian Dominance in Germany," *Central European History* 9 (September 1976): 203-219.

¹¹ For particularly useful works on the Danish War, as well as the Austro-Prussian War, see F. Darmstaedter, *Bismarck and the Creation of the Second Reich* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965); Dawson, *German Empire*; Erich Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* (New York: Norton, 1958); W. E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question, 1848-71* (New York: Octagon, 1981); Pflanze, *Development of Germany*; Keith A. P. Sandiford, *Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question 1848-64* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

Austria *jointly*.¹² In other words, neither power could peaceably decide the fate of the duchies unilaterally.

Bismarck knew Austria would not go along with his plans for Prussian supremacy in Germany. So he began laying the groundwork for war with the Austrians and any small German states which would join them.¹³ The joint control of Schleswig and Holstein, which was part of the problem, served as part of the solution. Bismarck used it to force the second war of German unification.

Austria and the small German states had no material interest in the duchies. They wanted the duchies to join the German Confederation and thereby strengthen the status quo in Germany. Consequently, they supported the succession rights of the Duke of Augustenburg. In November 1863, he had disputed the claim of Christian IX, the new King of Denmark, to succession in the duchies. Augustenburg lost that dispute when the European Great Powers imposed a settlement. But Augustenburg renewed his claim when Christian lost the duchies to Austria and Prussia in the Danish War. Bismarck of course refused to accept Augustenburg's claim.¹⁴ He wanted the duchies for the King of Prussia.

Soon after the Danish War, tensions between the two German Great Powers

¹² Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 22.

¹³ Ralph Flenley, *Modern German History* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), pp. 218-219. For other useful, English-language sources on this period in German history, see Roy A. Austensen, "Austria and the 'Struggle for Supremacy in Germany,'" *The Journal of Modern History* 52 (June 1980): 195-225; Billinger, "War Scare of 1831," pp. 203-219; Helmut Bohme, ed., *The Foundation of the German Empire: Selected Documents*, trans. Agatha Ramm (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); William Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification* (New York: Longman, 1991); Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1840-1945* (New York: Knopf, 1969); Golo Mann, *The History of Germany Since 1789* (New York: Praeger, 1968); Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany* (New York: MacMillan, 1966, 2nd ed.); A.J.P. Taylor, *The Course of German History* (New York: Capricorn, 1962); Adolphus W. Ward, *Germany, 1815-1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917).

¹⁴ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 191. Augustenburg's claims at the time were discarded by the Great Power treaty but he continued to make them throughout the Danish War. He presented Austria and the small German states with a convenient--for Bismarck, an inconvenient--solution for the duchies.

increased. Austria tolerated popular agitation in Holstein in support of Augustenburg's claims. Bismarck demanded that Austria and Prussia jointly suppress these demonstrations or Prussia would act alone. Austria declared that unilateral Prussian action would be intolerable.¹⁵ Bismarck viewed the agitations as a threat to his plan for annexation. If Germany recognized Augustenburg as the legitimate heir to the duchies, Prussia could not very well annex them legally. Immediate conflict was avoided when an Austrian envoy proposed dividing the duchies into two spheres of influence. Austria would control and administer Holstein, Prussia Schleswig. Signed on August 14, 1865, the Gastein Convention, as it was known, kept the peace a little longer. This enabled Bismarck to lay his plans for war more carefully, acquire allies, and prevent Austria from doing the same.¹⁶ By the end of 1865, Bismarck was looking for an issue over which he could provoke war. He found one in Austria's administration of Holstein.

Prussia treated the people of Schleswig far more harshly than Austria did the Holsteiners. "Let the people first learn obedience, and then they will learn to love us," declared General Edwin von Manteuffel, the Prussian military governor.¹⁷ He brutally stamped out any popular agitation in support of Augustenburg's succession. Manteuffel asserted that annexation was inevitable. By contrast, Austria respected Holstein institutions and customs and permitted agitation in favor of the Duke of Augustenburg to continue. Bismarck wanted those demonstrations put down. He feared that a growing German bandwagon in favor of Augustenburg would derail his plans.

As the new year of 1866 opened, the demonstrations in Holstein prompted more and

¹⁵ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 194.

¹⁶ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁷ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 199.

more demands by Berlin that they be suppressed. Vienna replied with one casual rejection after another. Bismarck used this time to prepare the domestic and international contexts for war. He declared in November 1865: "We have to *faire le mort* (pretend to be dead) and behave as if we were quite satisfied with the provisional settlement [Gastein]; at the same time to complain without pause in Vienna against the Austrian administration in Holstein and to keep open such complaints against Austria as might be capable of sharper development under certain circumstances."¹⁸

Prussia's War Aims and the Decision for War

With war coming closer, Bismarck, like the good the Clausewitzian he was (though he claimed never to have read the Prussian theorist), transformed his political objectives into war aims. They included first and foremost the destruction of Austrian influence in Germany and its exclusion from German affairs. Bismarck wanted to determine once and for all who was to be the master in Germany. As Moltke, who supported Bismarck in his aims and efforts, later put it: "The war of 1866 was entered on not because the existence of Prussia was threatened, nor in obedience to public opinion and the voice of the people: it was a struggle, long foreseen and calmly prepared for, recognized as a necessity by the Cabinet, not for territorial aggrandizement or material advantage, but for an idea--the establishment of power. Not a foot of land was exacted from conquered Austria, but it had to renounce all part in the hegemony of Germany."¹⁹ Bismarck intended to abolish the German Confederation and replace it with a new federal union, thoroughly dominated by Prussia,

¹⁸ Quoted in Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 109.

¹⁹ Helmuth von Moltke, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper Brothers, 1893), p. 430.

which would include all states in northern Germany (that is, north of the Main River). Bismarck intended to annex Schleswig-Holstein and most of the micro-German states and Free Cities. As for the other secondary states in northern Germany, whether they would be annexed or merely forced to join the new Prussian-dominated union depended on which side they chose in the war. The South German states would have to join an alliance with Prussia. At no time did Bismarck propose to annex South German or Austrian territory. Nor did he aim to humiliate or destroy the Austrian Empire. As one scholar of the war notes, "The Prussian aims were broadly defined as the exclusion of Austria from the German Confederation and Prussian territorial expansion in North Germany sufficient to link up her detached provinces."²⁰ These initial war aims were shared by Bismarck, Roon, and Moltke. As Bismarck himself stated: "But if war is waged against Austria it has to bring about not only the annexation of the Duchies but a new arrangement in the relations of Prussia with the German medium and small States."²¹ These men expected and hoped war would solve the German question once and for all. Yet, Bismarck needed to persuade his boss, King Wilhelm I, of the need for war.

Wilhelm supported Bismarck's basic aim of unifying northern Germany under Prussian leadership. He shared Bismarck's desire to annex Schleswig and Holstein. Thus the tension between Austria and Prussia over the administration of the duchies--which Bismarck had helped to create--disposed Wilhelm toward war. Bismarck encouraged and strengthened this disposition. The king, though unwilling to provoke a war with the venerable and venerated House of Hapsburg, would defend his sovereign rights if he felt they

²⁰ Heinrich Friedjung, *The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany: 1859-1866*, trans. A.J.P. Taylor and W.L. McElwee (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 246. See also, Dawson, *German Empire*, pp. 203-204.

²¹ Quoted in Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 99.

were being violated. Wilhelm viewed Austria's encouragement of the Augustenburg demonstrations in Holstein as just such a violation.²²

On February 28, 1866, Wilhelm held a Crown Council in Berlin. He authorized Bismarck and the generals to begin diplomatic and military preparations for war. But Wilhelm did not want the dethronement of any German princes to be part of Prussian war aims. For the time being Bismarck kept that aspect of his program to himself; he was satisfied that the path to war was clearing.²³ Austria could avoid war if it yielded to Bismarck's terms. As Pflanze notes, "What William desired was not an immediate decision for military action, but preparation for its eventual necessity. Nor had Bismarck abandoned his double-course [of pursuing war and diplomacy simultaneously]. He was never one to confuse probability with inevitability."²⁴

The Italian Alliance and Napoleon III

In a war with Austria, Bismarck wanted an ally. It would ensure that Prussia would not be isolated in a conflict with a rival Great Power. Moreover, an alliance would strengthen the balance of forces, adding power to the Prussian side and forcing Austria to fight on two fronts. Bismarck thought Italy a logical choice. It, too, was a rising young nation with grievances and territorial claims against the Austrian Empire. In the Crown Council of February 28, Moltke advised that an Italian alliance was necessary for certain victory.²⁵ Bismarck and Italian General Giuseppe Govone completed the negotiations for

²² Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 93-95; Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, pp. 109-111; and Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 285-287.

²³ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 111-112.

²⁴ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 284-285.

²⁵ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 287; Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 110-115.

the alliance in Berlin in March 1866.²⁶

Moreover, Bismarck did not expect Britain or Russia to upset his plans. The British professed little commitment to European affairs during this time. The fate of the Germans interested the British; but they were never prepared to intervene militarily. Russia was benevolently neutral toward Prussia for several reasons: 1. Many conflicts of interest existed between Russia and Austria; 2. The Prussian king and the Russian czar maintained a good personal relationship; and 3. Prussia and Russia needed to cooperate to keep a lid on Polish nationalism. Each power occupied about half of Poland. Should the Poles rise up, both Prussia and Russia would be weakened.

Bismarck's real fear of outside intervention came from the Emperor of France, Napoleon III.²⁷ Napoleon considered himself an enlightened, modern statesman. He thought his regime would--or at least should--serve as a model for the rest of Europe. Napoleon also wanted to sponsor a gradual reordering of Europe along nationalist-linguistic lines. Such a policy, he believed, would benefit France most: it would lead to the acquisition of French-speaking Belgium and the west bank of the Rhine.²⁸

Napoleon had sponsored, encouraged, and protected Italian unification during the 1850s. An almost parent-child relationship developed between France and Italy. Consequently, Bismarck needed Napoleon's consent to form an aggressive alliance with Italy against Austria.²⁹ Napoleon approved. He considered the conservative, multi-ethnic

²⁶ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, pp. 113-114; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 287.

²⁷ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 86-87. See also, Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 221-222.

²⁸ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 87.

²⁹ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 114.

Austrian Empire to be the biggest obstacle to his nationalist map-making plans in Europe.³⁰ Letting Prussia hammer it a bit did not bother him. Napoleon also thought that in a German civil war he would be asked, eventually, to mediate and settle the conflict. He expected Austria to defeat a Prussian-Italian alliance after a long war of attrition in which Prussia would plead for French intervention. In that event, Napoleon planned to support Prussia; his price would be French annexation of the Rhineland.³¹

Similarly, Austria feared French intervention on the side of Prussia. Austrians leaders wooed Napoleon to stay neutral. For his part, the French emperor was all-too-happy to work both sides of the table. He concluded a secret treaty with Austria which guaranteed France's neutrality in a German civil war in exchange for ceding Venetia to Italy. It was the Italian leadership's objective in a war with Austria.³²

On April 8, 1866, Prussia and Italy signed a secret offensive treaty--aimed at Austria--which would last for three months. Bismarck liked this alliance. The treaty did not oblige Prussia to wage war, but required Italy to attack Austria if Bismarck decided on aggression.³³ The only task that remained for Bismarck was to provoke the war with Austria on favorable terms. In other words, he wanted to make it look like Austria's fault.

³⁰ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 90.

³¹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 291-292.

³² Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 179-180. Italy, thus, would win no matter what the outcome of battle. If it lost to Austria, Venetia would still be hers due to Austria's treaty with France. If Italy beat Austria on the battlefield, Venetia would be won. From Austria's perspective, the treaty is quite bizarre. It only guaranteed France's neutrality and the Austrians would commit forces to defend Venetia even though the province was already lost by secret treaty before the war started.

³³ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 114.

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE WAR

The road to war was not yet a straight one. Austria proposed in the middle of April that both nations agree to cancel any preliminary war preparations and mobilizations that they may have made. Wilhelm, in a pacifist mood and concerned that Prussia was being blamed for belligerence in the councils of Europe, forced Bismarck to agree.³⁴ Bismarck's labors appeared to have been fruitless: the Italian alliance would lapse before war could be arranged.

In Vienna, however, rumors reached the Austrian leadership that Italy was mobilizing troops and moving supplies toward Venetia. The reports were untrue or heavily exaggerated and may have been spread by Bismarck.³⁵ Despite the recent agreement with Prussia on demobilization, Austria could not overlook this apparent threat. On April 21, Vienna ordered the mobilization of the Army of South to guarantee Austria's frontier against the potential Italian threat.³⁶ Such facts in the hands of Bismarck proved to be Austria's undoing.

Bismarck seized on the appearance of Austrian perfidy. He claimed that the Austrian mobilization was a violation of the recent agreement on demobilization. Austria claimed its mobilization was aimed only at Italy. Bismarck replied that he could not tell the difference. In daily letters to Wilhelm, Bismarck stressed the long-term hostility of Austria. In a letter to the king, dated April 22, Bismarck stated: "But anyone who, like your Majesty's humble servant, has for sixteen years been most intimately concerned with Austrian policy, cannot doubt that hostility toward Prussia has become the chief, one might say the only political aim in Vienna. It will be actively prosecuted as soon as the Vienna Cabinet considers the

³⁴ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 126-128.

³⁵ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 289.

³⁶ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, pp. 206-207.

circumstances more favorable than at present."³⁷ Bismarck stressed the need, therefore, to act immediately; future trends, he warned, may go against Prussia.³⁸ This was Bismarck's trump card. This violation of the agreement offended Wilhelm's sense of honor. He unleashed Bismarck to continue his drive toward war.³⁹

With Wilhelm finally on board, Bismarck's final task was to force the actual outbreak of war. The dispute over the demonstrations in Schleswig and Holstein had continued during these back-room negotiations. In June 1866, Austria tried to put the matter before the German Diet. The maneuvering in the Diet now became a substitute for crisis diplomacy, except that Bismarck was not interested in a peaceful resolution.

Austria's attempt to make Schleswig-Holstein an issue for the Diet to settle was a good move. But Bismarck knew how to play chess as well. He declared that Austria could not turn the duchies over to the Diet without Prussia's consent and then marched Prussian troops from Schleswig into Holstein. Austria offered a motion to mobilize all confederate troops but Prussia's to deal with the demonstrations. Bavaria proposed a compromise: Mobilize all Confederate troops but Prussia's *and* Austria's. In response, Bismarck proposed to reform the German confederation along lines which would have excluded Austria from Germany. On June 14, 1866, the Bavarian motion passed. For Bismarck it was a sufficient pretext to initiate hostilities. The approval of the Bavarian motion, he argued, was a hostile act aimed at Prussia. As such, it was a violation of the Confederate constitution. War was declared: Prussia and Italy on one side, Austria and most of the small German states on the

³⁷ Bismarck to Wilhelm, April 22, 1866, *Correspondence*, p. 64.

³⁸ *Correspondence*, pp. 64-69.

³⁹ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, pp. 206-207.

other.⁴⁰

Bismarck appealed to German nationalist sentiment in order to win public support for Prussia. On March 24, during the spring crisis, he wrote in a public message that Prussia must find security in Germany. This made sense because of "her position, her German character, and the German outlook of her princes."⁴¹ On June 16, the outbreak of war, Bismarck issued a manifesto in Wilhelm's name. He addressed it "To the German people." In this document, Bismarck wrote that the mobilization of the German confederation was illegal and, therefore, the organization ceased to exist. The only thing that was left was the "living unity of the German nation." German governments and peoples now must "find for this unity a new, vital expression." Bismarck added that Prussia was fighting for the "national development of Germany."⁴² As the historian Otto Pflanze writes, "in accord with the strategy planned since 1857, Bismarck set out to *exploit* the idea of nationalism and the yearning for national unity in the interest of Prussia. Hopefully it would provide the moral basis for the war and the means with which to arouse popular enthusiasm for the conflict."⁴³

The details of the campaigning are not important here.⁴⁴ It is only necessary to remember a few important points. First, all of Europe except the Prussian leadership expected Prussia to lose. Bismarck himself said during the campaign: "Foreign cabinets and nations underestimate us; but the world will see with astonishment what an assertion of power

⁴⁰ Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, pp. 124-127; see also Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, chapter six.

⁴¹ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 298.

⁴² Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 298. Pflanze is an invaluable source for this material.

⁴³ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 298. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁴ For those details, see Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*; Craig, *The Battle of Königgrätz*; and Dawson, *German Empire*.

the despised Prussia is capable of."⁴⁵ Second, Prussia won a decisive victory. For the first time, Prussia was clearly the strongest power in Germany. The battle of Königgrätz took place on July 3 and altered the European balance of power. Prussia lost 10,000 men, Austria 45,000, including 20,000 prisoners.⁴⁶ This victory, if left unmolested, guaranteed the fulfillment of Bismarck's war aims. It was in this context that the debate within the Prussian leadership over expanding war aims began.

3.4 DISPUTE OVER WAR AIMS

Prussian political and military leaders began to debate expanding their war aims immediately after the victory at Königgrätz. It was a particularly intense dispute, with Wilhelm, Moltke, and the rest of the military leadership on one side and Bismarck and Roon on the other. It is the heart of the case.

Favoring Expanding War Aims: Wilhelm I and the Generals

Moltke, as I had mentioned earlier, supported Bismarck's aims, at least until Königgrätz. King Wilhelm, however, thought Prussia's initial war aims only included annexing Schleswig-Holstein and reducing Austrian influence in Germany. He was not aware of Bismarck's plans to reorganize all of north Germany, including the removal of some German sovereigns from their thrones. Nevertheless, after Prussia's military victory King Wilhelm and his generals favored expanding Prussia's war aims to include the destruction of the retreating Austrian army, a triumphal march on Vienna, and the annexation of territory

⁴⁵ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 230.

⁴⁶ R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History: from 3500 B.C. to the present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986, second revised edition), p. 831.

in Austrian Bohemia and South Germany.⁴⁷

Moltke was a man of exact planning and linear thinking. He did not like political problems upsetting his military plans. Politics and war, he thought, were entirely separate. As Hajo Holborn writes: "Moltke, who had learned most of his strategy from Clausewitz, had failed to grasp firmly the latter's fundamental teaching that war is an act of politics and that military strategy should at all times remain subordinate to the aims of policy. By conceiving of war as a duel of two armies fought in a professional fashion Moltke saw no need for close political consultation, let alone the statesman's direction of the war."⁴⁸ Moltke followed a strict military logic: War aims should be set according to what the armies can fulfill. Consequently, he believed that Prussia could and should march into the heart of Austria, humiliate the Austrian Empire, and annex large tracts of Austrian territory.⁴⁹

Generally, Moltke did not concern himself with the potential reaction of the other Great Powers. To the extent that he did, Moltke had a military solution. When asked in April 1867 what impact French intervention would have had on Prussia's position, Moltke replied minor: "We were stronger after Königgrätz than before it and we had 664,000 men under arms."⁵⁰ Furthermore, Moltke believed that the threat of the retreating Austrian army required its pursuit and destruction, all the way to Vienna if necessary. Moltke considered the costs of immediate pursuit to be lower than allowing Austria to rejuvenate its armies.

⁴⁷ According to Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 199-200, the evidence as to who in the Prussian leadership supported what is unclear. Nevertheless, Wilhelm's, Bismarck's, Crown Prince Friedrich's and Moltke's views are reasonably well-known. Moltke favored a march on Vienna, but not a march into Vienna.

⁴⁸ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, p. 219.

⁴⁹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 308.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 243. To arrive at this figure, Moltke must also be including *Landwehr* units. Prussia's fully mobilized active army consisted of 300,000-350,000 troops, not counting contributions from its north German allies.

King Wilhelm shared Moltke's view that his victorious armies were entitled to as much as the battlefield has given them. Wilhelm summed up his view thus: "It is a question of getting as much money and territory as we can without risking everything."⁵¹ Wilhelm's pre-war objections to the annexation of German states vanished with their participation in "Austria's war" against his beloved Prussia. Specifically, Wilhelm wanted the following: march on and occupy Vienna to impose a Napoleonic peace; annex most of Saxony and Hesse; seize large parts of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Austrian Bohemia. All of this would be in addition to the annexations of northern territories--Bismarck's original aims.⁵²

Wilhelm's attitude was largely a punitive one for which Bismarck was partly responsible. Bismarck had cajoled, prodded, and pushed Wilhelm to war. Austria, Bismarck had argued, was a threat and an aggressive state: Prussia was entirely right in making war against it. Bismarck had oversold his case and the argument came back to haunt him. In Wilhelm's eyes Austria had just lost an aggressive war; it deserved to be punished. This justified extensive annexations and a march on Vienna.⁵³

Opposing Expanding War Aims: Bismarck

Bismarck was the primary Prussian decision-maker and in the end his views on war aims prevailed. Königgrätz fulfilled Bismarck's initial war aims. Austrian political influence in Germany was destroyed; Prussia now dominated Germany.⁵⁴ Bismarck's program of

⁵¹ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 238.

⁵² Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, p. 216.

⁵³ Craig, *Germany*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ A.J.P. Taylor argues that Bismarck did "put up his terms: he excluded Austria from Germany, instead of dividing it with her at the line of the Main." *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 169. It is a curious comment. Taylor provides no footnotes or documentary evidence in support of this statement. Furthermore, a thorough scouring of his chapter on Bismarck's wars finds Taylor quite unclear as to what Bismarck's original aims were. On the

annexations was less extensive than Wilhelm's or Moltke's. He wanted Schleswig and Holstein, Hanover, Saxony, the Free City of Frankfurt, Hesse-Cassel, and Nassau. Bismarck planned to reorganize the rest of northern Germany into a new confederation led by Prussia. Bismarck demanded treaties of alliance with and some territory from the South German states--Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, and Darmstadt.⁵⁵ But Bismarck vigorously opposed a continuation of the war, annexations in Bohemia, and a humiliating peace for Austria for two reasons: 1. He did not want to alienate Austria; he wanted to preserve the possibility of making it a future ally. 2. He feared outside intervention by other European powers, especially France.

AUSTRIA AS A FUTURE ALLY

After Königgrätz Bismarck immediately set about the task of convincing Wilhelm to accept a moderate peace. The first thing he did was ratchet down his rhetoric and try to put the genie back into the bottle. He argued that Austria was not and is not the threat he made it out to be. Austria was a normal state doing normal things to protect its interests. In his memoirs Bismarck explained how he had responded to Wilhelm's desire to punish Austria: "I replied that we were not there to sit in judgment, but to pursue the German policy. Austria's conflict in rivalry with us was no more culpable than ours with her; *our task was the establishment or initiation of a German national unity under the leadership of the King*

basis of his reporting, therefore, we cannot tell whether "Bismarck put up his terms" or not. Nowhere does Taylor indicate that Bismarck proposed dividing Germany at the Main with Austria. Indeed, on occasion Taylor makes vague references to the more conventional interpretation which I have offered. (p. 163) Consequently, I have chosen to ignore this comment. I shall let my interpretation and supporting citations stand on their own merits.

⁵⁵ The territory was land held by the South German states that was north of the Main. This was part of Bismarck's original war aims.

of Prussia."⁵⁶ Quite a change from the tune he had whistled in the spring.

Bismarck had once declared that in his study of diplomatic history and the mistakes of Napoleon I, he learned to exercise "wise moderation after the greatest successes."⁵⁷ Königgrätz shattered Austrian power in Germany and assured Prussia's domination of the north. He now put into practice the lesson he learned from Napoleon. With his aims fulfilled, he wanted to reduce Austrian bitterness toward Prussia. Austria was only a temporary enemy and he had no desire to make it a permanent one. He understood who the real aggressor had been. Indeed, in the evening on the day after Königgrätz, Bismarck justified his war aims and foreshadowed his future policy: "The question in dispute is therefore settled. Now it is time for us to regain the old friendship with Austria."⁵⁸ Punitive aims against Austria, Bismarck believed, risked making that course impossible. Bismarck did not look at Austria as a long-term threat against which additional aims were necessary to preserve Prussian security. He believed the opposite: Austria was a future

⁵⁶ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 51. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 90.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Darmstaedter, *Second Reich*, p. 290. The irony of this statement should not be overlooked. The previous 150 years witnessed a constant and occasionally quite intense rivalry between Austria and Prussia, going back to Frederick the Great's long feud with the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. The question of who would dominate Germany was the central question in German politics since the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. There was, of course, the alliance against Napoleon and the Three Emperor's League after 1848 in which Prussia and Austria were aligned. But these alliances did not remove the rivalry over Germany which constantly characterized their relations. Indeed, Bismarck's early years in the diplomatic service of the Prussian state were dominated by one theme: unrelenting hostility and opposition to Austrian power and influence. "In 1851 he was selected by Frederick William IV to represent Prussia in the Diet, where he became for the next eight years the bitterest foe of the Hapsburg monarchy." For Bismarck, the issue was simply one of power. Austria was the main bulwark to the growth of Prussian power and the domination of Germany. After Frankfurt, he served for brief stints as Prussia's ambassador to St. Petersburg and then to Paris. While in the Russian capital, Bismarck sought to serve to the interests of the Russian-Prussian relationship over that of the Austrian-Prussian. Furthermore, as a means to expand Prussia's power at Austria's expense, Bismarck had long been an advocate of an alliance with Paris. See Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 95-96, 153-154.

friend for which moderate terms were necessary to moderate its resentment.⁵⁹

Bismarck did not want to continue the war because further conflict could either destroy Austria as a Great Power or make Vienna a permanent enemy. Both outcomes were undesirable for domestic and systemic reasons. First, had Prussia marched on Vienna, the Austrian Empire might have been destroyed and revolution might have overtaken Austria's ethnic minorities. This in itself would be a constant source of distraction and disorder. As Bismarck would assure Czar Alexander in 1870, "We have no interest in seeing the Austrian monarchy collapse and involving ourselves in the insoluble question, what should take its place."⁶⁰ He added in his memoirs: "New creations in this area could only be of a continually revolutionary character."⁶¹ Thus, Prussia's chief minister did not consider the continuing existence of the Habsburg monarchy a threat, but a force for order and stability and for preventing nationalist revolution.

Second, a dissolved Austrian Empire probably meant the incorporation of the Austrian Germans into the new Prussian (or German) state. The addition of so many Catholic Germans would have created an undesirable, if not downright dangerous, situation for the Protestant Prussian autocracy. Bismarck was a nationalist of the Prussian variety. That is, intellectually he had little in common with the German nationalists of the time who preached the greatness and glory of the German language and culture. Bismarck was a believer in Prussia, not Germany. "Bismarck's nationalism was the type formed by the state

⁵⁹ See Carroll, *Germany and the Great Powers*, pp. 27-28; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 307-308; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 132. Bismarck's attitude toward the South German states was the same: "Bismarck warned the king not to alienate the feelings of the South German states, which he considered immediate allies against France and future members of a German federal state. For that reason he did not wish to take land from them." (Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, p. 188.)

⁶⁰ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 207.

⁶¹ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 308.

rather than by common culture."⁶² One of the foundations of that state was Protestantism. Bismarck's vision of a united Germany was one of domination by the Prussian state over all the German principalities. To incorporate so many Roman Catholics, Bismarck believed, would be difficult for Prussia to digest and thus be a constant source of domestic instability.⁶³

Last and most important, Bismarck had a keen understanding and appreciation for how European diplomacy worked. He understood, better than any of his contemporaries, the balance of power, Great Power rivalry, and how the international system worked. He did not want to remove Austria as a piece on the European chessboard. Austria was a fragile, multi-ethnic empire. Pushing it too hard would tear it asunder. At the same time, "By inflicting unnecessary wounds he feared to incur her enduring hostility. He remembered Frederick the Great's long feud with Maria Theresa. The relationship with Vienna must not be permitted to become an organic fault in Prussian foreign policy."⁶⁴ Bismarck probably foresaw that in the years to come a newly united and powerful Germany would have two natural rivals on the continent: France and Russia. This is not to say that they would be permanent or inevitable enemies, only that Paris and St. Petersburg had the power and status to challenge Germany's dominant position in central Europe. In contrast, with the question of German hegemony settled, Austria and Prussia would have no further conflicts of interest. Why, therefore, should Vienna not be an ally? In the long run Bismarck believed that Austria alive made Prussia stronger and safer than Austria dead or even Austria incorporated. Indeed, a few days after the Königgrätz, Bismarck commented to a military advisor of Crown

⁶² Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 72.

⁶³ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 239.

⁶⁴ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 308.

Prince Friedrich: "We shall need *Austria's strength in the future for ourselves*."⁶⁵

The argument that Austria was a source of strength for Prussia and therefore should be treated well in the coming peace was not obvious to any observer at the time other than Bismarck. Fortunately, Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, provided another reason for a moderate peace which was more apparent.

BISMARCK'S FEAR OF EXTERNAL INTERVENTION

Bismarck knew that Prussia did not exist in a vacuum in the center of Europe. He realized that Prussia's stunning victory was totally unexpected anywhere in Europe except in Prussia's high councils.⁶⁶ This sudden change in the political landscape concerned Russia and Britain, but Bismarck's most important worry was the threat of French intervention. The danger was undoubtedly real. Napoleon's support for Prussia's nationalistic aims backfired. Königgrätz in and of itself was a dramatic change in the European balance of power. Expanding Prussia's aims to march on Vienna, humiliate Austria, and annex large tracts of Austrian territory might have unleashed revolution in Hungary and destroyed Austria as a Great Power. This would have been too much for France. Prussia was not the weak state Napoleon imagined and, as Lord Cowley, the English Ambassador to France, observed: "The Emperor is getting alarmed at his Frankenstein."⁶⁷ Indeed, the day after Königgrätz, the Prussian Ambassador in Paris communicated to Wilhelm the following statement from Napoleon:

Your urgent wish, then, is the existence of the Imperial Austrian state should not be

⁶⁵ Quoted in Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 132. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁶ Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 128.

⁶⁷ Quoted in E. Ann Pottinger, *Napoleon III and German Crisis, 1865-1866* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 155.

threatened. The destruction of Austria would cause a gap in the European state system, which could not be filled without a general conflagration. Russia would oppose her destruction. Nor might France be able to remain quiet. The war undertaken by Your Majesty was necessary to secure for Prussia a better position.... Success must have exceeded Your Majesty's boldest hopes.... He, therefore, advises Prussia not to go too far, to show moderation, and to be content with the consolidation of that position in the balance of power which she has justifiably won."⁶⁸

This message was not lost on Bismarck, nor was the logic of the situation. Unlike Moltke, Bismarck feared that a small French force could intervene and rally the South German and Austrian forces against Prussia. Several years later Bismarck expressed his concerns to the Reichstag: "Although France had then very few troops, a small French reinforcement would have been enough to transform the considerable, but unorganized, forces of South Germany into a really effective army, so that we should have been compelled to cover Berlin and give up all our gains over Austria."⁶⁹

In fact Austria was pursuing the French option actively. On the evening of July 4, Austria requested and accepted Napoleon's terms for mediation. The French informed Prussia and Italy that they would mediate between the contending parties or intervene militarily if mediation was refused.⁷⁰

Bismarck realized that Napoleon's proposal for mediation could not be ignored without a serious loss of face for the French emperor. Napoleon was unlikely to tolerate that.⁷¹ On July 9, Bismarck wrote a letter to his wife summarizing events:

Everything goes well with us, despite Napoleon. If we are not excessive in our demands and do not believe that we have conquered the world, we will attain a peace which is well worth our effort. But we are just as quickly intoxicated as we are plunged into dejection, and I have the thankless task of pouring water into the

⁶⁸ Goltz to Wilhelm, *Selected Documents*, p. 168.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 243.

⁷⁰ Pottinger, *Napoleon III and German Crisis*, pp. 155-162; see also, Mosse, *European Powers and German Question*, p. 239.

⁷¹ Craig, *Prussian Army*, p. 198.

bubbling wine and making it clear that we don't live alone in Europe but with three other powers who hate and envy us.⁷²

Bismarck assured Napoleon that Prussia's annexations were limited to North Germany.⁷³

When this was understood, the Prussian minister-president persuaded the French emperor to acquiesce by constantly offering to support "compensations" for France in the Rhineland or at Belgium's expense.⁷⁴

* * * *

It should be noted, however, that Austria was not valuable enough to Bismarck to persuade him to contract his war aims. If Austria had refused Bismarck's terms, he was prepared to go for broke and destroy the Austrian Empire. Bismarck intended to stir up ethnic nationalism within the Balkans and Eastern Europe. He had made contacts with Hungarian exiles who desired an independent country. He provided them with money and support to build a Hungarian Legion which he would unleash on the Magyar homeland at his discretion. Bismarck also made similar overtures to Serbian exiles. If Austria joined with France to continue the war, he would have exploded this "mine." Bismarck later told a friend:

If this primer had been ignited, of course, retreat would no longer have been possible. To treat with Austria would have been out of the question. Her destruction would have been unavoidable. A great empty space would have been opened between Germany and Turkey. It would have been necessary to fill this vacuum.⁷⁵

Revolution, to be sure, was a last resort, but one which Bismarck was prepared to

⁷² Quoted in Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 199-200. See also, *Prince Bismarck's Letters to His Wife, His Sister, and Others, from 1844-1870*, trans. Fitz Maxse, 2nd ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), pp. 249-250. The translation in this work is slightly different, though the central thrust is the same.

⁷³ Craig, *Prussian Army*, p. 199.

⁷⁴ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 303-306.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 307-308. Ultimately, this legion met with little success in recruitment.

use before yielding on his aims or accepting humiliation at the hands of Europe's other Great Powers. For example, despite Prussia's good relationship with Russia, the czar was unhappy at the situation developing in central Europe, particularly Bismarck's dethroning of North German princes. Bismarck went out of his way to assure the Russian Court that the peace terms would be moderate and reasonable. He sent to St. Petersburg General von Manteuffel, a man well-liked by the czar, "with instructions to reassure him of Prussia's determination to adhere to the line of moderation."⁷⁶ Nevertheless, when Russia still demanded that the settlement of the war should be endorsed by a European congress, Bismarck snarled at his friend, threatening to stir up Polish nationalism and point a revolution east. "If there is to be revolution, we would rather make it, than suffer it."⁷⁷ Thus, to win Prussia's hegemony in Germany, Bismarck "stood poised, match in hand, over the powder keg of national revolution."⁷⁸

The Military Balance of Power

The central point of dispute between Moltke and Bismarck was the extent of systemic opportunity. Bismarck knew that Prussia could have continued into Austria and inflicted further defeats on the Austrian army; but he feared for Prussia's political and military position if France intervened. Moltke, on the other hand, calculated that he could simply wheel his army about and crush any French incursion on German territory. Both of the views cannot be correct. Who was right? What was the actual military situation after

⁷⁶ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 239.

⁷⁷ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 306-307.

⁷⁸ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 308.

Königgrätz? Could Prussia have fought successfully both Austria and France?⁷⁹

THE AUSTRIAN ARMY AFTER KÖNIGGRÄTZ

Prior to the battle, Field Marshall Benedek's army composed 230,000 Austrian troops and 25,000 Saxons which had immediately retreated into Bohemia at the outbreak of war. The Prussians killed 25,000 of these at Königgrätz and took another 20,000 prisoner. Benedek's army then retreated toward Vienna in a state of disorder.

The strengths of the Austrian army after this debacle were few. Archduke Albrecht was recalled from the Italian front to defend Vienna. He brought with him 57,000 troops who had bested the Piedmontese. With about 20,000 Saxons, the main body of Benedek's army (about 92,000 troops), and other elements of the northern army which had arrived earlier, Albrecht on July 13 had roughly an army of 200,000 for the defense of the Danube.⁸⁰ He prepared a defensive strategy for coping with the advancing Prussian army. Vienna itself was ringed with earthworks and fortifications and was equipped with heavy artillery. By July 27, Benedek's army had completed its retreat and had taken positions up at Pressburg, a spot not far from the capital. Albrecht's combined forces now amounted to 250,000 and 800 guns. Austrian cavalry and artillery, as at Königgrätz, were superior to the

⁷⁹ To conduct a proper military analysis of the balance of power among France, Austria, and Prussia, I make several political assumptions. First, the analysis I shall conduct will be the one Bismarck feared: A French-Austrian-South German combination. There is little merit in analyzing the Franco-Prussian or the Austro-Prussian balance of power. Prussia had already demonstrated its superiority over Austria. And based on the French performance in 1859, France could not possibly have mustered an army superior to the already mobilized and experienced Prussian one. It was the prospective alliance of France, Austria, and South Germany which Bismarck feared, not one of these enemies alone.

⁸⁰ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 259-260. Friedjung arrives at the 120,000 figure for Benedek's army once losses to the Prussians, the wounded, deserters, and garrisons are subtracted from the original figure. It seems to be widely accepted.

Prussian.⁸¹

However, this army's weaknesses more than overwhelmed its residual strengths. Most important, it was incapable of taking the offensive. Its morale was shattered. Indeed, it seemed to have little stomach left for any fighting at all. For example, on July 15, Benedek had pushed part of his retreating army across the front of the Prussian army. The Prussians launched a fierce attack, killing 1600 of Benedek's troops while losing only 135 of their own.⁸² Benedek's troops, which composed the lion's share available to Albrecht for the defense of Vienna, were beaten, exhausted, and poorly supplied. Albrecht and Benedek strongly urged Emperor Franz Josef to conclude a peace.⁸³

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY AFTER KÖNIGGRÄTZ

The army which defeated the Austrians at Königgrätz was 250,000 strong. An additional 50,000 troops (and 30,000 North German soldiers) had been diverted to clear northern Germany of opposition by Austria's allies. Losses from the battle numbered approximately 10,000 killed, wounded, and missing.

After pursuing the retreating Austrians into Bohemia, the Prussian army was badly in need of some rest. Moltke's troops were tired from the fighting and the forced march into Bohemia. The Prussians had far outmarched their supply train and were in need of food and fodder. As Ropp puts it, "The Prussians were too tired and hungry for pursuit."⁸⁴ The

⁸¹ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 289. As near as I can tell, the additional troops came from further elements of Benedek's army which had finally made it back to Vienna and joined up with the main body.

⁸² Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 250.

⁸³ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, pp. 289-292.

⁸⁴ Theodore Ropp, *War in the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 170. See also, William H. McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 250.

German rail system had shipped enormous quantities of supplies for support of the army, but the ability to ship the supplies by wagon from the off-loading points to the army was woefully inadequate. As William McNeil argues: "[H]ad the war lasted longer, and had the Hapsburg regime not been ready to negotiate peace after its initial defeat, supply difficulties would have caught up with the advancing Prussians and might well have brought their swift and dramatic success to a halt."⁸⁵ Furthermore, the army was suffering from a severe bout of cholera, undermining substantially the fighting strength of some regiments.

Nevertheless, even with these problems, Moltke's army was still the strongest on the continent. The supply problems were remediable. Roon, the war minister, argued that a five-day truce was necessary to bring up troop reinforcements and supplies before any river crossing could be attempted.⁸⁶ This suggests that only a few days were required to redress the army's most severe problem. It was simply a question of getting the goods to the army, a much more desirable situation than not having them at all. In 1866 Prussia's was the only army equipped with breechloading rifles--the needle-gun. Consequently, Prussian troops could fire six times faster than Austrian troops and three times faster than French troops.⁸⁷ Furthermore, unlike Austria's generals, Moltke and his staff were anxious to continue the attack. Prussian troops enjoyed a high state of moral, having just driven from the field an army most people in Europe expected would beat them.

⁸⁵ MacNeil, *Pursuit of Power*, p. 250.

⁸⁶ Craig, *Prussian Army*, p. 202-203.

⁸⁷ Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, p. 137.

Had Napoleon chosen a military demonstration or even military intervention after Königgrätz, how big an army could he have fielded? How much of a threat did it pose to the Prussian military and political position? Friedjung argues, for example, that France could not possibly have put a larger army onto the field in 1866 than in 1859, which was 150,000.⁸⁸ In the Autumn of 1866 (after Königgrätz), General de Castelnau, at a meeting summoned by Napoleon, argued that France could field an army of 288,000.⁸⁹ From this figure, one must subtract the forces engaged in support of France's commitments of overseas. As of July 1866, this would include 66,000 troops in Algeria, 34,000 in Mexico, and 8,000 in Rome.⁹⁰ This leaves Napoleon with an army of 180,000 for use on the Rhine, a figure close to Friedjung's and the French mobilization in 1859. Furthermore, while France enjoyed a railway system superior to Prussia's "from almost any conceivable point of view,"⁹¹ it had no detailed plans for the mobilization and concentration of the army. The training of the army was not particularly good and was inferior to Prussia in both rifles and artillery.⁹² The French had only just begun to replace their muzzle loading rifles with the new breech-loading *chassepôt*. In observing French maneuvers in 1865, the Prussian military attaché in Paris had a very poor opinion of French artillery, mobilization ability, and

⁸⁸ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 242.

⁸⁹ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 29-30. However, Marshall Randon, a dedicated optimist, argued that the real figure was 385,500.

⁹⁰ Pottinger, *Napoleon III and the German Crisis*, pp. 196-197.

⁹¹ Martin Van Creveld, *Supply War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 86.

⁹² Pottinger, *Napoleon III and the German Crisis*, pp. 192-195.

marksmanship.⁹³ In the Italian campaign, French infantry fought with considerable effectiveness against the Austrian, but the cavalry had not done its job of screening and protecting the army. The French high command received the worst marks for its apparent inability to direct large formations of men in battle.⁹⁴

Moreover, little had been done since 1859 to improve the organization and fighting strength of the French army. The army was still based on the old regimental system with little capability for a massive mobilization of large numbers of reserves. Napoleon had recognized that the system was badly in need of reorganization and improvement. He had witnessed many inadequacies in the Crimean and especially the Italian campaigns. But most everyone in the army and the nation did not see it that way. They remember the French army defeating its two main European rivals within a few years. There was, therefore, no need to change a system "which had stood the test of time."⁹⁵ Prussia had its logistical problems in 1866, but the French supply, based on the 1859 experience, was a complete mess. Napoleon and his generals admitted that they had sent an army of 120,000 to Italy without provisions or means of supply. French soldiers carried only a few days worth of provisions on them. Little had been done to correct these problems by 1866. A march to Berlin, in the hostile land of Germany (rather than, in 1859, friendly Italy), was out of the question.⁹⁶

⁹³ Pottinger, *Napoleon III and the German Crisis*, pp. 192.

⁹⁴ Richard Holmes, *The Road to Sedan: The French Army, 1866-1870* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1984), pp. 55-63, 216-233.

⁹⁵ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 18. See also, Holmes, *Road to Sedan*, pp. 157-158.

⁹⁶ Holmes, *Road to Sedan*, pp. 74, 82-86.

Bismarck calculated that if the French intervened, they could muster an army no larger than 60,000 men. He argued, however, that this force would provide order, discipline and leadership to the South German armies and, led by a French commander-in-chief, would create a coherent force of nearly 200,000 soldiers to threaten Prussia's flank.⁹⁷ He assumed the Bavarians would have an army of 100,000 and the rest of the South Germans would provide 40,000 more. But Bismarck overstated the actual size of Bavarian contingent. It *should* have been able to field an army that large; but years of neglect and free-riding on Austria had reduced the operational capability of the Bavarian army to (at most) 57,000.⁹⁸ The rest of the South Germans probably amounted to 35,000, perhaps a few more. But these troops were poorly trained, equipped, and led.⁹⁹ Even so, German particularism had prevented these small armies from cooperating with each other and with their long-time ally, Austria.¹⁰⁰ Moltke had allocated 80,000 Prussian and North German troops to deal with them should they show any signs of life. With exception of Hanover and, of course, Saxony, they never did.

What strategy would Prussia have pursued if the French intervened? Moltke would have attacked the French. When asked by Bismarck what he would do if the French intervened, Moltke replied: "I should adopt a defensive attitude towards Austria, confining

⁹⁷ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 38-39.

⁹⁸ See Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, p. 136.

⁹⁹ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 226.

¹⁰⁰ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 226. He reports that when the Saxons sought to join the Bavarian army, they were told to stay away. When the Austrian commander urged the Bavarian army to join it, he was "met with flat refusal. Not a Bavarian soldier left the kingdom; from first to last Bavaria gave her ally no useful help whatever."

myself to the line of the Elbe, and in the meantime prosecuting the war actively against France."¹⁰¹ Bismarck, on the other hand, believed that if the French intervened and a moderate peace was not concluded with Austria, Prussia should stand on the defensive against France and finish off Austria. "...[W]e must quickly and completely cripple Austria by a sharp onslaught, and also by furthering disaffection in Hungary, and perhaps in Bohemia as well; until then we must maintain a defensive attitude towards France instead of towards Austria, as Moltke wished."¹⁰² Neither man, it seems, considered the possibility that Prussia could stand on the defensive on both fronts and await the course of events.¹⁰³

Let us assume that if the war had continued and the French had intervened, Wilhelm would have followed Moltke's advice, not Bismarck's. On military matters, Moltke's influence was unassailable. Furthermore, Wilhelm had a particular dislike for the French, an added incentive to attack them and let the Austrians be. In addition, assume that approximately 92,000 South Germans would have allied with the French.¹⁰⁴ Assume also that the Austrians remained on the defensive around Vienna. French mobilization in 1859 took about three to four weeks. Little had changed in the interim to suggest that they could

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰² Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 38.

¹⁰³ It was not Moltke's habit to fight strictly defensive wars. Bismarck probably saw no profit in that strategy because it would simply string out the war and give Britain and Russia the excuse to intervene and impose a settlement of the war by a European congress in which Prussia would undoubtedly have had to give up many of its aims.

¹⁰⁴ During the peace negotiations, which included by necessity dealings with Napoleon and his territorial ambitions, Moltke, Wilhelm, and even Bismarck all talked of unleashing a national, German war against the French if they intervened. (Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 305-306.) Thus, it is not clear which argument Bismarck truly believed. He may have used the threat of national war to cow the French. Because his statement about the French unifying the South Germans was made in the Reichstag in 1874 and in his memoirs in 1898, I suspect that that is closer to his true feelings. Nevertheless, while French intervention certainly would have rallied all the North Germans to the Prussian cause, debate persists as to whether in 1866 South Germany preferred Prussian overlordship to French. Darmstaedter reports that the South German watchword was "rather French than Prussian." F. Darmstaedter, *Bismarck and the Creation of the Second Reich* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), p. 293. See also, Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 210.

have mobilized any faster by 1866. Thus, even if Moltke left an army of 100,000 behind to contain the Austrians,¹⁰⁵ with time to rest, resupply, and redeploy, he could have mustered an army of at least 200,000 troops to march against the French and South Germans. If he deployed more *Landwehr* troops, he probably could have doubled that figure.¹⁰⁶ At 20 miles a day, it is a three week march to the French border, perhaps a good deal less if Moltke could have made use of rails in this spontaneous situation. It is also reasonable to assume that Moltke would have launched a full attack against the South Germans, if they chose to rally with the French, before Paris completed its mobilization. The best French scenario is that they raise 150,000 troops and all of the South German troops retreat into France in anticipation of French help.¹⁰⁷ In this case, a Prussian and Franco-South German army would meet, probably somewhere in South Germany, on relatively equal terms. To be sure, the Prussians would have had to deal with their supply problems and redeploy their army. Nevertheless, in such an engagement, Prussia would likely have prevailed. The Prussians were very well-led, battle experienced, well-equipped, and possessing a high state of morale. The French were not as well-led or equipped (though they would have been brimming with confidence) and the South German troops were no match for anyone. In short, it is quite possible, if not probable, that Moltke's assessment, not Bismarck's, of the battlefield situation and the systemic threat was the correct one.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ This was the figure he left in reserve in 1870.

¹⁰⁶ This figure comes from 120,000-130,000 men from the Bohemian campaign, linking up with the 80,000 or so which had been left behind to contain the South Germans.

¹⁰⁷ This, however, is a dubious assumption. The South Germans were unwilling to leave their territory to aid the Austrians, a closer and more reliable ally. Of course, they did not expect Austria to be defeated so decisively. Then again, they probably would have expected France to defeat Prussia.

¹⁰⁸ Of course, this does not necessarily invalidate Bismarck's concern. If the Prussians then defeated the French army and completed German unity, Russia and even slumbering England might take greater notice. Prussia might have found itself against a united Europe in the coming years, an undesirable position in which to be.

In the lead-up to war in the Spring of 1866, the majority of Prussians--and Germans--opposed war with Austria.¹⁰⁹ Most viewed such a conflict as fratricidal and an open breach of what was the illusion of German unity. Bismarck's propaganda efforts to harness nationalism to Prussia's cause had failed. But Königgrätz changed everything. Malcom Carroll, an historian of German public opinion during the war, writes: "As Bismarck had expected, the swift and decisive success of the armies promptly changed Prussian and, to a certain extent, German public opinion. Demands for extensive territorial annexations and for complete unity poured into the general headquarters."¹¹⁰ For example, consider the change of heart of Rudolf von Ilering, a liberal professor of law at Göttingen University, in the summer of 1866. When the war broke out, he, like most people, believed that "a war has perhaps never been advertised with such shamelessness and with such ghastly frivolity as the one Bismarck is currently seeking to launch against Austria. One's innermost being is revolted by such a crime against all moral and legal principles." In August, however, he wrote to a friend with a dramatically different attitude:

I bow before the genius of Bismarck who has accomplished with great energy a master stroke of political teamwork. I have forgiven this man all that he has done in the past, yes more than I have convinced myself that what we uninitiated thought was criminal arrogance was necessary; it has since then become evident that it was an indispensable means to the goal...for such a man of action I would give a hundred men of liberal opinions [but of] impotent honesty. Could I have believed nine weeks ago that I would be writing a dithyramb to Bismarck.¹¹¹

Where extensive propaganda and national sentiment failed, brute force succeeded.

After Königgrätz, Napoleon proposed a temporary truce between Austria and Prussia.

¹⁰⁹ Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 227.

¹¹⁰ Carroll, *Germany and Great Powers*, p. 26; see also, Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, p. 139.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, pp. 139-141.

Bismarck agreed. It came into effect on July 19. Armistice negotiations followed at Nicolsburg on July 24-25. Preliminary peace terms were signed on July 26. The final settlement, the Peace of Prague, was signed on August 23.

Bismarck convinced Wilhelm to accept his program of annexations and to abandon desires of seizing Austrian territory. In this effort Bismarck received the key support of Wilhelm's son, Crown Prince Friedrich.¹¹² Friedrich had been opposed to war when all other members of the Council favored it. Now Friedrich supported Bismarck in his efforts to conclude a moderate peace. In a private conversation with his father, Friedrich convinced him to accept Bismarck's policy. Exactly what son said to father remains unknown to historians and archives. Bismarck's obstinateness and the crown prince's support for his position overcame Wilhelm's preferences. But the king was bitter: "Since my Prime Minister has deserted me in the face of the enemy and I am not in a position to find a substitute, I have discussed the question with my son; he supports the view of the Prime Minister and to my great sorrow I am therefore compelled to swallow this bitter pill and accept a disgraceful peace after the army's brilliant victories."¹¹³ When Bismarck outlined to Wilhelm in a memo the final terms of the treaty, the king returned it with his approval, adding in a marginal note: "If what the army and the country are justified in expecting--that is, a heavy war indemnity from Austria or an acquisition of land sufficient to impress the eye--cannot be obtained from the vanquished without endangering our principal objective, then the victor at the gates of Vienna must bite into this sour apple and leave to posterity the judgment of his behavior."¹¹⁴

¹¹² Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, pp. 217-218.

¹¹³ Quoted in Friedjung, *Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 288.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Craig, *Prussian Army*, p. 203.

3.5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the Predictions

How did the predictions of the hypotheses fare? To reiterate, the core predictions represent simple congruence-procedure tests, while the subsidiary predictions are the more involved and more revealing process-tracing tests. In this section, I restate each prediction made by each hypothesis. Following the prediction, I note in bold my coding as to whether the prediction came true or not. An explanation of my coding, where necessary, follows in parentheses.

The Blood Price

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will not expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Bismarck, in internal policy debates, should argue that Prussia has achieved gains from the war that are proportionate to its sacrifices. **Not True.**
- * Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy debates, should justify wider war aims in language which refers to the blood price. **Not True.**

Social Mobilization

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims to include incorporating South Germany and German Austria. **Not True.**
- * There should be evidence of Prussian leaders using nationalist propaganda to mobilize German and Prussian public opinion in favor of Prussia. **True.** (These appeals failed to have the desired effect, however.)
- * Bismarck exaggerated the threat posed by Austria to Prussia. **Not True.** (In private councils with the King, Bismarck admittedly did exaggerate the Austrian threat to Prussia in order to persuade Wilhelm to declare war on Austria. He then regretted this effort when he was grappling with Wilhelm over the question of war aims. But Bismarck did not *publicly* exaggerate the Austrian threat. Thus, I code this prediction as not true.)
- * Prussian public opinion demands wider war aims before Königgrätz. **Not True.** (Prussian public opinion did not support the war until after Königgrätz. Only then did it favor wider war aims.)

- * The policy dispute within the Prussian leadership over war aims centers on the issue of achieving German unity. **Not True.**

The Clean Problem

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **Not True.**
- * Moltke should favor wider aims than Bismarck. **True.**
- * Moltke's political influence rises during the war. **True.** (The King's regard for his generals, while always high, increases during war. Military victory imbues Moltke and his generals with considerable popularity and prestige.)
- * As Moltke's prestige rises, Prussia's war aims increase. **Not True.**
- * Bismarck should grow more cautious about challenging or contradicting Moltke as the latter's prestige rises. **Not True.** (Bismarck was never shy about contradicting or challenging anyone within the Prussian leadership, including Wilhelm himself.)

Threats to Security

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will restrain its war aims. **True.**
 - Austria grew weaker during the war. **True.** (It was beaten and facing domestic turmoil.)
 - Austria and Prussia were separated by great distances. **Not True.**
 - Prussian policy-makers did not perceive the offense as the stronger form of war. **Not True.** (The success of the offense in 1864 and now in 1866 convinced them of the opposite.)
 - Prussian leaders did not perceive Austrian intentions as increasingly aggressive. **Not True.**
 - + Prussian leaders did not perceive Austria as the initiator of war. **True.** (Bismarck knew who started the war.)
 - + Prussian leaders perceived Austrian propaganda and rhetoric as unthreatening. **Unclear.** (No evidence that it mattered or not.)
 - + Prussian leaders perceived Austrian wartime conduct as civilized. **Unclear.** (No evidence that it mattered or not.)
 - + Austria adopted a defensive strategy. **Unclear.** (Historians, such as Friedjung, argue that Austria intended to go on the offensive, but Prussia beat them to it.)
 - + Prussia and Austria shared a common regime structure. **True.**
- * A shift in the estimate of the Austrian threat by Prussian leaders will lead to a corresponding shift in Prussia's war aims. **Unclear.** (Prussia's war aims did not expand, but nor did they contract after Austria was defeated.)

- * Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should use language which demonstrates that he did not believe that the Austrian threat to Prussian interests and security increased during the war. **True.** (Bismarck argued to the king that Prussia and Austria were both culpable for starting the war.)
- * Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy discussions, should use language which justifies wider war aims on the grounds that Austria is a greater threat. **Not true.** (I found no such evidence.)

Opportunistic Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **Not True.**
 - Prussia was stronger at the end of the war than at the beginning. **True.**
 - Prussia won a decisive military victory over Austria. **True.**
 - Prussian political and military leaders expected that in continuing the war against Austria the Prussian army would not suffer high casualties. **Unclear.** (Bismarck and Roon are concerned about the condition of the army, but no mention of expected costs was made.)
- * Prussian leaders expand their war aims after opportunities arise. **Not True.**
- * There should be statements or other evidence in the documentary record in which Prussian leaders want to expand their aims to take advantage of opportunities presented by the war. **True.** (Moltke and Wilhelm made such statements, even if Bismarck did not. The latter even remarked that after the victories in the war Wilhelm's "frame of mind, so far as I could judge, underwent a psychological change; he developed a taste for conquest."¹¹⁵.)
- * Prussian public opinion should favor wider war aims after Königgrätz. **True.**

Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand the war to prevent Austria from growing stronger. **Not True.**

Quid Pro Quo Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will make promises to other states in order to get them to join the war. **Not True.**

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 235.

Systemic Constraints

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will restrain its war aims. **True.**
- * Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should express the fear that French intervention should decisively shift the balance of power against Prussia. **True.**
- * Moltke and Wilhelm, in internal policy discussions, should be unconcerned with the threat of foreign intervention. **True.**
- * The threat of foreign intervention should come before the decision to restrain war aims and end the war. **True.**

Table 3.1. Summary of Predictions and Results

Hypothesis	Core Prediction	Actual Result	Total Predictions	# True	# Not True	# Not Clear
Blood Price	Restraint	Restraint	2	0	2	0
Social Mobilization	Expansion	Restraint	4	1	3	0
Cleon Problem	Expansion	Restraint	4	2	2	0
Threats to Security	Restraint	Restraint	12	5	3	4
Opportunistic Expansion	Expansion	Restraint	6	4	1	1
Cumulative Resources	Attack Neutrals	No Attack	0	0	0	0
Quid Pro Quo Expansion	Make Promises	No Promises	0	0	0	0
Systemic Constraints	Restraint	Restraint	3	3	0	0

Explanation:

The first column states the hypothesis. The second column restates the core prediction of each hypothesis as to whether it expected Prussia to expand its war aims. The third column lists the actual result. The fourth column provides the total number of *subsidiary* predictions made by each hypothesis. The fifth column relates how many of the subsidiary predictions came true; the sixth relates how many were not true. And the seventh column indicates how many of the subsidiary predictions were difficult to evaluate in light of the available information.

These results point to a number of conclusions. To begin with, they demonstrate the value of conducting both congruence-procedure (core predictions) and process-tracing (subsidiary predictions) tests. Table 3.1 illustrates that there are four different types of test results which provide clues to the relative merit of the competing hypotheses:

1. Neither the congruence-procedure nor the process-tracing predictions come true. The social mobilization, the cumulative resources, and the quid pro quo expansion hypotheses came the closest to this description. Their core predictions did not correspond with the outcome of the case and most of their process-tracing predictions did not come true. This result suggests that these hypotheses had little explanatory power in this case.

2. The congruence-procedure (core) prediction is true, most process-tracing (subsidiary) predictions are not true. This was clearly the case for the blood price hypothesis and, to a lesser degree, the threat hypothesis. This kind of result suggests that what we have is a mere correlation with some other, more powerful cause of Prussia's decision to restrain its war aims. Thus, the blood price hypothesis emerges as a weak explanation in this case. The threat hypothesis is more ambiguous. A majority of its subsidiary predictions were untrue or unclear. Nevertheless, four did come true. The results for this hypothesis are mixed. It provides neither a powerful explanation as why Prussia restrained its war aims, nor was it totally useless. More research and testing for this hypothesis is warranted.

3. The congruence-procedure prediction is not true, but many of the process-tracing predictions are true. The opportunistic expansion and to some degree, the Cleon problem

hypotheses correspond to this description. This result suggests that these hypotheses were "working." In other words, there are events unfolding in the case that accord with predictions of a hypothesis, but the final decision to restrain war aims does not. This implies that another, more powerful cause overrode these forces. A hypothesis which can explain some events, but not the final outcome deserves more testing and research. Thus, the Cleon problem and the opportunistic expansion hypotheses explain Moltke's and Wilhelm's advocacy of greater war aims after Königgrätz. Moltke favored wider aims both for reasons of prestige and to take advantage of the battlefield opportunities opened by the defeat of Benedek's army. Wilhelm shared his chief general's views and was mesmerized by the stunning military victory. The two failed process-tracing predictions of the Cleon problem were those which predicted that Bismarck's power or will would wither before Moltke's growing influence and prestige. This did not happen and should come as no surprise in light of Bismarck's character and ambition.

4. The congruence-procedure prediction and most or all of the process-tracing predictions come true. This is the most powerful kind of support a hypothesis can have and suggests that it is the ultimate determination in a case. Thus, it is extremely likely that Prussia did not expand its war aims against Austria because of the perceived systemic constraints. The congruence-procedure prediction and *all* the process-tracing predictions of this hypothesis came true. The fact that two other hypotheses were observed as "working" but yet the systemic constraints hypothesis still prevailed suggests that it is quite powerful in explaining why a state will restrain its war aims. Bismarck favored limited aims against Austria because he feared French intervention and had no desire to destroy Austria as a Great Power. Bismarck made his war aims Prussia's war aims. This hypothesis appears

particularly powerful when one considers that within the Prussian government King Wilhelm and Moltke, chief of the General Staff opposed the war aims of the chief minister. Thus, while some hypotheses, like the Cleon problem or opportunistic expansion, could explain the war aim preferences of some groups, they were unable to explain state preferences. Conversely, the systemic constraints hypotheses, which also was observed as "working," accurately predicted the war aims preferences of the state. Nor is this hypothesis only useful for explaining why war aims do not expand. In the next several chapters, we shall see that the absence of systemic constraints is a necessary condition for the expansion of war aims, even when threats, opportunities, and generals force aims upward.

Some substantive findings also emerge from this case. First, generals and publics do get the "victory disease." That is, a military victory does not satiate them but whets their appetites for still more military victories. The Prussian military, including Moltke, and Prussian public opinion demanded wider war aims after Königgrätz.

Second, the international system constrains the behavior and ambitions of states, even in situations of apparent considerable opportunity. Bismarck claimed he needed Austria as a future ally. An ally against whom? Bismarck did not consider England a threat and Russia was ally. Did Bismarck expect that Austria would support Prussia in a possible war with France? As I shall discuss in the next chapter, Bismarck expected that Prussia and France would come to blows sooner or later. Yet, he did not expect in that war Austria would be ready to ally with Prussia against France. Bismarck was more concerned simply to prevent a Franco-Austrian alliance. The answer, it seems, is that Bismarck must have foreseen balancing behavior aimed at Prussia by the other European powers once German unification was finally completed. That is, in the long-term, a new, united, powerful Germany would

inspire fear and envy among the other European powers which had long considered Germany a romping ground. Russia, France, and possibly England might form an anti-Prussian alliance. In such a scenario, Prussia would indeed need Austrian strength.

Third, domestic politics shape the international behavior and ambitions of statesmen. If Prussia continued the attack on Austria, Bismarck thought France had two options. 1. It could immediately intervene on Austria's side. This was an outcome Bismarck clearly did not want. 2. France could engage in a major military build-up, complete the rearmament of its army, and search for allies with which to later fight the war with Prussia. In light of the military balance between France and Prussia, the second option seems to be the more dangerous, yet Bismarck preferred that outcome. Why? The answer may lie in Prussian domestic politics. Bismarck had an immense confidence in his ability to prevent France from gaining allies. He intended to make sure France was isolated when the time came for a test of arms between Paris and Berlin. In addition, peacetime diplomacy was an environment which Bismarck believed he could control. The uncertainties and fluid dynamics of war, however, were much more difficult to manipulate. Provoking French intervention and then stoking the fires of nationalism threatened his domestic program for unity. If South Germany united too quickly with the north, it would create a new German state and constitution in which Prussia might not have held unquestioned domination. The South German Catholics would have wielded more influence than Bismarck intended.

In short, Bismarck had a remarkably clear understanding of how the international system worked. He had an instinctive knowledge of what the other Great Powers would accept and not accept. He knew when to use carrots and when to use sticks and he knew which carrots and sticks to use. All of this helped him to bend and shape the forces at work in the international system to acquiesce in, if not support, his plans for the expansion of

Prussian power in the center of Europe. In the end, Bismarck got his way. When peace had been concluded, Bismarck celebrated, pounded his fist on a desk, and declared: "I have beaten them all! All!"¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 310.

CHAPTER FOUR:
PRUSSIAN WAR AIMS IN THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

"We Germans fear only God, nothing else in the world."

--Otto von Bismarck¹

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, Prussia expanded its war aims against France. Within a month after the outbreak of war, Prussia wanted France to surrender Alsace and Lorraine. This demand had not been an initial war aim when Prussia declared war in July 1870. In this chapter, I examine the reasons and the process which led Prussian leaders to demand the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. As in the previous chapter, the views of Bismarck, as the dominant Prussian policy-maker, are given primary consideration. However, the views of the rest of the Prussian leadership, the same cast of characters as in 1866, are discussed as well.

Consequences of Prussia's Expanded War Aims

Prussia's new war aims led directly to several military escalations. First, a European capital was starved and bombarded with artillery. Because France was unwilling to yield to demands for Alsace-Lorraine, the Prussian army marched on and laid siege to Paris. Not since the Napoleonic Wars had Europe witnessed such a sight. Second, the character of the war changed. French military reversals at Sedan and Metz led to the overthrow of Napoleon III's government. The Government of National Defense, successor to the Second

¹ Quoted in Pinson, *Modern Germany*, p. 132.

Empire, issued a call to battle and transformed France into a "nation in arms" to defeat the invasion. The entire nation was mobilized to repel the Prussians.² This, in turn, led the German war effort to take on a much more nationalist character as well. "Each nation came to believe that it alone was upholding civilization against a race of barbarians which could only be bullied into submission by brute force."³ Third, the war entered a new dimension of conflict. French partisans launched a guerilla insurgency campaign against the invaders. Prussian officers responded with a ruthless counterinsurgency operation. Casualties increased dramatically among the civilian population.

Furthermore, Prussia's expansion in war aims complicated war termination. The Government of National Defense wanted to end the war on a basis resembling a *status quo ante bellum*. But when Prussia demanded Alsace-Lorraine, the new French foreign minister Jules Favre declared that France could not and would not yield "neither an inch of its territory nor a stone of its fortresses."⁴ Bismarck then tried negotiating with Napoleon. The Prussian minister-president offered to restore the deposed emperor to his throne. But Napoleon would not accept the offer if it meant surrendering Alsace-Lorraine.⁵ Rather than ending in seven weeks, as did the war against Austria, the Franco-Prussian War dragged on into January 1871. It ended when Paris fell to its Prussian besiegers, all new French armies were defeated, and France was exhausted.⁶

² Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p.122-123.

³ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (New York: Routledge, 1988 reprint), p. 381.

⁴ Quoted in Craig, *Germany*, p. 31. See also, Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 119; Pflanz, *Development of Germany*, p. 463; and Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, 283-284.

⁵ Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 206-209.

⁶ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 121-123.

What do the Hypotheses Predict?

In this section, I infer predictions from the hypotheses offered in chapter two as to how they might explain Prussia's decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine. Similar to chapter three, each hypothesis makes a core prediction as to whether Prussia should be expected to expand its war aims at all and several subsidiary ones which purport to predict more detail of the cases.

The Blood Price:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.** This prediction stems from the war's length. Prussia did not expect to fight a seventh month war with France and, consequently, casualties were greater than any Prussian leader anticipated.

* **Bismarck and other Prussian leaders should express concern at increasing casualty rates as the war continues.**

* **Bismarck and other Prussian leaders should justify the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine in terms and language that refer to the blood price or the number of Prussian casualties.**

* **The decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine should come relatively late in the war.** This is a sequence prediction. Unless Prussia suffered an enormous number of casualties very early in the war, the decision to annex Alsace and Lorraine should only come after the dead have mounted up.

* **The military should be especially adamant about keeping Alsace-Lorraine because of the blood price paid.** This reflects the fact that it was the military which suffered the blood price.

Social Mobilization:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.** The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, two provinces ripped from Germany by Louis XIV, was a universal aim with which Prussia would rally its own and the German people.

* **Prussian leaders should use nationalist propaganda in order to win public support for the war and the aim of annexation.**

* **Public opinion should favor wider war aims before Prussian military victories in August.** This is a sequence prediction.

* **Bismarck and other Prussian leaders, in internal discussions, should express the need to annex Alsace and Lorraine in order to give the Prussian public a universal reason to support the war.**

The Cleon Problem:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.**

* **Moltke's domestic political influence should increase during the war.**

* **As Moltke's prestige rises, Prussia's war aims rise.**

* **Moltke should favor wider war aims than Bismarck.**

* **Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should be reluctant to challenge Moltke's authority as his prestige rises.**

Threats to Security:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.**

→ France grew stronger during the war.

→ France and Prussia bordered each other.

→ Prussian political and military elites perceived the offense as the stronger form of war.

- Prussia perceived French intentions as increasingly aggressive, because:
 - + France initiated the war.
 - + Prussian leaders perceived French wartime conduct as uncivilized and malevolent.
 - + Prussian leaders perceived French propaganda as increasingly aggressive and hostile.
 - + France adopted an offensive military strategy against Germany.
 - + Prussia and France were governed by different regime structures.

* **A shift Prussia's estimate of the French threat should correspond to a shift in Prussia's war aims.** This is a sequence prediction.

* **Prussian leaders, in internal discussions or policy documents, should justify the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine using language which describes France as a greater threat.** Simply, if Bismarck thought France was a greater threat, we should find some documentary evidence in which Bismarck declares France a greater threat.

Opportunistic Expansion:

* **Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims.** One of the following predictions must also be true:

- Prussia grew stronger as the war continued.
- Prussia won a decisive military victory.
- Prussian leaders thought annexing Alsace and Lorraine would be inexpensive in human and material terms.

* **Prussian leaders should expand their war aims after their estimate of opportunity rises.** This is the sequence prediction.

* **Prussian public opinion should support wider war aims *after* Prussian military victories.** If the Prussian public is supporting wider war aims before an a military victory or an increase in Prussian power, then they motivated by something other than opportunity.

* **Prussian leaders, in internal policy discussions, should use language which justified the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine in terms of opportunity.**

Preventive Expansion:

* **Core Prediction:** Prussia will expand the war to prevent France from growing stronger. Usually this means attacking neutrals which are aiding France or widening the war such that France is deprived of a means of resupply.

Quid Pro Quo Expansion:

* **Core Prediction:** Prussia will make promises to other states in order to persuade them to join the war.

Systemic Constraints⁷

- * **Core Prediction:** Prussia *could* expand its war aims.⁸
- * **No threats of outside intervention in the war should materialize in response to Prussia's decision to keep Alsace-Lorraine.**
- * **Bismarck, in the documentary record, should have declared that he was not concerned about foreign intervention if Prussia annexed Alsace-Lorraine.**
- * **As Bismarck's fear of foreign intervention increases, Prussia's war aims should decrease.**

⁷ Because this was strictly a bilateral war, I offer no predictions for the hypothesis on alliance management.

⁸ The nature of this hypothesis precludes a determinate prediction of expanding war aims. It can only predict no expansion (because of systemic constraints) or the systemic opportunity to expand (the absence of systemic constraints).

Section 4.2 provides background to the war. It covers the period from the 1866 armistice up to the Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish throne which led to the outbreak of war. Section 4.3 details both the candidature crisis and the declarations of war. Section 4.4 presents Bismarck's initial war aims against France. Section 4.5 provides a brief summary of the war. Section 4.6 is the heart of the case. It examines why Prussia decided to expand its war aims and annex Alsace and Lorraine. Section 4.7 discusses Moltke's bid for total victory. Section 4.8 examines why Prussian war aims were difficult to contract. Section 4.9 evaluates the explanatory power of the hypotheses presented in chapter two.

4.2 AFTERMATH OF THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR

After 1866 Bismarck devoted his energy to digesting Prussia's annexations in northern Germany. The four South German states remained independent. Forced into defensive and offensive military alliances with Prussia, as part of the 1866 peace settlement, the South Germans remained leery of Prussian ambitions and jealous of their sovereignty. Bismarck expected that they would eventually join the North German Confederation but believed it would and should take a longer, more evolutionary process. He wanted the South Germans to join Prussia's new union loyal to the Hohenzollern throne. He did not want them brought in at the point of a bayonet, otherwise they would forever be an internal stability problem for the government. A peaceful unification, he believed, would take time and coaxing.⁹

In light of the new constitution Bismarck wrote for North Germany, the apprehension of the southerners was understandable. Many North German states, including the ancient

⁹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 369.

Kingdom of Hanover, were annexed by Prussia. Those states not incorporated directly into the Prussian state were forced to join the Confederation. The Prussian king and his ministry held all political, military, and financial power. Bismarck did create a German parliament of universal suffrage. Appearances were impressive but Bismarck made sure it was denuded of real power.

Relations with France

Bismarck's relations with France after the Austro-Prussian War revolved around the issue of "compensations." Napoleon thought he was going to get Belgium in exchange for agreeing to Prussia's annexations in north Germany. The Prussian ambassador to Paris, Count von Goltz, had encouraged Napoleon to believe that Bismarck and Prussia would support his claim to Belgium.¹⁰ Indeed, "in the past Bismarck had given the French reason to expect Prussian approval. Twice during the previous year he had suggested that France seek compensation in French-speaking Europe." However, the other Great Powers got wind of Napoleon's negotiations with Prussia. As Bismarck knew they would, the Great Powers-- Britain in particular--vetoed any violation of Belgian neutrality.¹¹

Eventually, after more diplomatic dancing, Napoleon was reduced to trying to *buy* Luxembourg from its Grand Duke, the King of Holland. But Bismarck denied Napoleon even that minor morsel. In March 1867, King William III of Holland agreed to sell Luxembourg if Prussia assented.¹² But Bismarck would not let Prussia accept the onus of

¹⁰ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 296.

¹¹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 372, 374.

¹² Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 154. See also Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 378-379.

approving the transfer of formerly German lands to France.¹³ When questioned on the Luxembourg matter in the Prussian Diet, Bismarck claimed to know nothing about it, but promised to safeguard German populations wherever they may be located. To thunderous applause, Bismarck declared: "As things stand in Germany we must in my opinion dare war rather than yield, despite the fact that the object, Luxembourg, is in itself hardly worth a war."¹⁴ Bismarck had hoped the Luxembourg affair would make the South Germans suspicious of French intentions and thus draw them closer to Prussia. The opposite occurred. The South German states, Bavaria and Württemberg especially, feared being drawn into a war between Prussia and France over something as unimportant to them as Luxembourg.¹⁵

The Luxembourg affair was an opportunity, if Bismarck had wanted, to provoke a war with France. Prussian public opinion was enraged by Napoleon's effort to acquire "German lands." Moltke, in fact, had recommended preventive war against France. But Bismarck turned away this advice and preferred that Prussia spend a few years digesting its annexations and settling the reconfiguration of Germany wrought by the 1866 war.¹⁶

In short, Bismarck's policy toward France and the South German states after 1866, unlike his policy toward Austria after 1864, was not studied preparation for war and an increase in international tensions. By 1869, Bismarck believed that steady progress was being made toward unification with the south. He viewed their incorporation as inevitable, albeit

¹³ Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, p. 209. A devoted Prussian, Bismarck manipulated German nationalism for his own ends. To turn Germans over to be governed by Frenchmen would have severely undermined his ability to play on German nationalist sentiment to support his policies.

¹⁴ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 380.

¹⁵ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 385-387.

¹⁶ Craig, *Germany*, pp. 17-18.

taking some 20-30 years.¹⁷ Bismarck believed in the abstract, however, that a war in Europe could speed the process along:

The distant and greater aim is the national unification of Germany. We can wait for this in security because the lapse of time and the natural development of the nation, which makes further progress every year will have their effect. We cannot accelerate it unless out-of-the-way events in Europe, such as some upheaval in France or a war of other Great Powers among themselves, offer us an unsought opportunity to do so.¹⁸

While Bismarck may have believed that German unity could not be fully and completely finished without a test of arms with France, Bismarck was in no immediate hurry to start that fight so soon after finishing the one with Austria.

4.3 THE HOHENZOLLERN CANDIDATURE AND THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

In September 1868, a palace revolution in Spain overthrew the reigning Bourbon monarch, Queen Isabella II. Army generals set up a provisional government. The new rulers of Spain decided that the monarchy should continue and wanted to establish a new dynasty. The generals searched and made offers to a number of candidates, all of whom refused. Finally, they secretly offered the Spanish throne to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen in September 1869.¹⁹ He refused this first offer, but left the door open for later acceptance provided both Wilhelm and Napoleon consented. The Spanish generals made a second, more formal offer in February 1870. Leopold's father informed Wilhelm and Bismarck, but no one told Napoleon.²⁰ Bismarck spent most of the spring of 1870

¹⁷ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁸ Bismarck to William I, November 20, 1869, *Selected Documents*, pp. 203-204.

¹⁹ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, p. 257.

²⁰ Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, pp. 258-259.

persuading Wilhelm that Leopold should accept the throne.²¹ Bismarck believed that it was in Prussia's national interest to have a Hohenzollern governing Spain.

Bismarck thought the candidature would enhance Prussian security *vis-à-vis* France. A Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne would change the European balance of power in Prussia's favor and against France. Rather than being the traditional ally of Paris, Madrid would become a diplomatic and potential military ally of Prussia. France would no longer be able to leave its southern border unprotected. A Hohenzollern ruling Madrid would require Paris to devote a full army corps to protect its Spanish border.²² Wilhelm, however, was less than enthusiastic. He saw only trouble with France in Leopold's candidature. Yet, as was usually the case, Bismarck prevailed. He cajoled and prodded Wilhelm to encourage Leopold to accept the offer.

Bismarck, too, knew France would react adversely to the announcement of Leopold's selection when it came. By having the Spanish parliament approve the selection first and *then* have it announced, he hoped to present the French with a *fait accompli*. As he wrote to one of his agents in Spain: "It is possible that we may see a passing fermentation in France and without a doubt it is necessary to avoid anything that may provoke or increase it...undoubtedly they will cry 'intrigue,' they will be furious against me, but without finding any point of attack."²³

A bureaucratic foul-up, however, prevented the news of Leopold's formal acceptance

²¹ After the initial offer, Bismarck became the driving force behind accepting the throne. Leopold's father, Charles Antony of Sigmaringen did not want to see his son monarch of such an unstable country, but relented when Bismarck made it an issue of Prussian patriotism. See the letters between Charles Antony and Leopold and Charles (the younger son), *Selected Documents*, pp. 219-220.

²² See the various letters between Bismarck, Wilhelm I and others, Spring 1870, *Selected Documents*, pp. 218-221. See also the letter from Bismarck to Wilhelm in W. M. Simon, *Germany in the Age of Bismarck* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), pp. 140-141; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 441-442.

²³ Quoted in Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 51.

from reaching Spanish officials before the parliament, the Cortes, adjourned for summer. The secret was not and could not have been held for two more months. Rumors appeared in Paris newspapers. On July 3, 1870 Marshall Prim, the Spanish regent, told the French ambassador of Leopold's selection.²⁴

France went into an uproar. The French Foreign Minister, the Duke of Gramont, declared in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies that the Hohenzollern candidature represented a threat to the European balance of power and French security. If the Spanish or the Prussians do not withdraw Leopold's candidacy, Gramont added, "we shall know how to do our duty without hesitation and without weakness..."²⁵ He made it a *casus belli*.

To Bismarck's great dismay and over his vociferous objections, Wilhelm yielded. He told Leopold to withdraw his name. France had apparently won a diplomatic triumph over Europe's Machiavellian master.

Yet, Napoleon and his ministers could not let well enough alone. They wanted more than a diplomatic victory; they wanted Prussia's humiliation.²⁶ Napoleon sent Count Benedetti, the French ambassador to Prussia, to Ems where Wilhelm rested on his summer holidays. Gramont instructed Benedetti to extract a guarantee from the King of Prussia that no attempt in the future would be made to put a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne. Wilhelm had disliked Leopold's candidature, but he refused this demand: "You ask me to undertake an obligation to hold good for all time and all circumstances. Such an undertaking I dare not give. I must reserve liberty to decide in every case according to circumstanc-

²⁴ Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, pp. 168-169. Eyck provides one of the best and fullest accounts of the entire candidature controversy.

²⁵ Speech of Gramont to the French Chamber of Deputies, July 6, 1870, *Selected Documents*, p. 221.

²⁶ Mann, *Germany Since 1879*, p. 190.

es."²⁷ Several more exchanges followed but Benedetti could do nothing more. He accepted Wilhelm's response and left.

There was little that Bismarck could do after Wilhelm had told Leopold to withdraw his name. He expected that he would have to accept diplomatic defeat. However, an aide to Wilhelm delivered into his hands an instrument for creating alternatives. He sent to Bismarck a telegram relaying the substance of the meeting. Bismarck took what was a straightforward, explanatory telegram and edited it. When he was done, it read more like a political challenge boldly turned away instead of an inquiry by the French ambassador to the Prussian king.²⁸ Bismarck published his version. As one historian put it, "the impression given and intended by the altered dispatch was that the King had deliberately snubbed the ambassador [justly to Germans], and France through him, and had virtually broken off diplomatic intercourse."²⁹ Here Bismarck *intended* to provoke war; he let it appear that the altered dispatch was the original. As he said after finishing the editing: "If in execution of his Majesty's order (to release the telegram) I at once communicate this text, which contains no alteration in or addition to the telegram, not only to the newspapers, but also by telegraph to all our embassies, it will be known in Paris before midnight, and not only on account of its contents, but also on account of the manner of its distribution, will have the effect of a red cloth upon the Gallic bull."³⁰

The outcome was indeed war. The perceived snub of Benedetti inspired demonstra-

²⁷ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 332.

²⁸ For a full transcript of the two versions, see the Ems Dispatch, July 13, 1870, *Selected Documents*, pp. 228-229.

²⁹ Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 336. For a good summary of the Ems episode, see Pinson, *Modern Germany*, pp. 145-146.

³⁰ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 101. Bismarck had not been actively pursuing a war with France since 1866. But if France was going to open the door to it, he would gladly walk through.

tions and demands for war in France. Germany interpreted the ambassador's treatment of Wilhelm as another example of French aggressiveness and an attempt to humiliate a German power. As Otto Pflanze put it: "The cult of the nation requires devils as well as gods. If Bismarck was the Washington of the German revolution, Napoleon was its George III."³¹ France declared war on July 19, 1870; Prussia quickly followed suit.

Bismarck's Responsibility for the War

Scholars have debated excessively whether Bismarck was responsible for the war.³² Robert H. Lord made perhaps the fairest and truest statement regarding the origins of the Franco-Prussian War: "Unless one accepts the view that a Franco-Prussian war was under any circumstances inevitable, it is difficult not to accuse both governments in 1870 of criminally playing with fire."³³ While I have no desire to get bogged down in the details of this debate, some discussion is warranted. It bears on the issue of Prussia's initial war aims.

Prior to the Hohenzollern candidature, Bismarck was not increasing tensions with France in the way he had pressured Austria during 1865-1866. Yet, Bismarck regarded war with France as an eventuality, if not an inevitability. A vigorous new Prussia could not rise up in the center of Europe without challenge by Europe's traditionally dominant power. The Spanish throne provided Bismarck with a quick and cheap way to alter the balance of power against France. It was an opportunity that few statesmen, especially one with Bismarck's

³¹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 372.

³² For example, Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, pp. 171-173 argues that the primary responsibility for the war lies with Bismarck. By contrast, A. J. P. Taylor interprets Bismarck's motives in Spanish throne affair as a means to make France *less likely* to go to war with Germany. (*Struggle for Mastery*, p. 202.)

³³ Quoted in Pinson, *Modern Germany*, p. 141.

abilities, would have passed up. To argue, as Taylor does, that Bismarck did not want war with France in 1870 overlooks the fact that he consciously drove a project which he knew the French would regard as most threatening, if not an act of war. Bismarck probably hoped to get away with it. Nevertheless, he was willing to risk war--and wage it--if necessary.³⁴

From Bismarck's point of view, pushing Leopold's candidacy looked like a no-lose proposition. On the one hand, if Prussia placed a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne, the European balance of power would shift against France. Prussia would become the dominant power in Europe. On the other hand, if France declared war, the Prussians would fight, win, and unify Germany. Bismarck believed that another war between a German power (Prussia) and France would energize nationalist sentiment in South Germany and overcome their particularist inclinations, especially if it appeared the French were the aggressors. In those circumstances, the South would voluntarily join Prussia's northern union. Again, Prussia would become the dominant power in Europe. If Bismarck had been determined on war from the outset, he almost certainly would have let slip that Leopold was a candidate for the Spanish throne himself, rather than trust a minor bureaucrat to make a convenient mistake.³⁵

In short, Bismarck risked war, but he did not commit policy irrevocably to it until the Ems Telegram. If Bismarck had to choose between diplomatic defeat and war with

³⁴ Bismarck, not surprisingly, claimed both total innocence and boasted about his "trap" for Napoleon. Bismarck's memoirs portray a peaceful, innocent Prussia engaging in a simple matter of dynastic succession when pounced on by France. (*Memoirs*, vol. 2, chapter 22). Locher Bucher, Bismarck's closest collaborator and friend, reported and approved of Bismarck's claim that it was all a trap. (See Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 164; and Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 373, note 1.) It probably was a trap, but not necessarily a guarantee of war. Lawrence Steefel argues Bismarck had not settled on war until early July, though he was knowingly risking war throughout the crisis. (See Lawrence Steefel, *Bismarck, the Hohenzollern Candidacy, and the Origins of the Franco-German War of 1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962.)

³⁵ Eyck, for example, wrote: "I personally feel convinced that Bismarck undertook it (Leopold's candidacy) with the intention of putting Napoleon in a formidable dilemma: either to suffer a political defeat which would in the long run cost him his throne, or to wage war--and that he foresaw that Napoleon would prefer war." *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 173. This interpretation is somewhat stronger than the one I have offered here.

France, he preferred war. He may not have been in a hurry to start the war with France prior to the candidature crisis, but, unaccustomed to losing, he certainly was not going to shy away from it either.

4.4 BISMARCK'S INITIAL WAR AIMS

If one accepts this interpretation of Bismarck's motives, it follows that Alsace-Lorraine was not one of Bismarck's initial war aims. He did not provoke war because he wanted Prussia to annex Alsace-Lorraine.³⁶ Bismarck's initial war aim was to use a national war against an ancient enemy, France, to complete the unification of Germany under terms of Prussian political and military domination.³⁷ As George Windell writes:

Only the natural passions which such a conflict would release could overcome South German antipathy toward Prussia sufficiently to make possible the entry of the four independent states into a new *Reich* at least seemingly uncoerced. However, while he hoped to make use of inflamed national sentiment as the agency of unification, he had no desire to be himself used by it.³⁸

Bismarck did not want to conquer the south. His strategy since 1866 was to encourage *voluntary* unification through diplomatic machinations.³⁹ Yet, the Hohenzollern candidature was an opportunity to polarize the divide between Germans and Frenchmen. If war broke

³⁶ See also, Charles Lowe, *Prince Bismarck: An Historical Biography*, vol. 1 (London: Cassell, 1885). Scholars of the war have debated whether Bismarck aimed at taking Alsace-Lorraine from the outset. Taylor, for example, argues that "Bismarck preached annexation from the outbreak of war." (*Struggle for Mastery*, p. 211.) But Taylor provides no evidence for this. Ultimately, one must do as Smoke said and did: "Conclusive evidence is lacking, so that scholars must fall back on interpretations based upon partial evidence." (*Controlling Escalation*, pp. 376, note 33.) My interpretation falls into the camp that believes Bismarck expanded his war aims later.

³⁷ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 480; Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 173; Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, 253; Pinson, *Modern Germany*, pp. 146-147; Mann, *Germany since 1789*, pp. 189-191; Holborn, *Modern Germany*, p. 215.

³⁸ George G. Windell, *The Catholics and German Unity 1866-1871* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 245. See also, Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 173.

³⁹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 486-487. Bismarck feared a diplomatic defeat for Prussia would set back unification.

out, Bismarck thought he could finish unification.⁴⁰ Pflanze is concise:

Through a national crusade against France he (Bismarck) expected to produce a flood of German sentiment which would overflow the barriers of southern particularism. From the palaces of Munich and Stuttgart to the palisades of Paris he propagated the view that the struggle against France was "a great national war," "a moral and national revolt against foreign attack and arrogance," whose only logical outcome would be the consolidation of "Germany's unity and power" under the northern system.⁴¹

To mobilize German public opinion for a nationalist war, Bismarck had to make France appear to be at fault and be the aggressor. The first and most important part of that effort was of course the Ems telegram. Bismarck knew it would enrage German public opinion--as well as the French--exciting it to war and encouraging France to respond in kind.⁴² "In editing the Ems dispatch Bismarck counted on the reality that any crisis with France, whatever the origin, was sufficient to arouse the *Furor Teutonicus*."⁴³ Second, while Bismarck himself did not share the passion of German nationalism, he readily manipulated it for his own ends.⁴⁴ Bismarck regularly inserted in German newspapers articles relating to questions of state policy. These articles were written or commissioned by

⁴⁰ Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 173. He had tried to use the external threat of France during the Luxembourg crisis to weld north and south Germany together. That first attempt failed.

⁴¹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 480.

⁴² Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 55,

⁴³ Pflanze, *Development of German Empire*, p. 469.

⁴⁴ In 1866, for example, Bismarck told an Italian general that "I personally am *much less German than Prussian*." Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 123. (Emphasis in original.) Pflanze observes that German scholars are still sharply divided over to what degree Bismarck was merely a Prussian patriot or a German nationalist. (*Development of Germany*, pp. 1-8) He goes on to argue quite persuasively that Bismarck was an extraordinary political leader who was ahead of his time. He, unlike almost all his contemporaries, grasped the new reality that state policy could no longer be conducted in a vacuum of public opinion. The people would have to be consulted because nationalism was giving the people a single voice. It was Bismarck's genius to seize German nationalism and harness it for his own ends. German nationalism, Pflanze wrote, gave Bismarck "the moral means with which to justify simultaneously the expansion of Prussia and the retention of Hohenzollern authority." (*Development of Germany*, pp. 11-12.) Pflanze casts some doubt on historical "inevitability" of German nationalism leading to German unification in the absence of Bismarck giving it force, purpose, and character. (*Development of Germany*, pp. 12-14.)

his press secretary, Moritz Busch. The two men portrayed this whole affair as one of innocence on the part of Prussia and Spain, and paranoid ravings on the part of France. They used various subtle and not-so-subtle appeals to German nationalism to make their case. This usually meant attacks on the French national character.⁴⁵ Third, Wilhelm, in a Reichstag speech (which Bismarck wrote) that was frequently and loudly applauded, declared that *Germany* had suffered a history of brutality and assaults from foreign conquerors. Germans had united once to defeat the first Napoleon and would now do it again. He appealed to the German people's patriotism and willingness to sacrifice for "our freedom and our right against the brutality of foreign conquerors."⁴⁶

The other major figures in the Prussian leadership were either unaware of Bismarck's activities or were co-conspirators. Roon supported Bismarck in his political objectives. Moltke assured Bismarck that Prussia was quite prepared for a war against France.⁴⁷ Both Roon and Moltke approved of and were present at Bismarck's editing of the Ems Telegram. Moltke said of Bismarck's sleeker version: "Now it has a different ring; it sounded before like a parley; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge."⁴⁸ When the telegram was published, King Wilhelm was surprised at what he read, but the damage had been done.⁴⁹

Whatever the cause, the results were as Bismarck had hoped. In Germany (and in

⁴⁵ Dr. Moritz Busch, *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of his History*, vol. 1 (London: MacMillan, 1898), pp. 26-37. One typical piece, written after the publication of the Ems telegram, stated: "The French are running amuck like a Malay who has got into a rage and rushes through the streets dagger in hand, foaming at the mouth, stabbing every one who happens to cross his path. If France is mad enough to regard Germany as a fit object for a vicarious whipping, nothing will restrain her, and the result will be that she will herself receive a personal castigation." (p. 33)

⁴⁶ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 469-470.

⁴⁷ Pinson, *Modern Germany*, p. 146.

⁴⁸ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 101.

⁴⁹ Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, pp. 172-173. Wilhelm would never have fired his irreplaceable chief minister.

France) the war was enormously popular. In his train ride from Ems to Berlin, Wilhelm was met at every station with a cheering crowd. The order for mobilization was announced to the crowd at the Berlin station. "The crowd stood shoulder to shoulder all the way from the station to the Royal Palace, uttering one unbroken storm of cheers that gave witness to their enthusiasm for the coming struggle."⁵⁰

There was no mention of Alsace-Lorraine in Prussia's declaration of war. Bismarck wrote for Wilhelm a speech to be delivered from the throne explaining why Prussia was at war. Annexing Alsace-Lorraine was not among the subjects.⁵¹ "I make war against French soldiers, not against French citizens," Wilhelm declared.⁵²

4.5 SUMMARY OF THE WAR

Most everyone in Europe expected Prussia to lose a war with France. The French army still lived off its Napoleonic reputation of having the most formidable infantry in Europe. The reality was shattering. The Prussians destroyed the two main French armies in quick succession. The first was caught and surrounded in the Metz fortress on August 19, 1870 (surrendering with 173,000 French troops on October 27). The second, led by the Emperor Napoleon himself, surrendered on September 2 after losing the battle of Sedan. The Prussians captured an army of 120,000 men.⁵³

⁵⁰ Frederick William, *The War Diary of the Emperor Frederick III* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1988, reprint), p. 6.

⁵¹ Lowe, *Prince Bismarck*, pp. 520-522. See also, Hermann Schoenfeld, *Bismarck's Speeches and Letters* (New York: D. Appleton, 1905), pp. 101-117.

⁵² Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 475.

⁵³ Pinson, *Modern Germany*, pp. 147-148. For the most useful works on the strengths and organization of the opposing armies and the war itself, see Cyril Falls, *A Hundred Years of War* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1953); Archibald Forbes, *William of Germany* (New York: Cassell, 1888); J. F. C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World*, vol. 3 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1956); Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*; Count Helmuth von Moltke, *The Franco-German War of 1870-71*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1893).

Prussian generalship, logistics, organization, and artillery all proved superior to the French. Prussia had mobilized, supplied, and deployed over 300,000 troops on the French frontier in three weeks. Napoleon's generals had expected it to take six. The French army was a mirror opposite. French generalship was poor, logistics and mobilization hopelessly disorganized, and its muzzle-loaded artillery no match for the Prussian breech-loaders. One area of superiority was a "secret weapon," the *mitrailleuse*, a predecessor to the machine gun. But it was so secret that few men were trained to use it and few were deployed in the war.⁵⁴ Also, the French rifle, *the chassepôt*, was superior to the Prussian needle-gun in accuracy and volume of fire. This is evident in many of the early engagements. The Prussians won these fights, but with vastly superior numbers managed only to inflict casualties on the French comparable to their own. For example, in the Battle of Wörth on August 6, a German army of 125,000 men engaged a French force of 46,500; the Germans lost 9400 killed, wounded, and missing. The defeated French lost 10,760 killed and wounded, and 6200 were taken prisoner. At the Battle of Spichern on August 6, a victorious German army of 45,000 men suffered over 4800 casualties compared to the French army of 30,000 which lost almost 3000.⁵⁵

After the defeat of France's two main armies at Sedan and Metz, the war did not end, as Bismarck had expected. It took on an entirely new character. Napoleon abdicated his throne. In Paris, the Empire was overthrown and a republic was proclaimed. A Government of the National Defense took over and immediately began organizing the city and the country for continued resistance against the Prussians. A *levée en masse* was proclaimed and France

⁵⁴ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, pp. 118, 129; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 459. The best military history of the war is provided by Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*.

⁵⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 833-834.

girded itself for total war. Leon Gambetta, Minister of the Interior in the new government, was smuggled out of Paris to the south to begin the task of raising, organizing, and training the new armies. Behind Prussian lines, partisan bands, known as *Francs-Tireurs*, engaged in guerilla-like activities. This "innovation" enraged the Germans and brought about brutal reprisals. Bismarck was particularly frustrated at France's unwillingness to make peace on his terms and sought to increase the level of punishment felt by the average French citizen. "The more Frenchmen suffered from the war the greater would be the number of those who would long for peace."⁵⁶ As Bismarck remarked on October 2, "It will come to this, that we will shoot down every male inhabitant."⁵⁷ These tactics, more than anything else, gave the war its national character and substantially increased the intensity of the conflict.

The Prussians, meanwhile, began their march on Paris. Privately, Bismarck had questioned the value of this development. He told his son: "My wish would be to let these people stew in their own juice, and to install ourselves in the conquered provinces before advancing further. If we advance too soon, that would prevent them falling out among themselves."⁵⁸ He did not object, however, when Moltke gave the order to advance on Paris. Once there, Bismarck advocated an immediate bombardment of the city to force the new government to yield. The military preferred a starvation siege. The bombardment did not begin until late December. The French capitulated in late January only when all of their new armies had been defeated and Paris had surrendered.

Prussian and German losses had continued to mount since the French proclamation of national resistance. The (newly constituted) German Empire suffered 28,208 dead and

⁵⁶ Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 167. Busch is commenting on Bismarck's attitude.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 167. See also, Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 471-473.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 229.

88,488 wounded. French losses were even higher.

4.6 PRUSSIA'S NEW WAR AIMS: ANNEXING ALSACE AND LORRAINE

Alsace and Lorraine were originally part of the old, mostly German Holy Roman Empire until they were seized by the French King, Louis XIV, in the seventeenth century. During the next two hundred years the people of the two provinces became happy and loyal French subjects. They retained some linguistic and cultural connection to Germany but ties to France grew every year. Few signs of discontent surfaced within the provinces.⁵⁹

Early Support for Annexation

Soon after the outbreak of war, some elements in the German press and intelligentsia demanded that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine be made a primary Prussian war aim. After Prussian victories on August 4, 5, and 18 (the battles of Wörth, Spichern, and Gravelotte-St. Privat), the trickle of articles and opinion in the German press which favored annexation became a flood which, according to Pflanze, "swept the entire press."⁶⁰ On July 25, for example, the *Die Neuesten Nachrichten* of Munich urged that the war continue "until Alsace and Lorraine are again German and the Rhine is Germany's river, not Germany's frontier."⁶¹ The German philosopher-historian, Heinrich von Treitschke, declared: "The domination of a German tribe by Frenchmen has always been an unhealthy condition; today it is a crime against the reason of history, a subjugation of free men by half-educated

⁵⁹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 473-474.

⁶⁰ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 475.

⁶¹ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 475.

barbarians."⁶² The desire to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine knew no ideological lines. Both the Prussian nationalist right and the unification liberals enthusiastically supported annexation.⁶³

Free men the Alsations and the Lorrainers may have been but that did not mean their views regarding annexation were important. As Treitschke stated: "We Germans who know Germany know better what is good for the Alsations than these unfortunate people themselves, who, warped by their French life, have remained without honest knowledge of the new Germany. We want to give them back their own self against their will."⁶⁴ The newspapers agreed. The question of putting the matter to a referendum in Alsace and Lorraine was rejected. The view of the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* was typical: "We must begin with the rod. The alienated children must feel our fist. Love will follow the disciplining, and it will make them Germans again."⁶⁵

Wilhelm and Alsace-Lorraine

Wilhelm's views on the war and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine were straightforward. He considered France an historic enemy and particularly hated Napoleon III's regime.⁶⁶ In Wilhelm's mind, the war was entirely France's fault. After all, Leopold's candidacy had been withdrawn. The shouts of Paris crowds-- "To Berlin!" --after the publication of the Ems telegram were proof of French aggression. Wilhelm initially thought Prussia would have to fight a defensive war. "...France *had* been the first to mobilize, *had*

⁶² Quoted in Holborn, *Modern Germany*, pp. 221.

⁶³ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 228.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Holborn, *Modern Germany*, pp. 221-222.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Craig, *Germany*, p. 30.

⁶⁶ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 305.

been the first to declare war, and now was proceeding as rapidly as it possibly could to begin an all-out invasion of the German homeland."⁶⁷ France's declaration of war was illogical unless it intended to go on the offensive. Wilhelm even thought it unnecessary to supply his army with French maps.⁶⁸ Prussian victories, however, combined with perceived French treachery soon turned his eyes to the French provinces.

But the real story here is Bismarck. Why did he desire Alsace and Lorraine?

Bismarck and Alsace-Lorraine

Bismarck appeared to fulfill his initial war aims in the opening weeks of the war. The appearance of French aggression that Bismarck had fostered swept an energized South Germany to Prussia's side. One prominent South German intellectual, Arnold Ruge, wrote: "Any German, whoever he may be, who is not now on the side of his people, is a traitor!"⁶⁹ Prussian Crown Prince Friedrich, who was given the military command of the South German armies, records in his war diary overwhelming enthusiasm for the war in South Germany: "One may truly say that, in face of the wanton provocation of France, all Germany has risen like one man; it will very surely re-establish her unity." [sic] He adds that he was received in the south "at every station" with acclaim: "Who would ever have dreamed that Bavarians and Saxons would greet a Prussian Prince with tumultuous hurrahs specially emphasizing the Unification of our Country?"⁷⁰ The military treaties, forced on the South German states in

⁶⁷ Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 141. Emphasis in original. The Berlin crowds, interestingly, shouted only "To the Rhine!". See *Letters of the Empress Frederick*, ed. Sir Frederick Ponsonby (New York: MacMillan, 1930), p. 74.

⁶⁸ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Craig, *Germany*, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Frederick William, *War Diary*, pp. 8, 12.

1866, were implemented with enthusiasm. Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg began mobilizing on July 16-17.⁷¹ As Pinson states: "All the German states were at last united in one great national enterprise. Bismarck's dream was realized, and the basis was laid for the unity of North and South Germany."⁷²

As for new political objectives, it is difficult to determine precisely when Bismarck made Alsace-Lorraine a Prussian war aim. The first inkling, according to Busch's account, came in a dispatch to St. Petersburg in which Bismarck declared that even if Napoleon fell from his throne, it would not satisfy Prussia. On August 22, Busch reported that there was no longer any doubt that Prussia will retain Alsace and Metz. Bismarck *publicly* announced the government's intention to keep the provinces on August 27.⁷³

Bismarck marshalled a number of arguments which explain--or at least justify--his decision to keep Alsace and Lorraine. First, Prussia suffered enormously in the war and a simple indemnity would not be sufficient compensation. However, Bismarck himself never made such an argument in government documents. He used it to sell the cause for annexation in the court of public opinion.⁷⁴

Second, Alsace and the German-speaking half of Lorraine were once part of Germany. "Besides, it must not be forgotten that this territory which we now demand was originally German and in great part still remains German, and that its inhabitants will perhaps

⁷¹ Craig, *Germany*, p. 27.

⁷² Pinson, *Modern Germany*, p. 147; see also, Lowe, *Prince Bismarck*, p. 565; Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 83.

⁷³ Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 52, 74, 91. Crown Prince Friedrich reports in his war diary a similar timetable, though he does not mention Lorraine or Metz as a war aim until much later. On August 20, he cites Alsace as a war aim but leaves the door open for more after Sedan. Frederick William, *War Diary of Emperor Frederick*, pp. 65, 102, 104.

⁷⁴ Busch cites this as one (among many) consideration which led "the chancellor" to the conclusion that Germany must keep Alsace and Lorraine. There is no direct evidence of Bismarck using such language, only that the war aim was justified in these terms in Busch's diary and the newspaper articles that he wrote. See Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 74, 91.

in time learn to feel that they belong to one race with ourselves."⁷⁵ To a great extent, however, this argument must be considered propaganda on Bismarck's part. Bismarck never used such arguments in official statements or government documents. As Pflanze writes: "In Bismarck's defense it is usually pointed out that his motive for claiming the Vosges frontier (Alsace-Lorraine) was not blood relationship, common language and culture, or any of the usual justifications from the cult of nationalism. He dismissed such arguments contemptuously as 'professorial ideas'."⁷⁶ Bismarck claimed to respond to public opinion, but he often stirred up public opinion for his own purposes. Referring to the "return of German soil," he used these nationalist arguments to maintain public opinion behind his annexation policy. "While Bismarck disdained this viewpoint, his propaganda made use of it. What mattered to him at the moment was the greatest possible agitation of German opinion, whatever the justification."⁷⁷

Third, Bismarck argued that the change in government in France increased the threat to Prussia, requiring the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. "The palpable threat of revolutionary contagion spreading outward from France made it necessary, he (Bismarck) informed Vienna and St. Petersburg, for the three eastern monarchies to stand together and for Germany, the Power that was most exposed, to protect itself by annexing Alsace-

⁷⁵ Busch, *Secret Pages*, p. 93. This was from a newspaper article wrote with Bismarck's sanction.

⁷⁶ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 474. See also Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, pp. 184-185; Windell, *Catholics and Germany*, pp. 247-251. Bismarck stated on September 4: "Metz and Strassburg are what we require and what we wish to take--that is, the fortresses. Alsace is a professorial idea." Quoted in Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 124. See also, Dr. Moritz Busch, *Bismarck in the Franco-German War*, vol. 1 (New York: MacMillan, 1879), p. 127.

⁷⁷ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 478; Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, p. 206.

Lorraine."⁷³ We can attribute this argument as part of Bismarck's efforts, which I shall discuss in the next section, to keep Austria and Russia neutral in the war. Throughout the war, Bismarck had not cared about the character of the French government so long as it yielded to his peace terms, i.e. surrendering Alsace and Lorraine. After the fall of Napoleon, Bismarck hoped the new government would accept his terms and make peace. When this did not happen, he flirted with the idea of putting Napoleon back on the throne. During negotiations with officials from the French republic, Bismarck often threatened them with Napoleon's restoration to force them to yield on Alsace-Lorraine.⁷⁹ When the French government ultimately capitulated, however, Bismarck was happy to end the war, regardless of who governed France. Alsace and Lorraine were more important than the form of government which prevailed in France.

Fourth, Bismarck most often stressed security. France, he argued, has demonstrated a history of aggressiveness, particularly toward Germany, which is innate to the French national character. On August 21, two days after the Prussians had trapped and surrounded half the French army in Metz, Bismarck emphasized the aggressiveness of the French nation and its people in a letter to the Prussian ambassador to England, Count von Bernstorff:

We are fighting today against the 12th. or 15th. invasion a[nd] war of conquest which France has conducted against Germany during the past 200 years. In 1814 and 1815, assurances against a repetition of these breaches of the peace were sought by treating France with forbearance. But the danger lies in the incurable lust for power a[nd] arrogance which is peculiar to the French national character and which can be misused by every ruler of the country to attack peaceful neighboring states. Our protection against the evil does not lie in the fruitless attempt to momentarily

⁷³ Craig, *Germany*, p. 29. Several years later, Bismarck still emphasized this theme. On March 3, 1874, Bismarck declared that "We have not annexed Alsace-Lorraine to make the inhabitants happy, we have erected a rampart against the incursions which a dispassionate and warlike people have been making into our country for two hundred years." Quoted in Barry Cerf, *Alsace-Lorraine since 1870* (New York: MacMillan, 1919), p. 19.

⁷⁹ Busch, *Secret Pages*, pp. 147-148, 198-197, 418. See also, Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 223.

attenuate the sensitivity of the French, but in our acquisition of well fortified frontiers.⁸⁰

After Sedan, Bismarck reiterated the point: "Until now, France has been aware that she has emerged from every war started arbitrarily by her without any penalty and without a diminution of her territory which had been increased at Germany's expense."⁸¹

Again, one must wonder whether Bismarck truly believed this or whether it was simply propaganda and justification for a decision taken for other reasons. For example, at the outbreak of war, Bismarck declared, through Wilhelm's speech, that the war was Napoleon's fault alone. But once the decision to take Alsace and Lorraine had been made, the blame for the war shifted to the French people itself. "[E]veryone has recognized that the emperor was but the expression of the senseless and criminal desires of the French people....It is not merely Napoleon. It is France herself whose quest for domination forms a permanent danger for her neighbors, with or without Napoleon at her head."⁸²

Yet, Bismarck's security argument cannot be completely dismissed. He expressed real concerns and there were real strategic advantages to keeping Alsace and Lorraine. Louis XIV had seized Alsace and Lorraine from a disunited Germany in 1680. Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, the French king's master of fortification and siege warfare, made Metz and Strassburg into virtually impregnable fortresses. By virtue of geography, they provided strategic defense for France against any invasion from the west. At the same time, however, they provided advantageous sally ports for a French invasion into southern Germany in 1870. French armies, under Louis XIV and, later, Napoleon I, passed through the fortresses on the

⁸⁰ Bismarck to Bernstorff, August 21, 1870, in Herman N. Weill, ed. and trans., *European Diplomatic History, 1815-1914: Documents and Interpretations* (New York: Exposition, 1972), p. 208. See also, Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 220-221.

⁸¹ Bismarck to Henry VII Prince Reuss, September 8, 1870, in Weill, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 209.

⁸² Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 475.

way to Germany. "The two provinces formed a triangular wedge with the apex at Strassburg pointing toward the heart of Germany. To France they gave the benefit of interior lines of communication and to Germany the disadvantage of exterior lines."⁸³ Metz and Strassburg represented the heart of Bismarck's elevated war aims: "We must have the two fortresses in order to make difficult for France another aggressive war, not in order to bring Alsace and Lorraine back to Germany."⁸⁴

Fifth, Bismarck emphasized the security argument with the theory that France would desire revenge for its humiliation in 1870, especially after Sedan. In that same memo to Bernsdorff, Bismarck asserted that

Our victory at *Sadowa* (Königgrätz) has already aroused bitterness in the *French*; how much more will result from our victory over the French themselves! Even without cessations of territory, revenge for Metz, for Worth, will remain a battle cry for a longer time than the revenge for *Sadowa* or *Waterloo*!⁸⁵

In a private conversation, Bismarck remarked: "They did not forgive us for *Sadowa* and they will be even less forgiving with respect to our present victory, no matter how generous we are when it comes to the peace."⁸⁶ It did not matter whether Germany took Alsace-Lorraine or not. The French would seethe:

It is the defeat itself, it is our victorious defense against her outrageous attack, which the French nation shall never forgive us. If we now were to withdraw from France without any cessions of territory, without any indemnity, without any other advantage than the glory of our arms, there would still remain in the French nation the same hatred, the same thirst for revenge because of her injured vanity and arrogance, and she would only live for the day when she could hope to successfully

⁸³ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 474. See also, Holborn, *Modern Germany*, p. 222; Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, pp. 280, 299; and Coleman Philippon, *Alsace-Lorraine: Past, Present and Future* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1918), p. 139.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 474.

⁸⁵ Bismarck to Bernsdorff, August 21, 1870, in Weill, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 209. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Craig, *Germany*, p. 30.

transform these feelings into action....⁸⁷

Thus, it made sense to take the provinces and secure better Germany's border. "It was a simple dictate of prudence, therefore, to seize upon the strong points that would help deny gratification of French resentment."⁸⁸

This argument raises an interesting question, however. Why did Bismarck believe that Königgrätz would not inspire permanent Austrian hostility (so long as it was given a moderate peace) but that the defeats France suffered would inspire permanent French hostility even if it were granted a moderate the peace? There are three possible answers to this question. The first is that the French revenge argument was pure propaganda. But the frequency and vigor with which he used this argument in much official and private correspondence--compared to, say, the nationalist argument--suggests that it was more than that.

The second explanation stresses prestige and power. By the 1860s Austria was not the power it had once been a century or two earlier. It was declining and everyone recognized it, including the Austrians. Vienna, if one can put it this way, was getting used to losing wars. In 1859, they lost a large portion of Italy by virtue of France's intervention and defeat of the Austrian army at Solferino. That fact did not engender permanent Austrian

⁸⁷ Circular Dispatch to All Missions Abroad, September 13, 1870, in Weill, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 210.

⁸⁸ Craig, *Germany*, p. 30. See also, Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 221, 231-232; and Busch, *Franco-German War*, pp. 41-42, 69-70, 138. Busch reports Bismarck expressing sentiments for keeping Metz by August 22. Crown Prince Friedrich, despite frequent disagreements with Bismarck, held a similar attitude: "Since the victory of Sedan hatred and the craving for revenge have, I suppose, taken such a hold on the French that it is useless for us to give any further consideration to any such arguments as the enemy may bring forward in a more or less conciliatory spirit. France is henceforth for all time our natural enemy, who will seek any and every alliance to help them to avenge themselves on us; hence it is our immediate task to weaken France in such a way that she can never again bring enjoyment of peace into question. Cessions of territory in Alsace facilitate our strategic dispositions, which were rendered immensely more difficult at the outbreak of the present War than they would otherwise have been, and will cause the French no greater distress than the defeats that they have already involved." Frederick William, *War Diary*, pp. 113-114.

hostility against France. Thus it was not unreasonable for Bismarck to suspect that Austria would not be permanently embittered by its defeat at Königgrätz. Conversely, Bismarck realized that Prussia's defeat of France shattered the myth of French invincibility and power. It had taken all of Europe in 1814 to bring France to its knees, and then only barely. This served as a source of pride. In 1870, the expectation in France and Europe was that the upstart Prussians would be taught a lesson by the French master. Bismarck may simply have believed therefore that France would forever hate Prussia because it had ripped the illusion of power from the French imagination.

In the new European balance of power which would take shape after the war, France and a newly united Germany were roughly equal in economic and military strength. Austria was a clear notch weaker.⁸⁹ (See the comparison in Table 4.1) It was therefore France (or possibly Russia) who was the future threat to Germany, not Austria-Hungary whose time had passed. Thus, to Bismarck, reconciling France was, perhaps, as impractical as it was impossible. Keeping Alsace and Lorraine made more sense. It was one thing to defeat a clearly recognized declining power. It was something else entirely to strip away the prestige of Europe's "first power" so quickly and seemingly so easily.

⁸⁹ See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), pp. 170-203.

Table 4.1 The Power Resources of Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary: 1880

Country	GNP* (Billions)	GNP per capita*	Population	Military Personnel	Industrial Output**
Germany	19.9	443	45,000,000	430,000	8.5
France	17.3	464	37,000,000	544,000	7.8
Austria	12.2	315	39,000,000	273,000	4.4

* In 1960 U.S. dollars and prices.

** As a percentage of total world industrial output.

Source: Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 149, 154, 171.

The third explanation is that Bismarck *wanted* permanent French hostility for domestic political reasons. Keeping Alsace-Lorraine and thereby creating an enduring French threat would help solidify German cohesion in several ways. 1. Alsace and Lorraine would provide a symbol of unity for the new German Empire. Soldiers from all over Germany had fought and conquered the provinces together. Alsace and Lorraine did not become members of the Imperial Confederation or sign Bismarck's new constitution. They were *Reichsland* (Empire's Land), government territory to be administered in the general and collective interest of the federated states.⁹⁰ In mid-September, Busch noted in his diaries that Bismarck intended to make Alsace-Lorraine common German property so that they might "serve as a bond of union between North and South."⁹¹ Bismarck wrote into the German

⁹⁰ David Starr Jordan, *Alsace-Lorraine: A Study in Conquest: 1913* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1916), p. 33. See also, Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 126, 133. Bismarck told Busch in an official communication that "The partition of this territory between single States inexpedient. The fact that this war has been waged in common cannot fail to have exercised a healthy influence in other respects on the cause of German unity..."

⁹¹ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 137.

law of June 9, 1871 the idea that the provinces were the symbol of unity: "Alsace-Lorraine is the price of combats in which all German states have shed their blood, the pledge of the unity of the German Empire, conquered by its united forces....Alsace-Lorraine must belong to all."⁹²

2. A permanent French threat guaranteed continuing South German "balancing behavior" within the political framework of the newly united German Empire. When Bismarck was an envoy to the German Diet at Frankfort in the 1850s, he had discussed the South German position with King William I of Württemberg. "Its substance was that South Germany would long have been occupied by the French from the direction of the strategic invasion base of Strasbourg by the time help could arrive from Berlin; hence that so long as Alsace remained in French hands South German policy would always in some measure have to take France into account."⁹³ But with a more defensible frontier, South Germany could safely balance with Prussia in any conflict with France, without jeopardizing its security and safety.⁹⁴ If Prussia held Metz and Strassburg, launching a French invasion of southern Germany was much more difficult. France would no longer have these strategic strong points to support an invading force. In addition, to invade Germany a French army would first have to contend with the Prussian garrisons in these fortresses. In July, the speedier Prussian mobilization had prevented a French invasion of Baden. In the future, Alsace and Lorraine would provide more breathing space.⁹⁵ During the unification talks with Bavaria, one of Bismarck's aides pointed out that unless the South German states joined in the union of

⁹² Cerf, *Alsace-Lorraine*, p. 23. This law determined the final status of the provinces.

⁹³ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 254.

⁹⁴ For theoretical insight to this argument, see Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, pp. 23-31.

⁹⁵ Carr, *Wars of German Unification*, p. 206.

Germany, there was no material reason for *Prussia* to demand Alsace and Lorraine. They were needed to protect *South Germany*.⁹⁶ In a circular to Prussia's agents abroad, Bismarck stated:

As long as France remains in possession of Strassburg and Metz, her strategical position is stronger offensively than ours defensively, both as regards the whole of Southern Germany and the left bank of the Rhine in Northern Germany. Strassburg, in the possession of France, is an inviting gate open for the invasion of Southern Germany. In the possession of Germany, Strassburg and Metz assume a defensive aspect. In more than twenty wars with France we have never been the aggressors: we have nothing to demand from that country except our own security, which as been so often endangered....By thus laying difficulties in the way of the aggressions of France, from whose initiative so many disturbances of the peace have risen, we are acting in the interest of all Europe.⁹⁷

3. A permanent French threat guaranteed the Prussian character of the German Empire would persist and serve to cement the southern states to the north. As one historian noted: "A France so bled and mutilated would be an irreconcilable enemy [and] would be an incontrovertible argument for the continuance of the Empire in arms. What Germany had taken by force she could only keep henceforward by force..."⁹⁸ Keeping Alsace and Lorraine as *Reichsland* meant, of course, a Prussian military presence on the border which separated South Germany from France. In effect, if the annexation made South German balancing with Prussia against a French threat easier, it also made "balancing" with France against Prussia next to impossible. The South Germans would be physically prevented from changing their minds; unity would be permanent.

Finally, it is worth noting that Bismarck had flirted with creating a neutral buffer state, but ultimately rejected the idea as being disadvantageous for Germany: "A neutral

⁹⁶ Busch, *Franco-German War*, vol. 2, pp. 16-17.

⁹⁷ Lowe, *Prince Bismarck*, vol. 1, p. 568.

⁹⁸ C. Grant Robertson, *Bismarck* (New York: Henry Holt, 1919), pp. 277-278, quoted in Smoke, *Controlling Escalation*, p. 138.

buffer State like Belgium or Switzerland would not serve our purpose, as it would unquestionably join France in case of a fresh outbreak of war. Metz and Strasburg, with an adequate portion of surrounding territory, must belong to all Germany, to serve as a protective barrier against the French."⁹⁹ According to Ritter, if the provinces were neutralized, Germany would be prevented from attacking France, whereas France could land troops on Germany's coast or in Denmark and launch an invasion.¹⁰⁰ By keeping Alsace and Lorraine Prussia strengthened its ability to attack France. The Rhine was a natural zone of defense for Germany, whereas Alsace-Lorraine was a natural zone for offense. Sally ports used to support an army marching east are just as useful to an army marching west. Taking these two fortresses put a potential Prussian invasion force that much closer to Paris and the heart of France.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, pp. 80, 132-133; Phillipson, *Alsace-Lorraine*, pp. 89-90. Richard Smoke agrees that security was a major motivating factor in Bismarck's decision to expand war aims. An additional reason, Smoke argues, was that Bismarck needed to keep the war going longer, to unify the country further, as he prepared the political and constitutional basis of the new Reich. Alsace-Lorraine was "an unusual and provocative example of elevating subsequent objectives in order to protect the original objective." (*Controlling Escalation*, p. 140.) Smoke's *interpretation* might be right but it is difficult to evaluate. In the three pages (pp. 139-141) where he makes this case, there is not one footnote. Moreover, I have not found any independent confirmation of the argument. His argument is not unreasonable; it fits with Bismarck's purpose in provoking war.

Nevertheless, Smoke's interpretation is suspect on empirical grounds. Bismarck wanted to end the war as soon as possible, albeit on his own terms. On August 16, Bismarck wrote to his wife that the war was "as good as ended, unless God should manifestly intervene for France, which I trust will not happen." (Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 462.) Bismarck wanted the bombardment of Paris begun as soon as possible to end the war quickly. He expressed nothing but consternation at the fact that he could not get France's new government--or its old one--to accept his peace terms and end the war.

¹⁰⁰ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 256. Ritter assumes of course Bismarck's obedience to international law. In fact, Bismarck went to great lengths to adhere to that code, but there was no certainty, as we discovered in 1914, that his successors would.

The System's Reaction: A Limited Opportunity

After the 1866 war, European opinion anticipated that sooner or later France and Prussia would fight. Bismarck also expected this. Consequently, he spent the years between 1866 and 1870 assiduously courting Europe's other Great Powers to ensure that when war eventually came, France would not have an ally. He did so by playing on European fears of French power and aggressiveness. History, of course, made this job relatively easy. "If he played his hand with great skill, it was a good one in the first place."¹⁰¹

In any war with France, Bismarck had three potential problems: Austria-Hungary, Russia, and England. In each case, however, self-interest and Bismarck's unique stew of oblique threats and somewhat more explicit promises combined to cause Europe's other Great Powers to stand aside when war came.

Austria. A French alliance with Austria-Hungary, with the objective of reversing Königgrätz, was Bismarck's most dangerous potential problem. Austria was still bitter after its defeat in 1866. But skilful diplomacy and Austrian self-interest prevented this Franco-Austrian combination from materializing. Immediately after the Peace of Nicolsburg France sought an alliance with Austria. Although Austrian Emperor Franz Josef and his chancellor, Count von Beust, shared Napoleon's desire to undo Königgrätz, they were realistic men. Austria had many internal problems to tend to, not the least of which was the army. Nothing came of this alliance other than the "innocuous exchange of friendly letters."¹⁰² When war

¹⁰¹ Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 372.

¹⁰² Albrecht-Carric, *Diplomatic History*, p. 136. Napoleon and his foreign minister, Gramont, however, took away far more. Napoleon thought Austria and France were "morally bound" together against Prussia in any future war. Gramont, who had been the French minister to Vienna, deluded himself into thinking that the desire for the revenge of Königgrätz automatically translated into support for any anti-Prussian policy initiated by France. "...Napoleon chose to believe in the existence of an alliance with Austria secured neither by signed treaty nor by actual solidarity of interests. Such were the circumstances as the most realistic political strategist of the century entered upon his final match with its most successful romantic adventurer." See Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 432.

came, Austria preferred neutrality. Neither the army, nor the country was in any condition to face Prussian troops again. Beust, who had been the Saxon prime minister and who had no love for Bismarck, did not want to commit to an alliance. He expected France to defeat Prussia which would give him the opportunity to intervene and reestablish Austria's traditional overlordship in South Germany. Beust expected that Prussia's defeat would encourage the South German states to renew their historic and natural friendship with Vienna.¹⁰³

Beust's policy collapsed with the French army. In order to reestablish the Austrian position in South Germany, Beust needed France to gain the upper hand. But with unification fervor sweeping the south, Austria could not hope to regain its former position.¹⁰⁴ The military option for Austria, never a strong one to begin with, was eliminated by the defeat of Napoleon. Vienna had just begun a reorganization of its army. Thus it was, perhaps, in worse shape than even after Königgrätz. To mobilize and attack Prussia without the benefit of any South German help was inconceivable.

Bismarck, for his part, promised Vienna that he had no intention of uniting *all* German lands. He offered to guarantee the integrity of German Austria.¹⁰⁵ In early 1871, swallowing what must have been a bitter pill, Austrian Emperor Franz Josef wrote to Wilhelm on the subject of unification and Alsace-Lorraine: "I congratulate you on the

¹⁰³ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 208; Dawson, *German Empire*, pp. 344-345; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 424-432. On the eve of the war, Prussia's ambassador to Vienna reported to Bismarck that Austria hoped "to play the same part in the peace negotiations as France played at Nikolsburg..." (Eichman to Bismarck, July 12, 1870, in *Selected Documents*, p. 236.)

¹⁰⁴ Dora Neil Raymond, *British Policy and Opinion During the Franco-Prussian War* (New York: Columbia University, 1921), pp. 269-270. Until they were certain of Austria's passivity, the Prussians reserved 95,000 troops to contain an intervening Austrian army. Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia*, p. 832.

¹⁰⁵ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 306-308. This was also a matter of concern to the czar who ruled a large number of ethnic Germans in the Baltic provinces. (See Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 478.)

annexation of an open sore to your empire." ¹⁰⁶

Russia. Bismarck was not going to rely on the gods and Austrian self-interest to prevent an Austro-French alliance. He took out some insurance from the only man who was selling: the Russian czar. The shared interests of Prussia and Russia that had kept the czar neutral in the Austro-Prussian War still existed in 1870. Both powers needed to keep Polish nationalism suppressed. This kept relations between the two states friendly.

Furthermore, prior to the war Bismarck had constantly nurtured the relationship. During 1867-1868, the Balkans were in turmoil: The population of Crete rebelled against Turkey. St. Petersburg looked to London and Paris to support a Russian-led anti-Turkish policy. Both capitals rebuffed the Russians. The czar also feared that war or some other kind of turmoil would strike in western Europe and he wanted a friend in a time of such upheaval. Thus, in the spring of 1868 Czar Alexander turned to Prussia. Bismarck was waiting with open arms.¹⁰⁷ Bismarck and Alexander agreed to support each other militarily if either were attacked by two or more Great Powers. They agreed to a policy of armed neutrality *vis-à-vis* France and Austria, respectively, to prevent them from threatening Prussian or Russian interests. As Alexander explained to the Prussian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Prince Reuss:

Let us hope that [Austria will not try to exploit the Balkan crisis to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina.]... Let us hope also that France will not attack Germany. But should, contrary to expectations, both events occur, the King can count on me to paralyze Austria, just as I would rely on his aid. In both cases the deployment of an army on the Austrian border would suffice to achieve this end.¹⁰⁸

Thus, when the Franco-Prussian War broke out in the summer of 1870, Bismarck's

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Cerf, *Alsace-Lorraine*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 422.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 423. See also, Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 306

policy produced the fruit he had nurtured. Russia confirmed that if Austria should go to war, Russia would occupy Galicia (an Austrian province) with 300,000 troops. Beust suspected that Bismarck and Alexander had come to such an arrangement. This fact reinforced the inclination of most Austrian and Hungarian leaders, including the emperor, to remain neutral. To avoid alarming Vienna, St. Petersburg offered "a guarantee of Austrian territorial integrity."¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, Prussia's swift defeat of French armies in August and the widespread talk of annexation concerned the Russian government. This was not at all how the czar expected the war to develop. To see France destroyed and Prussia dominant in Europe was not in Russia's interest any more than the reverse. Russian leaders, though they enjoyed their relationship with Prussia, were not immune to the upending of the balance of power.

In mid-August, Czar Alexander and his foreign minister, Prince Gorchakov, attempted to organize the neutral European Great Powers to stop the war before Prussia's astonishing military victories permanently unhinged the balance of power. The purpose, Mosse writes, "was an eleventh hour effort to redress the European balance imperilled by the impending collapse of France, and to save that country from the consequences of Napoleon's folly and incompetence."¹¹⁰

The French collapse, however, came too quickly. Sedan and the fall of Napoleon undercut St. Petersburg's efforts. The czar had no desire to make himself look as foolish as Napoleon had after Königgrätz.¹¹¹ Alexander and Gorchakov could see little alternative to accepting Prussia's annexations. The English ambassador in St. Petersburg relayed

¹⁰⁹ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 460.

¹¹⁰ Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 324.

¹¹¹ Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 328.

Gorchakov's views to London:

[There was little hope] of England and Russia being able to prevent the dismemberment of France, should the Prussian Government have decided not to relinquish their conquests of Alsace and Lorraine; and he fears that the Neutral Powers can only look on with regret if Prussia should commit so great an error as to annex territory which cannot fail to be a constant source of weakness and embarrassment to Germany, and a germ of future wars.¹¹²

Bismarck, moreover, encouraged the Russians to stay on the sidelines with an appropriate mixture of carrots and sticks. On the one hand, he warned the conservative Russian monarch that without Alsace-Lorraine the Prussian government would fall prey to "revolutionary and republican interests."¹¹³ On the other hand, to divert Russian attention, Bismarck encouraged the czar to renounce the Black Sea clauses left over from the Crimean War.¹¹⁴ His efforts succeeded. Russia renounced the clauses on October 31, 1870 and, a few days earlier, had rebuffed a British suggestion to organize a European conference to end the war.¹¹⁵ Russia now depended on Prussia's support with respect to Poland, the Balkans, *and* the Black Sea clauses. Russian leaders knew that "if Russia was ever to achieve her objects in the east, it could only be with the goodwill of Prussia-Germany."¹¹⁶

Britain. Prior to the war, Bismarck enjoyed a substantial reserve of goodwill in London. The British government expected that German unity under Prussian leadership was inevitable. It saw little point in resisting it. Moreover, France was regarded as the troublemaker of Europe. As Albrecht-Carrie writes: "There was in Britain far greater suspicion

¹¹² Quoted in Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 336.

¹¹³ Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 465.

¹¹⁴ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 114-115. The Black Sea clauses, forced on Russia by Britain and France after the former's defeat in the Crimean War, neutralized the sea militarily and prohibited Russia from building warships there. According to Taylor, the Russians wanted this humiliation removed symbolically; they were in no hurry to build a fleet. (*Struggle for Mastery*, p. 215.)

¹¹⁵ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 465.

¹¹⁶ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 366-367.

of Napoleon, his revisionist tendencies, and his propensity to indulge in large, complicated, and potentially troublesome schemes..."¹¹⁷

Bismarck also held a trump card. With the outbreak of war, the British government was mainly concerned with Belgium's neutrality and security. Napoleon at once guaranteed Belgium's frontiers. Bismarck then pulled from his files and released a draft treaty, written in August 1866 by the French ambassador to Prussia, Count von Benedetti. He had proposed that Prussia should acquire South Germany and France should annex Belgium. Bismarck, however, smudged the date, so to speak: "The impression was deliberately created that the document was of recent origin and that the Prussian refusal alone had prevented a Franco-Prussian alliance at the cost of Belgium and the German southern states."¹¹⁸

The treaty's contents angered the British. London demanded and received on August 9 and 11 fresh written guarantees of Belgium's security from both belligerents. Britain then stood aside. "[H]aving secured a promise by both sides to respect the neutrality of Belgium, the British government could afford to observe with some equanimity the future course of events."¹¹⁹

Prussia's victory at Sedan did little to change the British attitude. Inasmuch as it was not a land power, Britain could not intervene in the war militarily unless it had a close continental ally. But London was just entering its phase of diplomatic isolation. Furthermore, many British leaders favored Germany.¹²⁰ They regarded Napoleon as the disturber

¹¹⁷ Albrecht-Carrie, *Diplomatic History*, p. 136.

¹¹⁸ Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 461. The best account of this incident is Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 312-317. See also Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 347; Albrecht-Carrie, *Diplomatic History*, p. 138.

¹¹⁹ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 313-317; See also, Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 461

¹²⁰ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 329-331.

of the peace and most Englishmen believed France was responsible for the war.¹²¹ Queen Victoria rejoiced at the victory "of civilization, of liberty, of order and of unity...over despotism, corruption, immorality, and aggression."¹²² A strong Germany would provide a balance to the ambitions of France, for two centuries regarded by most Britons as the main threat to stability in Europe. A united Germany would also balance Russia's influence in the east. The Hohenzollern monarchy, the British thought, would prove to be a solid, reliable partner.¹²³ No member of the British Cabinet, with the exception of Lord Cowley, predicted that a Prussian-led Germany would be a future threat to England, least of all at sea.¹²⁴

Britain did express some concern over Prussia's proposed annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Prime Minister Gladstone suggested that perhaps the wishes of the inhabitants should be taken into consideration. But Lord Granville, Gladstone's chief rival in the Cabinet, rejected this idea and advised a do-nothing, say-nothing policy. The Cabinet supported Granville and even Gladstone stated that his suggestion was "for rumination only."¹²⁵ Britain, the prime minister told the queen, intended strict non-intervention unless asked by both France and Prussia: "The Cabinet is duly determined to shun all sole action on the part of this country with reference to the war now raging, and not to encourage any

¹²¹ Raymond, *British Policy and Opinion*, pp. 17-36, 67-86. By the end of the war, however, public opinion in Britain had shifted in France's favor out of sympathy in light of Prussia's sustained efforts at prosecuting the war. See Raymond, *British Policy and Opinion*, pp. 192-193; Frederick William, *War Diary*, pp. 240-241.

¹²² Quoted in Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 465.

¹²³ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 359-360; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 212-215.

¹²⁴ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 366-367.

¹²⁵ Quoted in Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 338-339. See also, Raymond, *British Policy and Opinion*, pp. 191-193. Lord Granville, the British Foreign Minister, wrote a letter to Friedrich's wife, stating that there was no pro-French tilt to Britain's policy. Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 63.

act of partisanship, or any attempt at mediation under present circumstances except with the assent of both parties."¹²⁶

Finally, Bismarck used the Black Sea clauses with just as much effect in London as in St. Petersburg. Britain was alarmed at the way Russia took advantage of a European war to renounce the clauses. It wanted an immediate European congress to discuss the issue. Bismarck wanted to avoid this because he was sure that the war would find its way onto the agenda. So he came to an understanding with London. Bismarck agreed to support and participate in a European conference on the Black Sea clauses *after* the war--if Britain continued its policy of neutrality. London accepted the proposal. The conference took place in March 1871. Bismarck paid off the British by forcing the Russians to come to the conference. He kept his word to Russia by supporting in the conference the renunciation and removal of the Black Sea clauses. As Mosse writes:

British Ministers accepted Germany's annexations in exchange for Bismarck's assistance in the settlement of the Black Sea question. In 1870-71 Bismarck was able to pay both England and Russia for their acquiescence in German supremacy by means of a single diplomatic transaction in which, moreover, their interests were opposed. The settlement of the Black Sea question marks the beginning of Bismarck's ascendancy in Europe.¹²⁷

Both Britain and Russia saw in the new Germany what they wanted to see and what Bismarck wanted them to see: a potential ally or bulwark against the other. Britain thought Germany would restrain Russia in the east. Russia thought Germany would support it against Austria and England. Thus, "Neither conservative Russian nor liberal British diplomat saw cause to regret the eclipse of Napoleonic France and the triumph of Bismarckian Germa-

¹²⁶ Quoted in Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 340.

¹²⁷ Mosse, *European Powers*, pp. 333-334.

ny."¹²⁸ In short, Bismarck was able to expand his war aims and annex Alsace and Lorraine because the conditions of the international system would let him.

Nevertheless, the opportunity was a limited one. As the war dragged on much longer than he anticipated, Bismarck felt systemic constraints tightening. He grew increasingly concerned that the Great Powers would overcome their proclivities to individual neutrality and unite to end the war by imposed mediation. If that happened, Bismarck was certain that he would not come away with the objectives he wanted. In particular, he might lose part or all of Alsace-Lorraine. He hoped, therefore, to end the war as quickly as possible. This brought him into conflict with other members of the Prussian leadership, above all with Helmuth von Moltke.

4.7 MOLTKE'S BID FOR TOTAL VICTORY

Bismarck and Moltke shared many values, including their love of Prussia and obedience to King Wilhelm and the Prussian monarchy. Nevertheless, in their attitudes toward war and politics, they were completely different. Bismarck saw war as an instrument to achieve specific political goals, to be used judiciously, cautiously, even sparingly. Bismarck rarely, if ever, considered preventive war to be a viable policy option.¹²⁹

Moltke's attitude toward war, however, was cogently described by Ritter as "War as

¹²⁸ Mosse, *European Powers*, p. 358. In April 1868, Bismarck summarized his policy to a south German politician and, with amazing foresight, predicted its success: "I am not afraid of France. We are far superior to the French. If God is not unfavourable to us and favourable to the French we shall repel the French attack and march to Paris after our victory. Napoleon knows we are so strong. Austria will under all circumstances remain neutral. Even apart from her financial position she cannot wage war. All her interests are against it. In case of need we shall with the help of Russia hold Austria completely in check. We do not need to give the Russians anything even if we make an alliance with them in a war against France. Their weak side is Poland. A single French battalion would bring Poland into a state of revolt. With England we are on excellent terms. The English had formerly relied on Austria. Since the war of 1866 they have like practical people put their stake on another card. They have no objection to a national reorganization of Germany." Quoted in Darmstaedter, *Creation of Second Reich*, p. 350.

¹²⁹ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 191.

Destiny." While Moltke believed war was unfortunate, he also thought that it was an inevitable, recurring condition of the international system and, in many ways a healthy one.

- Ten years after the Franco-Prussian War, Moltke wrote: "Peace everlasting is a dream--a dream that is not even appealing--while war is a link in God's world order. Man's finest virtues unfold in war--courage and renunciation, obedience to duty, and readiness to give up one's life. But for war, the world would be caught up in a morass of materialism." Above all, war is "the ultimate, wholly justified means for maintaining the existence, independence, and honor of a state." Moltke also seemed to have little use for limited war which required only limited means. Weakening an enemy's armed forces is important, but a properly conducted war should not end there. "No, all the resources of the hostile government must be put under pressure--its finances, railways, food supply, even its prestige."¹³⁰

Moltke was also an ethnic German nationalist in a way that Bismarck was not. Consequently, France was the archenemy. It was the first Napoleon, after all, who to a large extent created German nationalism. Moltke "viewed France as Germany's most dangerous neighbor, ever restive, the French people as insatiable in their greed for German territory, capricious in their moods and passions; and he regarded Napoleon III as a dangerous adventurer, inscrutable in his ultimate aims, driven to grab at outward success to maintain his prestige."¹³¹

In this combination--war as destiny and France as the primary enemy--Moltke was convinced that a war with France was inevitable, especially if German unity was to be achieved. In 1859, when France was at war with Austria, he advocated attacking the French

¹³⁰ Quoted in Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 206, 214, 215, 216. Pflanze states that "Moltke believed it possible to draw a distinct boundary between politics and strategy." *Development of Germany*, p. 459.

¹³¹ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 216.

across the Rhine. In the 1866 war, as we learned in the last chapter, he was quite prepared to deal with French immediately, only to be restrained by Bismarck. In the 1867 Luxembourg crisis, he again advocated preventive war against France; again Bismarck refuted the argument with the excuse that the timing was politically inopportune. Moltke lamented, "he will cost us many lives in his time."¹³² In 1870, Moltke approved of war then, because in a few years time the French army reforms would begin to take hold. Even after the war Moltke continued to advocate preventive war. In 1875, appalled at the quickness of the French recovery and further impressed by the army reforms, Moltke argued that it would be better for Germany to attack at once, than wait.¹³³ In short, Moltke did not shy from war. "By July 1870 Moltke knew that he had under his hand one of the greatest engines of war the world had ever known; and he was impatient to use it."¹³⁴

Moltke divided politics and war into two separate spheres of activity. Politicians and diplomats should make the decisions before a war starts and after it ends. But in between, war and strategy must be left exclusively to the generals: "The politician should fall silent the moment that mobilization begins."¹³⁵ Peace should only be concluded once the military determines the success or failure of the war on the battlefield. Moltke defined "success" as

¹³² Shortly after the end of the Austro-Prussian War Moltke expressed the following in a conversation with his father-in-law: "After a war such as we have just had no one can really feel a desire to have another and no one can be farther from cherishing such a desire than I am. And yet I cannot but wish that the occasion given for a war with France were taken advantage of; unhappily, I regard this war as absolutely unavoidable within the next five years, and within this period the now indisputable superiority of our organization and weapons will be equalled by France who is making great efforts, more and more to our disadvantage. The sooner, therefore, we come to blows, the better. The present occasion is good. It has a national character, and ought, therefore, to be taken advantage of." Field Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke, *Essays, Speeches and Memoirs*, trans. Charles Flint McClumpha, C. Barter, and Mary Herms, vol. 2 (London: James R. Osgood, Melluaine, 1893), pp. 204-205.

¹³³ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 227. In the late 1880s, he would advocate preventive war against Russia as well.

¹³⁴ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 44.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Brodie, *War and Politics*, p. 11.

the greatest goal achievable by military means. In other words, he reversed Clausewitz: Political ends were subordinate to military means. As Moltke wrote in an essay on strategy shortly after the Franco-Prussian War: "Strategy can only direct its efforts towards the highest goal which the means available make attainable. In this way, it aids politics best, working only for its objectives, but in its operations independent of it."¹³⁶

From this analysis, it is difficult to tell whether Moltke had any initial war aims at all. He clearly shared Bismarck's aim to unify Germany. In war planning prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Moltke had remarked that a Prussian victory would bring down Napoleon's regime. He added that since "...we desire nothing from France, perhaps a rapid peace could signed with the new government."¹³⁷ Yet, after the outbreak of war Moltke soon advocated the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to extend and secure Germany's frontier with France. Seizing the provinces would strengthen the overall balance of power in Prussia's favor. Yet, Moltke's war aims did not stop there. He ultimately adopted military objectives and strategies which, if pursued to their logical conclusion, represented a massive expansion in war aims beyond Alsace and Lorraine. In his eyes, the threat from France was monolithic. Prussia would never be secure until French power was destroyed.¹³⁸

After Sedan, Prussian armies surrounded Paris. For Bismarck the march on the French capital was a means to an end. He intended to force the Government of National Defense to surrender Alsace-Lorraine. For Moltke, however, the invasion of France was an end in itself. If the armies were capable of marching on the French capital, then they should.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Craig, *Prussian Army*, p. 216.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 44.

¹³⁸ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 41.

Moreover, Moltke and Bismarck did not agree on strategy once Prussian armies were at the gates of Paris. Bismarck and Roon wanted an immediate bombardment to force the French government to yield. The longer the war dragged on, Bismarck believed, the greater the possibility the neutral powers would escape the web he had weaved and impose mediation on the belligerents.¹³⁹ In contrast, Moltke, the crown prince, and most of the generals wanted to starve the city into submission. Taking Paris by force would cost Prussia too many casualties. As in 1866, Moltke considered Bismarck's fears of foreign intervention exaggerated.¹⁴⁰ This dispute over tactics dragged on until December 27 when the bombardment was begun. Paris finally capitulated on January 29, 1871.¹⁴¹

For Moltke the end of resistance in Paris meant that his armies were free to crush all remaining French resistance and to destroy any new armies which might be raised. As Gerhard Ritter put it, Moltke "was solely concerned with military advantage, with gaining control of Paris as a great transport center and staging area for continuing the war, which he wanted to carry deep into South France, to destroy even the enemy's last resources, render him utterly defenseless, and impose peace on his own terms."¹⁴² Crown Prince Friedrich, who was present when Moltke expressed these views, concluded that the chief of the General Staff was determined on a "war of extermination."¹⁴³ At a dinner on January 13, 1871 Moltke proposed to drive south and continue the war: "We must fight this nation of liars for

¹³⁹ Bismarck, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 109-110. See also, Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 353-354; Busch, *Franco-German War*, p. 287.

¹⁴⁰ Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 209, 208. See also, Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 169.

¹⁴¹ Pflanze argues that Moltke was right. The bombardment actually stiffened Parisian resistance; starvation caused the city's capitulation. (*Development of Germany*, p. 467.)

¹⁴² Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 223.

¹⁴³ Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 258. See also, Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 211-212.

all its worth and ultimately crush them. Then we can dictate the peace however we like."¹⁴⁴ When the crown prince inquired about the political implications, Moltke replied: "I am concerned only with military matters."¹⁴⁵ Most military officers shared Moltke's aims and resented Bismarck's "interference." General Blumenthal, chief of staff to the crown prince and the second-ranking general in the army, wrote in his diary on February 24: "The beaten-down enemy must so bleed that he will not be able to stand up for a hundred years: he must be bound in chains which will prevent him from thinking of revenge."¹⁴⁶ How Moltke would have operationalized his war aims is not clear. At the time of his dinner with the crown prince, he was only beginning to formulate his plans. After the fall of Paris he planned to continue the war with the armies freed up from the siege of Paris, drive south, and capture or destroy all French military resources.¹⁴⁷ Thus, while Bismarck tried to complete his war aims, Moltke resisted and pursued his own.

After the fall of Paris, Bismarck took steps to begin armistice negotiations. He particularly sought to exclude Moltke and the generals from the process. In the fall of 1870, Bismarck had complained repeatedly that the army was not informing him about military operations. Wilhelm ordered Moltke to keep Bismarck briefed. But after Moltke blurted out his intentions in January, Bismarck moved to short-circuit the general from the peace process entirely. Bismarck used a minor exchange of letters between Moltke and the French

¹⁴⁴ *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden und die deutsche Politik von 1854 bis 1871*, prepared by Hermann Oncken, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: *Deutsche Berlags Anstalt*, 1927), p. 390. I wish to thank Susan C. Sanders for helping me with this and all translations from this source. This is an important and the original source for this episode. See also, Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 436.

¹⁴⁵ *Grossherzog, Friedrich*, p. 301. See also, Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 436.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 366. I am not including in that "pecking order" the prince-generals that commanded the Prussian armies in battle, only the professional officers.

¹⁴⁷ *Grossherzog Friedrich*, p. 300.

Governor of Paris to claim that the chief of the General Staff, contrary to the King's explicit instructions, had failed to keep the minister-president informed of all political and military developments. Bismarck then demanded that Wilhelm forbid Moltke to carry on any independent negotiations with the enemy. While Wilhelm was sympathetic with his general, Bismarck prevailed. The king--now kaiser--issued strong, unequivocal orders giving Bismarck exclusive control of the peace negotiations and access to all necessary information to carry out those talks. Moltke consented bitterly.¹⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter, the French capitulated and agreed to Bismarck's terms. Moltke, along with most of the country, found those too lenient.¹⁴⁹

4.8 THE FAILURE TO CONTRACT WAR AIMS: THE QUESTION OF METZ

Bismarck opposed Moltke's strategy and war aims largely because if the war did not end soon, Europe might intervene and deprive Prussia of its gains. However, if the threat of foreign intervention were growing, as Bismarck believed, why did he not contract his war aims--at least a little--to make them more acceptable to the French government and thereby reach a quicker peace? In November and December, Bismarck could have scaled down his war aims, foregone Metz and Lorraine and probably have concluded a peace.¹⁵⁰ Something was better than the risk of nothing. For example, during the February negotiations, Thiers told Crown Prince Friedrich: "The cessation of Alsace would be considered a severe blow throughout France, but it would be accepted with resignation, if only Metz and Lorraine were

¹⁴⁸ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 437-438; Craig, *Prussian Army*, pp. 212-214; Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, pp. 467-468; Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 224.

¹⁴⁹ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 442-443.

¹⁵⁰ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 221.

to remain French."¹⁵¹ Yet, this did not happen.

Furthermore, in the last weeks of the war Bismarck questioned whether Prussia should in fact keep Metz. The population in and around Metz was almost entirely French and, he believed, digesting that particular morsel would be more trouble than it was worth.¹⁵² "I do not want so many Frenchmen in our house," Bismarck declared.¹⁵³ He told his wife that Metz was a "very indigestible element."¹⁵⁴ Bismarck was also concerned about the long-term implications for relations with France. "We cannot forever remain hostile to the French....The question is, how can we conclude a peace that has any prospect of lasting? The incorporation of Lorraine would constitute an enormous complication."¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Bismarck's official statements never dropped the demand for Metz. "He had severed Lorraine from the administration of occupied France as early as August, 1870, placing it under the 'Government General' at Strasbourg."¹⁵⁶ Bismarck's doubts about retaining Metz were always voiced in private conversation. For example, at a dinner on February 22, he remarked: "If they (the French) were to give us another milliard we might perhaps leave them Metz, and build another fortress a few miles further back..."¹⁵⁷ The closest he ever came to publicly backing away from this war aim was in the peace program he presented to King Wilhelm on January 14, 1871. The language was comparative-

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 320n.

¹⁵² Eyck, *Bismarck and German Empire*, p. 185; Dawson, *German Empire*, p. 366, Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, p. 299

¹⁵³ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 418.

¹⁵⁴ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 321n.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 257.

¹⁵⁶ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 255.

¹⁵⁷ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 2, pp. 417-418.

ly vague, referring to the "cessation of the present area of the Strasbourg Government General, with a number of modifications." There was no special reference to Lorraine or Metz.¹⁵⁸

What are the competing explanations which might account for Bismarck's refusal to yield on Metz when his own best judgment told him otherwise? First, security may ultimately have been the reason. Bismarck clearly vacillated over Metz, wondering whether a stronger border (than the one Alsace was already going to provide) was worth the added French hostility. Perhaps he finally concluded that the security was worth it. One problem with this argument is that after the war, Bismarck's doubts about Metz did not go away. For example, he told de Gabriac, the French *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, that:

I am under no illusion but that it was absurd of us to take Metz, which is French, away from you. I did not wish to have to defend it for Germany. The general staff asked me if I could guarantee that France would not seek revenge. I replied that, on the contrary, I was quite convinced they would, and that this war was but the first of many that would erupt between Germany and France, that it would be followed by many more. In such an eventuality, they told me, Metz would be a staging area for 100,000 Frenchmen, and we shall have to hold it; but that is as true of Alsace and Lorraine. If we are to have enduring peace, it is a mistake for us to have to have taken them from you, for those provinces will only be an embarrassment to us.¹⁵⁹

The problem with the security argument--as it relates to Metz--is that if Bismarck had truly been concerned about a resurgent France, why did he not impose arms limitations on France? There are two answers to this question, both systemic. Perhaps he did not want France so hobbled that it could not play its role in the European balance of power. This would be consistent with his geopolitical mind set. In addition, he probably thought that the other European states would not have permitted so harsh a peace. In late January, for instance, he rejected, politely but firmly, a Russian suggestion to forego Metz and annex Luxembourg

¹⁵⁸ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 255.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 321n.

instead.¹⁶⁰ Bismarck, therefore, may simply have decided to take all that he could get and knew that Metz was the limit.

Second, Bismarck may have yielded to the demands of King Wilhelm. He strongly favored retaining Metz because taking the fortress had cost so much in Prussian blood.¹⁶¹ According to Moltke's history of the war, the siege of Metz, which lasted 72 days, cost 240 officers and 5500 men in killed and wounded.¹⁶² If one includes operations around Metz prior to its investment, i.e. Moltke's engagements with and pursuit of Marshall Bazaine's army, German losses increase by approximately 20,000.¹⁶³ Throughout the war, Wilhelm was constantly distressed at the number of casualties Prussia was suffering; they were much greater than he had expected. Crown Prince Friedrich reports that Wilhelm was "quite cut up by the frightful losses" from the battles around Metz. The king "dwelt again and again upon the sacrifices already made."¹⁶⁴ During Bismarck's peace negotiations with Thiers, Wilhelm "had used expressions as though, to win the possession of that fortress of all others, he was disposed to go on with the War..."¹⁶⁵ According to Busch, Wilhelm "absolutely rejected" the Russian notion that Metz could be traded for Luxembourg.¹⁶⁶ However,

¹⁶⁰ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 255.

¹⁶¹ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 447-448.

¹⁶² Moltke, *Franco-German War*, p. 165. This was the only figure mentioned in the primary and secondary sources that I examined.

¹⁶³ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 181; Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 834-835.

¹⁶⁴ Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 64. Count Hatzfeldt writes in late August, after a number of Prussian victories: "The King is very well, and is much pleased with the turn of affairs, but he is terribly distressed at all these losses." Hatzfeldt, Paul, Graf von, *The Hatzfeldt Letters: Letters of Count Paul Hatzfeldt to His Wife, written from the Headquarters of the King of Prussia, 1870-1871*, trans. J. L. Bashford (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1905), p. 46.

¹⁶⁵ Fredrick William, *War Diary*, p.316.

¹⁶⁶ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p.387.

Bismarck's ability to persuade Wilhelm to take a decision which the king adamantly opposed was legendary. He probably could have overcome these objections, all other things being equal.¹⁶⁷

Third, throughout the war, Bismarck had claimed that keeping Metz was vital to the security of Germany. He had had his press secretary go to considerable effort to build public support for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, including Metz. Now in the late stages of the war when Bismarck found himself doubting the wisdom of retaining Metz, the public was in no mood to change its mind. In his reply to the Russian czar's suggestion that Luxembourg be substituted for Metz, Bismarck said (in part): "The German people will not tolerate any alteration of the programme."¹⁶⁸ This was certainly true enough. Perhaps he at last had to accept some consequences of his own mobilization rhetoric. As Michael Howard put it: "The claim to Metz had been too openly and too frequently made in the German press for it to be abandoned now without a furore which Bismarck was unwilling to brave."¹⁶⁹ Yet, if he yielded to public opinion in this instance, it was probably the first time. Bismarck usually was quite unencumbered by what the people thought.

Fourth, Moltke and his officers resolutely opposed giving Metz back to the French. The military's prestige--Moltke's in particular--had grown considerably since the war against Austria in 1866. Prussian military success in the current conflict did nothing to slow down the ascent. After the battle of Sedan, Friedrich wrote in his diary: "...congratulations were

¹⁶⁷ See Pflanze, *Development of Germany*, p. 495.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 387. Crown Prince Friedrich wrote in his diary: "It is at this time of day a simple impossibility for us to cancel our possession of Alsace and Lorraine....Even Bismarck, whose genius is pre-eminently displayed in discovering ways out of inconvenient obligations, would find himself in the greatest embarrassment if he were forced to search for excuses to cover the surrender of the two provinces. Every man in Germany, be it rightly or wrongly, desires their retention, and even from the military point of view this is deemed a necessity." Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 239.

¹⁶⁹ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 448.

due to Generals von Moltke and von Blumenthal, whose names have from to-day attained fresh lustre and a new renown, and to whom our Army owes an enduring debt of gratitude."¹⁷⁰ Wilhelm and the public shared this view. While Bismarck's prestige also grew during the war, he was forced to take a few lumps as well. Public opinion, for example, blamed him for the delayed bombardment of Paris, accusing him of interference and of not wanting to take serious action.¹⁷¹

The military demanded Metz on security and emotional grounds. Vauban, the man who had built Metz, once told Louis XIV: "Each of the fortresses of your kingdom defends their province; Metz defends the State."¹⁷² Moltke concurred. He thought the fortress was worth 120,000 men to Prussia in any future conflict with France.¹⁷³ Moltke had no intention of surrendering such a prestigious prize. "As chief of the General Staff he felt obliged to keep watch lest military advantage be sacrificed to the diplomats, lest the army be robbed of even a tittle of its triumphs." General Blumenthal was appalled at the notion that Metz might be returned:

The return of Metz seems to me tantamount to a defeat and is likely to raise a terrible storm in Germany. I can scarcely believe that all that blood is to have been shed before Metz in vain! The sound military line we secured at such sacrifice would be relinquished, solely for the sake of getting a peace treaty. The army is not that war weary. On the contrary, it is champing at the bit.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 94.

¹⁷¹ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 214.

¹⁷² Quoted in General Charles Marie de Lardenelle, *Metz défend l'État: La question mosellane, La securite, La restauration de Metz* (Paris: Edition Berger-Levrault, 1930), p. 59.

¹⁷³ Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, p. 448; *Letters of the Empress Frederick*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁷⁴ Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, pp. 219, 226. Friedrich shared some of these sentiments but strongly disagreed with others. For example, he wrote in his diary: "The annexation of Alsace and perhaps of a part of Lorraine, is surely well earned by the sacrifices Germany has made." However, he was not champing at the bit and was quite war weary. If it were necessary to achieve peace, Friedrich was prepared to sacrifice Metz, even though he recognized its military value. *War Diary*, pp. 117, 308, 311-314

The military's influence appeared to be decisive. Bismarck yielded to Moltke's opinion: "[T]he soldiers will not hear of giving up Metz, and perhaps they are right."¹⁷⁵ Crown Prince Friedrich wrote in his diary at the end of the peace negotiations that Bismarck "...frankly admitted to me it was his great fear of what our military men would say that had mainly determined him to his obstinate insistence on Metz."¹⁷⁶

Finally, it should be noted that Bismarck's doubts about Metz do suggest that his real motivation in annexing Alsace and Lorraine was security. After all, if he truly wanted a permanent French enemy to solidify German cohesion, then keeping Metz was obviously the way to do it. He never would have questioned Prussia's retention of the "the key to the French house."

4.9 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the Predictions

How did the predictions of the hypotheses fare in this case? In this section, I restate each prediction, core and subsidiary, made by each hypothesis. Following the prediction, I note in bold my coding as to whether the prediction came true or not. An explanation of my coding, where necessary, follows in parentheses.

The Blood Price

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Bismarck and other Prussian leaders should express concern at increasing casualty rates

¹⁷⁵ Busch, *Secret Pages*, vol. 1, p. 418.

¹⁷⁶ Frederick William, *War Diary*, p. 316. Ritter, who makes considerable use of Friedrich's diary, argues that Bismarck did *not* bow to military opinion, but rather was persuaded to keep Metz by a belief that the French would seek revenge. In making this argument, Ritter overlooks this important quotation and even some of his own material.

as the war continues. **Partially True.** (We have clear evidence that this bothered Wilhelm and Crown Prince Friedrich, but less so with Bismarck.)

- * Bismarck and other Prussian leaders should justify the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine in terms and language that refer to the blood price. **Partially True.** (Again, this was true for Wilhelm and Crown Prince Friedrich, but not true for Bismarck.)
- * The decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine should come relatively late in the war. **Not True.** (The decision came before Sedan, no later than mid-August, if not earlier. But Prussia had suffered larger than expected casualties in the early battles.)
- * The military should be especially adamant about keeping Alsace-Lorraine because of the blood price. **True.** (Blumenthal's diary seems to be especially clear evidence of this.)

Social Mobilization

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Prussian leaders should use nationalist propaganda in order to win public support for the war and the war aims of annexation. **True.**
- * Prussian public opinion should favor wider war aims before Prussian military victories. **Not True.** (The accounts of historians, Pflanze in particular, indicate the Prussian public was not responding to Bismarck's propaganda until Prussia's first victories in August.)
- * Bismarck and other Prussian leaders, in internal discussions, should express the need to annex Alsace and Lorraine in order to give the Prussian public a universal reason to support the war. **Not True.** (I found no such evidence.)

The Cleon Problem

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Moltke's domestic political influence should increase during the war. **Unclear.** (Moltke's influence was already high; it is not clear it went higher.)
- * Moltke favored wider war aims than Bismarck. **True.** (Bismarck wanted a quick peace; Moltke a war of extermination.)
- * As Moltke's prestige rises, Prussia's war aims rise. **Not True.** (There was no war of extermination.)
- * Bismarck, in internal policy discussions, should be reluctant to challenge Moltke's authority as his prestige rises. **Partially True.** (Bismarck readily contradicted Moltke

on the bombardment of Paris and continuing the war, but seemed to yield to his opinion on Metz.)

Threats to Security

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **True.**
 - France grew stronger during the war. **Not True.** (Although the *levée en masse* produced a greater supply of manpower and armies than the Prussians anticipated, they were not very good.)
 - France and Prussia bordered each other. **True.**
 - Prussian political and military elites perceived the offense as the stronger form of war. **True.** (I take their experience in the Austro-Prussian War and Moltke's strategic planning as evidence of this.¹⁷⁷)
 - Prussia perceived French intentions as increasingly aggressive. **True.**
 - France initiated the war. **True.** (The French declared war first, even if Bismarck certainly provoked them.)
 - + Prussian leaders perceived French wartime conduct as uncivilized and malevolent. **True.** (The guerilla warfare.)
 - + Prussian leaders perceived French propaganda and rhetoric as hostile. **True.** (The shouts of Paris crowds of "To Berlin!")
 - + France adopted an offensive strategy. **Unclear.** (This is what the French planned and what the Prussians expected, but it never materialized.)
 - + France and Prussia were governed by different regime structures. **True.** (This was exacerbated with the rise of the republican regime.)

- * A shift in the Prussian estimate of the French threat should be followed by a corresponding shift in Prussia's war aims. **True.** (The war did seem to exacerbate Prussian perception of the French threat.)

- * Bismarck, in internal discussions or policy documents, should justify the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine using language which describes France as a greater threat. **Unclear.** (Bismarck described France as future and permanent threat, but not really a greater one.)

Opportunistic Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand its war aims. **True.**
 - Prussia grew stronger as the war continued. **True.**
 - Prussia won a decisive military victory. **True.**
 - Prussian leaders thought annexation would be inexpensive. **True.** (Prussia already occupied the provinces; Bismarck did not expect the difficulty of finding a French government willing to surrender Alsace and Lorraine.)

¹⁷⁷ See Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 40-47.

- * Prussian leaders should expand their war aims after their estimate of opportunity rises. **True.**
- * Prussian public opinion should support wider war aims *after* military victory. **True.**
- * Prussian leaders, in internal policy discussions, should use language which justifies the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine in terms of opportunity. **Unclear.**

Preventive Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will expand the war to prevent France from growing stronger. **Not True.** (Bismarck went to great efforts to keep the war limited. There were no states which were aiding France.)

Quid Pro Quo Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Prussia will make promises to other states in order to persuade them to join the war. **Not True.** (Bismarck above all want to keep the war bilateral.)

Systemic Constraints

- * Core Prediction: Prussia *could* engage in a limited expansion of war aims. **True.**
- * No threats of outside intervention in the war should materialize in response to Prussia's decision to keep Alsace and Lorraine. **True.**
- * As the fear of foreign intervention increased, Prussia's war aims decreased. **Not True.**
- * Bismarck, in the documentary record, should have stated that he was not concerned about foreign military intervention if Prussia annexed Alsace-Lorraine. **Unclear.** (This is likely true in light of his diplomacy, but the available evidence does not spell it out explicitly.)

Table 4.2. Summary of Predictions and Results

Hypothesis	Core Predict.	Actual Result	# Subsid. Predicts.	# True	# Part True	# Not True	# Not clear
Blood Price	Expand	Expansion	4	1	2	1	0
Social Mobilization	Expand	Expansion	3	1	0	2	0
Cleon Problem	Expand	Expansion	4	1	1	1	1
Threats to Security	Expand	Expansion	11	8	0	1	2
Opportunistic Expansion	Expand	Expansion	6	5	0	0	1
Preventive Expansion	Expand War	Bilateral War	0	0	0	0	0
Quid Pro Quo Expansion	Make Promises	None Made	0	0	0	0	0
Systemic Constraints	Could Expand	Expansion	3	1	0	1	1

Explanation:

The first column states the hypothesis. The second column states the core prediction. The third column states the actual result. The fourth column provides the total number of subsidiary predictions. The fifth through eighth columns tell us how many of these were true, partially true, not true, and unclear.

Conclusions

At the level of core prediction we have an overdetermination problem. All of the hypotheses predict Prussia will expand its war aims and Prussia did indeed expand its war aims. With respect to subsidiary predictions, while there are differences in results among the hypotheses, all hypotheses demonstrated some measure of explanatory power. Unfortunately, all of the predictions tested above are probabilistic. Therefore we cannot narrow the possible range of explanations by confirming or eliminating certain hypotheses through key tests.

The blood price hypothesis comes away with only some explanatory power in this case. It explains poorly Prussia's decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine. This is understandable since that decision came so early in the war. It was somewhat more useful in explaining why Prussia did not surrender Metz. King Wilhelm, as the narrative indicated, insisted that Prussia's gains compensated for its losses. In light of the fact that Prussia's losses were greater than he expected--or, at least, seemed to inordinately distress him--he opposed Bismarck's efforts to return Metz. For similar reasons, many in the military strongly opposed surrendering the fortress.

The social mobilization hypothesis fared poorly. It failed an important test--that public opinion would favor wider war aims before Prussia won military victories. It was not until after several important battles were won that the opinion that Germany should keep Alsace and Lorraine became widespread. Bismarck did stir up public opinion using nationalist propaganda to support a decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine. He may also have been reluctant to contradict his own propaganda when it came to the question of returning Metz. But the evidence is not conclusive. Furthermore, the king's chief minister was more than willing to ignore public opinion when it desired a much harsher peace than the one he had negotiated with Thiers.

The quid pro quo and prevention expansion hypotheses fared the worst among all the hypotheses. Prussia made no promises to win any allies. Bismarck was quite anxious to keep the war with France a bilateral one. In addition, the war was not expanded to attack neutrals which were aiding France (none were) nor was the war carried on into the deep south as Moltke wanted. However, because these hypotheses do not purport to be the cause of expanding war aims in every case, this is not all that damaging.

The hypothesis which provided the most decisive result was threats to security. Eight

of its eleven subsidiary predictions came true. The security motivation in annexing Alsace-Lorraine was a theme that Bismarck and all other members of the Prussian leadership constantly stressed throughout the war. Specifically, the geography and, to a lesser degree, the offensive advantage components of this hypothesis seemed the most relevant. In a sense, Prussia geographically "moved closer" to France in the wake of German unification. Alsace-Lorraine would never have done much for Prussian security, but it did protect better the newly incorporated South German states. Closely related to this point, if France, as Moltke expected, reformed its army in the coming years, its ability to mobilize quickly would be enhanced. Keeping Alsace-Lorraine provided a larger buffer between German territory and a French invasion force. In any future conflict, it would give Germany more breathing space to match a French mobilization with one of its own.¹⁷⁸

Other hypotheses can clearly be seen as "working." The Cleon problem, for example, accurately predicts that Moltke's war aims would be greater than Bismarck's and predicts his considerable efforts to implement them. But the limitations of the hypothesis in this case mirrored those revealed by the Austro-Prussian War. It can predict group preferences, but not state preferences. The Cleon problem rebounds strongly, however, when we try explain why war aims were so difficult to contract and, in particular, why Bismarck did not yield on Metz. This hypothesis emerges from the evidence with the most powerful and persuasive explanation for his obstinacy in keeping Metz. The quotation from the crown prince's diary and Bismarck's own admission come close to a "smoking gun."

The systemic constraints hypothesis emerges with the most persuasive explanation as to why Prussia did not adopt Moltke's war aims after the fall of Paris. Bismarck feared the

¹⁷⁸ On a negative note, the wartime conduct did not seem to relevant to Bismarck's war aims policy. He seemed to be appalled at what the French were doing behind Prussian lines, but he did not expand his war aims in response. The guerilla activity had come *after* Alsace-Lorraine.

neutral European powers would intervene if Prussia pursued Moltke's war of extermination. It would seem, therefore, that in light of this case and the Austro-Prussian War, the *absence* of systemic constraints or at least perceived systemic constraints is a necessary condition for for statesmen to expand their war aims. Nevertheless, the hypothesis demonstrated some surprising weakness with respect to the contraction of war aims. As Bismarck's fear of external intervention grew during the fall, this hypothesis predicted that Prussia would trim its war aims and reach a compromise peace. This did not happen. Even Bismarck's concern about unnecessarily embittering France did not cause him to surrender Metz. Thus, the systemic constraints hypothesis appears to be able to explain why a state does not expand its war aims too much, but is unable to account for a Prussia's failure to contract them when for systemic reasons it is advisable to do so.

Finally, the opportunity hypothesis also fared well in this analysis. Five out of its six subsidiary predictions came true. Prussian public opinion largely supported annexation only after Prussia defeated French armies in France. The problem, however, is the lack of decisive documentary evidence. Bismarck does not explicitly say that Prussia is going to annex Alsace-Lorraine because it has a battlefield opportunity to do, though it is a reasonable surmise that that is part of the equation. But in reality the opportunity was not as great as he originally may have thought. Bismarck did not anticipate the difficulty in finding a French government which would yield to his demands. He did not anticipate France would wage total war over two small provinces. After all, it was not a *Bismarckian* thing to do.

CHAPTER FIVE: U.S. WAR AIMS IN THE KOREAN WAR

"It is extraordinary how rarely it seems to occur to Americans that every victory is a responsibility, and that there are limits on the responsibilities we should invite on ourselves."

-- George F. Kennan

5.1 INTRODUCTION

United States objectives in the Korean War represent a case where war aims both expand and contract.¹ This chapter focuses on three key points during that war: 1. The decision by the United States to cross the 38th parallel after the victory at Inchon and expand its war aims to include the unification of Korea under a non-Communist government. 2. The failure of the Truman administration to contract war aims after the first signs of Chinese intervention were evident. 3. The decision by the U.S. after the Chinese intervention in November 1950 *not* to expand war aims against China and, simultaneously, to contract war aims back to the initial goal of restoring South Korean independence to the 38th parallel.

The events of the Korean War are well-known to historians and political scientists. North Korea attacked the south in June 1950. The United States intervened in the conflict shortly thereafter with the aim of restoring the 38th parallel. The U.S. achieved this goal by landing an amphibious army at Inchon late in the summer, completely routing North Korea

¹ In this chapter, I shall treat U.S. war aims and U.N. war aims as the same thing, for indeed they were. The U.S. was acting at all times as the U.N.'s agent. The U.N., more than in any later period, was thoroughly dominated by the United States. Where U.N. language is vague with respect to war aims, it is only so to get the necessary General Assembly majority to cover decisions that were already taken in Washington. As Neustadt explains the decision to cross the 38th parallel: "The new policy objective was no less a war aim of the Americans for being an expression of the General Assembly. The United States in the war as U.N. agent....the decision was a Washington decision; in that he assented, it was Truman's." Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter* (New York: Wiley, 1980), p. 92.

forces. At that time, the Truman administration expanded its war aims and invaded North Korea to unify the entire Korean Peninsula. In November 1950, the People's Republic of China intervened and counterattacked the U.S.-led United Nations forces. In response, some members of the administration, but most notably the U.N. commander in Korea, General Douglas MacArthur, favored another expansion in war aims. He wanted to launch a preventive war against China. Truman, however, rejected the idea and contracted his war aims back to the original goal of June 1950. The dispute over war aims was firmly resolved when Truman dismissed MacArthur as the commander of U.S. forces in Korea in the spring of 1951.

These episodes have served many as a case study for theories or histories of deterrence, compellence, escalation, and limited war.² In recent years, as documents have become declassified, scholarship has revisited the war offering new interpretations on its origins and conduct.³ Thus, U.S. war aims in the Korean War represent a rich case in which to conduct a comparative study of the evolution of war aims during war.

² See, for example, Bernard Brodie, *Escalation and the Nuclear Option* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); idem, *War and Politics* (New York: MacMillan, 1973); J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime: The History and Lessons of Korea* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969); Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Morton Halperin, *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963); Trumbull Higgins, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur: A Precis in Limited War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); Burton Ira Kaufman, *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1960); Robert McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957); Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

³ See, for example, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times, 1988); Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Rosemary Foote, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacekeeping at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); idem, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

The decision to expand war aims was the most important event of the war after the North's invasion. Nearly all scholarship on the Korean War argues that the U.S. decision to cross the 38th parallel precipitated the Chinese intervention and a much longer and costlier war. New documentary evidence--Mao's Korean War telegrams--confirms this hypothesis.⁴ The newly-widened war cost tens of thousands of additional U.S. casualties and millions of Chinese and Korean casualties. Three years of attrition war, misery, and stalemate for the troops on the field followed. The risk of military escalation was high. President Eisenhower used one of the few serious threats of nuclear escalation during the Cold War to bring the Korean conflict to an end.⁵ Domestically, the failure of the Truman Administration to end the stalemated war contributed to the president's extreme unpopularity at the end of his term and ended any aspirations he may have had to a second elected term. George Kennan called the decision "an absolutely unbelievable and stupendous military blunder."⁶ He was not alone in this assessment. Raymond Aron, several years later, declared that had the U.S. "voluntarily halted at the old demarcation line they would have been able to claim that they were the victors and had been acknowledged as such...all over the world."⁷

The decision not to expand war aims against China and to contract them back to the initial goal of an independent South Korea was equally important. The United States was spared General Omar Bradley's "wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time against the

⁴ See Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace: The Lessons of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security* 17 (Summer 1992), pp. 122-154. See also, Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

⁵ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 204-231.

⁶ Quoted in Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 88.

⁷ Quoted in Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 53.

wrong enemy." War between the U.S. and China would have been destructive and costly to both sides.⁸ In addition, once the United States had restored the U.N. line to the 38th parallel after the Chinese intervention, it sought peace based on the *status quo ante bellum*. A renewed drive to unify Korea would have cost more casualties and run the risk of further escalation by China or, possibly, the Soviet Union.⁹ General Ridgway estimated U.S. casualties alone would have been 100,000 dead and wounded.¹⁰

What Do the Hypotheses Predict?

In this section, I infer predictions from each hypothesis as to how U.S. war aims in the Korean War should evolve. The predictions focus mostly on the two decisions to change war aims. As in previous chapters, I make core predictions and subsidiary predictions.

The Blood Price:

- * **Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against North Korea.**

The U.S. took a healthy number of casualties in the Pusan Perimeter period, enough to warrant wider aims.

- * **Core Predictions # 2: The U.S. will expand its war aims against China.** The Chinese attack only drove them higher.

⁸ MacArthur and sycophant Courtney Whitney have argued the issue of consequences differently, saying that the failure of the U.S. to confront Communism in Asia risked America's defeat at the hands of Communism on a global scale. See Douglas A. MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); and Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History* (New York: Knopf, 1956).

⁹ Brodie, however, makes the argument that the U.N. was well-placed to continue the counteroffensive to the neck of Korea and that the war would have been over the quicker for it. See his *War and Politics*, pp. 91-97.

¹⁰ Matthew B. Ridgway, *The War in Korea: How We Met the Challenge* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1968), pp. 150-151.

* **The Truman administration should express concern at increasing casualty rates as the war continues.**

* **Truman, Acheson, and especially the military, in internal policy discussions, should justify the decision to unify the peninsula using language which refers to the blood price.**

Social Mobilization:

* **Core Prediction # 1: The Truman administration should declare the universalistic goal of "rolling back" Communist aggression in Asia as the war aim. This aim would mobilize the American people for war and imply the unification of Korea.**

* **Core Prediction # 2: The Administration will expand war aims against China once it enters the war. This follows for the same reason as the first core prediction. If the United States was going to oppose Communist aggression in Asia, then Chinese aggression must also be defeated.**

* **The Truman administration should declare its intention to unify the Korean peninsula very early in the war.**

* **American public opinion should favor the wider aim of unification *before* the Inchon landing. This is an important sequence prediction. If the administration failed to rally public support for its war aims policy, it would not invalidate this hypothesis. But support for this prediction would be powerful evidence.**

* **The Truman administration, in internal policy discussions, should voice the need to unify the peninsula in order to give the American people a universal aim for which to fight.**

The Clean Problem:

- * **Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against Korea.**
- * **Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand its war aims against China.** If generals gain greater power and prestige in war and they favor wider aims than their civilian counterparts, then the U.S. should adopt the war aims of its senior generals, in this case, MacArthur.
 - * **MacArthur should favor wider war aims than Truman.**
 - * **As MacArthur's prestige rises, U.S. war aims widen. As MacArthur's prestige falls, war aims shrink.**
 - * **Civilian elites should be afraid of contradicting or challenging MacArthur's opinions and authority when his prestige is high. They should be more prone to contradicting MacArthur's opinions and authority when his prestige is low. We should find evidence of this in internal policy discussions and documents.**

Threats to Security:

- * **Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. expands its war aims against North Korea, because:**
 - North Korea grew stronger prior to the decision to unify the peninsula.
 - The U.S. borders North Korea.
 - The U.S. perceived the offense as the stronger form of warfare.
 - The U.S. perceived North Korean intentions as aggressive, because:
 - + North Korea initiated the war.
 - + The U.S. perceived North Korean conduct as uncivilized.
 - + The U.S. perceived North Korean propaganda as hostile and menacing.
 - + North Korea pursued an offensive strategy.
 - + North Korea and the U.S. had different regime types.
- * **Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. expands its war aims after the Chinese intervention, because:**

- Communist forces in Korea grew stronger prior to the decision to contract aims.
- The U.S. borders China.
- The U.S. perceived the offense as the stronger form of warfare.
- The U.S. perceived Chinese intentions as more aggressive, because:
 - + China initiated its intervention.
 - + The U.S. perceived Chinese wartime conduct as uncivilized.
 - + The U.S. perceived Chinese propaganda as menacing.
 - + China pursued an offensive strategy.
 - + China and the U.S. did not share a common regime type.

*** A shift in the Truman administration's estimate of the threat posed by North Korea/China should be followed by a corresponding shift in U.S. war aims. In other words, as the threat goes up, war aims go up. As the threat declines, war aims shrink.**

*** MacArthur's perception of the Chinese threat should be greater than Truman's.**

*** Members of the Truman administration, in internal policy discussions, should justify the effort to unify Korea in terms which describe the North as an increasingly dangerous state.**

*** Later, the administration should justify the contraction of war aims in terms which describe China as relatively unthreatening.**

Opportunistic Expansion:

*** Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against North Korea, because:**

- The U.S. grew relatively stronger as the war progressed.
- The U.S. won a decisive military victory over North Korea.
- The U.S. thought expanding its war aims would cost few casualties.

*** Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will contract its war aims after China's intervention, because:**

- The U.S. became relatively weaker after China's intervention.
- The U.S. suffered a decisive military defeat.

→ The U.S. thought expanding or even holding its war aims steady would cost many casualties.

* The Truman administration, as demonstrated through internal policy discussions, should expand its war aims as its estimate of the degree of opportunity rises and contract war aims as its estimate of the degree of opportunity declines.

* American public opinion should support wider war aims *after* Inchon and favor reduced war aims after the Chinese intervention.

Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion

* Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand the war to weaken North Korea. Such as attacking neutral states which are giving it aid.

* Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand the war against China in order to deprive it of power resources. Again, this would involve attacking neutrals which are giving it aid or conquering resources which it is using in the war.

Quid Pro Quo Expansion:

* Core Prediction: The U.S. should make promises to other states in order to get them to join the war on the U.N. side, stay in the war, or at least not to side with the North Koreans.

* The Truman administration, in internal discussions with representatives of other nations, should be making promises of side payments or other benefits in return for support of the war.

Systemic Constraints:

* **Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. should not expand its war aims against North Korea.** China's warnings in the fall of 1950 suggest that this hypothesis, *ex ante*, would predict the restraint of war aims.

* **Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. should not expand its war aims against China and should contract them in Korea.**

* **As the Truman administration's fear of outside intervention decreases, war aims should, or at least could, expand. As the fear of outside intervention increases, war aims should shrink.** This fear, or the lack thereof, should be expressed with appropriate language in internal policy discussions.

* **MacArthur should be less concerned with outside intervention than Truman or other administration officials.**

Outline of the Chapter

Section 5.2 is a basic summary of the main dates, events, and personalities of the war. Section 5.3 reports that the initial war aims of the United States in the summer of 1950 were to restore control of Korea south of the 38th parallel to the Seoul government. Section 5.4 examines Truman's crucial decision, around the time of Inchon, to expand U.S. war aims to include crossing the 38th parallel and unifying Korea by military force. Section 5.5 covers the Chinese intervention in November 1950 and the American administration's decision not to expand war aims further (such as against China) and to contract its war aims back to the initial objective of restoring the 38th parallel. Finally, section 5.6 evaluates the predictions and explanatory power of the competing hypotheses.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE WAR¹¹

At the end of World War II, the Allies freed Korea from decades of Japanese colonial rule. But the Cold War divided the country in two at the 38th parallel. The Soviet Union occupied one half, the United States the other, and the Cold War began soon thereafter. Each half of the peninsula became an independent sovereign entity: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North), a Communist regime, and the Republic of Korea (South). The two states lived in uneasy tension, if not open hostilities, with each other. Between 1945-1950, the *political* objective of the United States and the United Nations was an independent, democratic Korea. In 1947 the General Assembly passed resolutions calling for free and fair elections in Korea, supervised by the U.N., to determine the fate of the country.¹² But the intensifying political conflict between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. prevented those elections from ever taking place.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean dictator Kim Il-sung attacked South Korea to unify the peninsula under his Communist regime. Several days later, with the endorsement of the United Nations, the United States committed large ground, naval, and air forces to Korea to stop the North Korean advance. To President Harry S Truman, the invasion represented a new Munich:

In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force

¹¹ Excellent histories of the Korean War are available. See for example Blair, *Forgotten War* or Kaufman, *Korean War*.

¹² Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, p. 181; See also, NSC-81/1, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, vol. 7, Korea (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 712 (September 9). Hereafter cited as *FRUS*.

their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war.¹³

In deciding to intervene, Truman drew a parallel to the U.S. aid given to Greek anti-Communist forces in 1947: "This is the Greece of the Far East. If we are tough now, there won't be any next step."¹⁴

The initial balance of power on the Korean peninsula was extremely favorable to the North Koreans. Pyongyang had a well-trained and well-equipped army. It organized 130,000 men into 10 divisions with a brigade of Russian-built T-34 tanks. The cream of the army was 25,000 battle-hardened veterans who supported the Communists in Manchuria during the Chinese civil war. The air force composed 180 Yak planes, the same type used by the Soviet Union in World War II. The army also had at its disposal 100,000 trained reserves.

The South Korean army was little more than a collection of policemen. It composed 100,000 men in eight divisions, lacking medium and heavy artillery, tanks, combat aircraft, and reserves. The U.S. had no ground forces in Korea at the time of attack. MacArthur had at his disposal parts of the Seventh Fleet and the eight and a half combat groups of the Far East Air Force. But in terms of ground forces, he possessed only four understrength divisions organized into two skeleton army corps, stationed in Japan. "Infantry and artillery units were each at two-thirds strength in personnel and cannon, and short of antitank weapons. Corps troops, such as medium tanks, artillery, and other supporting arms, did not

¹³ Harry S Truman, *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope*, vol. 2 (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 332-333. Truman also made this point in his address to Congress on the Korean situation. See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman*, 1950 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 529.

¹⁴ Quoted in John W. Spanier, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War* (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 32.

exist."¹⁵ By late June, additional ground forces were being deployed to Korea.

Soon after the war began, some government officials began discussing the possibility of crossing the 38th parallel. It was too early for Truman to become interested in that issue, but he did ask the National Security Council to study it.¹⁶ The issue remained unresolved until the Inchon landing on September 15, 1950. U.S. casualties in the war until that point totalled 19,165 men, including over 4000 killed.¹⁷

In the Inchon operation, which the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved reluctantly, MacArthur landed a large U.N. force behind North Korean lines at the port city of Inchon and turned the war around.¹⁸ No longer struggling to survive behind the defensive Pusan Perimeter, United Nations forces took the offensive. North Korean forces were quickly routed; they retreated in panic back to the 38th parallel. By September 26, U.N. forces had liberated Seoul, and had captured 125,000 prisoners, a number nearly equal to the entire North Korean army.

On October 7, at the request of the United States, the United Nations approved the decision to expand war aims and unify Korea. By late October, Washington was receiving reports of Chinese troops operating in North Korea. On November 25, the Chinese People's Liberation Army attacked United Nations forces with 300,000 troops, precipitating the longest retreat of the United States Army in history. Truman and his advisors thus reverted to the original objective of restoring South Korean independence to the 38th parallel. This decision coincided with a successful American counteroffensive which drove the Chinese

¹⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 1241-1242.

¹⁶ Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 144.

¹⁷ Roy Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), p. 547.

¹⁸ For JCS opposition to Inchon, see Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 44; and Spanier, *Controversy*, pp. 80-81.

army back to the 38th parallel during January, February, and March. The Chinese and North Korean armies were decimated, but the Americans advanced no further. There the war continued in attrition and stalemate for two years more until the signing of an armistice on July 27, 1953.

5.3 INITIAL U.S. WAR AIMS

The United States went to war against North Korea in the summer of 1950 for several reasons. In a January speech to the National Press Club, Secretary of State Dean Acheson appeared to omit South Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter.¹⁹ But President Truman considered the North's invasion of the South as the latest, most flagrant attempt by Soviet Communism to overthrow the West. As I already mentioned, he saw a parallel to fascist aggression in the 1930s and did not want to see it go unchecked. In a statement of policy to the nation on September 1, Truman declared with conviction, if not exaggeration:

It is your liberty and mine which is involved. What is at stake is the free way of life--the right to worship as we please, the right to express opinions, the right to raise our children in our own way, the right to choose our jobs, the right to plan our own future, and the right to live without fear. All these are bound up in the present action of the United Nations to put down aggression in Korea...Right now, the battle in Korea is the front-line struggle between freedom and tyranny.²⁰

¹⁹ Kaufman, *Korean War*, p. 25.

²⁰ Truman Speech, U.S. Department of State Historical Office, *American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1950-1955*, vol. 2 (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 2567. Hereafter cited as *Basic Documents*. William Manchester argues that Truman intervened in Korea largely for domestic reasons. Callum MacDonald makes a similar point when he argues that Truman intervened in part "to restore bipartisanship at home." See William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964* (Boston: Little Brown, 1978), p. 547; Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1986), p. 36. However, Manchester and MacDonald do not provide a source for this assertion or even an argument defending its validity. In my judgment, even a cursory reading of the documents and public statements of Truman reveals that he was highly motivated by the 1930s analogy and the general tension of the Cold War, which was rather frigid at that time. Furthermore, when one of his advisors, Under Secretary of State James E. Webb brought up the domestic implications of the Korean situation in an early meeting on whether to intervene, Truman banished him from several later meetings as punishment. See Glenn D. Paige, *1950: Truman's Decision: The United States enters the Korean War* (New York: Chelsea House, 1970), p. 73. For a similar book providing a day by day account of the decision to intervene, see Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, agreed: "We must draw the line somewhere"; Korea "offered as good an occasion for drawing the line as anywhere else."²¹ In essence, the Truman Administration viewed the war as a direct challenge by Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin to America's commitment to resist Communism. "[F]ailure to meet Stalin's challenge...would be so morally derelict it might fatally damage America's prestige and lead to the collapse of the free world's will to resist Communist aggression in places that really counted."²²

Truman had general and specific war aims. The broad aims were as follows: 1. Contain Communism; 2. Resist aggression wherever it occurs; and 3. Make collective security through the United Nations work.²³ The specific war aim was to drive the North Koreans back to 38th parallel, restoring all of the south to the Seoul government. The U.N. resolution authorizing intervention in Korea specified that objective as the war aim.²⁴ Truman reports in his memoirs that in a directive to the National Security Council he "wanted it clearly understood that our operations in Korea were designed to restore peace

²¹ Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 72.

²² Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 72. Everyone in Washington agreed on the need for the U.S. to intervene in Korea: The administration, the opposition in Congress, the media, and the public. See Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1949-1953* (New York: Norton, 1982), pp. 208-209.

²³ Brodie, *War and Politics*, p. 70. Truman and the Joint Chiefs and most others in his administration feared that the Korean attack was a prelude to other, similar moves by Soviet satellites and that this one, therefore, must be resisted strongly. See Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 292. Moreover, Truman told John D. Hickerson, Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs: "Jack, in the final analysis I did this for the United Nations. I believed in the League of Nations. It failed. Lots of people thought it failed because we weren't in it to back it up. Okay, now we have started the United nations. It was our idea, and in this first big test we just couldn't let them down. If a collective system under the U.N. can work, it must be made to work, and *now* is the time to call their bluff." See Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 199. Emphasis in original.

²⁴ Text of U.N. resolution, *Basic Documents*, pp. 2538-2539.

there and to restore the border."²⁵ Truman believed that his general war aims would be fulfilled if his specific war aim were. In his statement to Congress, where he formally ordered U.S. forces to intervene, Truman declared:

The Security Council of the United Nations called upon the invading troops to cease hostilities and to withdraw to the 38th parallel. This they have not done, but on the contrary have pressed the attack. The Security Council called upon all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the United Nations in execution of this resolution. In these circumstances I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.²⁶

This declaration was consistent with internal policy documents. The record leaves no mistake that restoring the 38th parallel was the initial and official war aim.²⁷

5.4 INCHON AND THE EXPANSION OF WAR AIMS

The internal administration debate on war aims began in mid-July 1950. On July 17, President Truman ordered the National Security Council (N.S.C.) and other government agencies to prepare for his consideration a report on U.S. policy once the 38th parallel was restored.²⁸ This touched off vigorous discussions within the Departments of State and Defense, the N.S.C., and the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) over future U.S. war aims. This debate, however, did not follow any predictable pattern. Different people in the same bureaucracies often made opposite arguments.²⁹ As Foote argues: "Perhaps to build

²⁵ Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 341. Acheson declared that the initial war aim was "solely for the purpose of restoring the Republic of Korea to its status prior to the invasion of the north." *Department of State Bulletin*, XXIII (July 10, 1950), pp. 579-580.

²⁶ Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 339.

²⁷ See *FRUS*, 1950, pp. 386-387, 393-395, 451-453.

²⁸ Memorandum of the NSC Executive Secretary, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:410 (July 17).

²⁹ For example, John Allison and Dean Rusk of the State Department favored unification from the beginning. Paul Nitze and the Policy Planning Staff favored a *status quo ante bellum* and a negotiated settlement. See Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War* (New York: Longman, 1986), pp. 181-182.

support for the decision to move north, those who favored doing so expressed views that were often more consistent with their personal beliefs than with their bureaucratic positions."³⁰ In succeeding pages, I examine that debate in detail.

Countering Aggression: The Argument for New War Aims

Some administration officials wanted the United States to expand its war aims to include conquering and unifying all of Korea. The arguments used to support this view were not disputed by more cautious officials. To push beyond the 38th parallel would represent a real victory against the threat of Communism. "To proceed was to seize a rare opportunity victoriously to roll back the Communist orbit in Asia to the borders of China and the Soviet Union, realizing the grandest dream of containment."³¹ Specifically, by attacking South Korea, North Korea demonstrated itself to be an aggressive power bent on conquest. It seemed improbable to many in the U.S. government that South Korea's security could be secured so long as the North Korea regime existed.

The loudest--and least influential--voice, however, came from outside the administration. South Korean Prime Minister Syngman Rhee advocated uniting Korea. Rhee had told a CBS news correspondent that the North Korean invasion removed any significance the 38th parallel had as a political boundary.³² In a July 19 cable to sent to Truman, Rhee declared: "It would be utter folly to attempt to restore the *status quo ante*, and then to await the enemy's pleasure for further attack when he had time to regroup, retrain, and reequip....For

³⁰ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 70-71.

³¹ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 268.

³² Memorandum from Allison to Rusk, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:373 (July 13). A U.S. army spokesman, however, stated that American troops were fighting only to drive the North Koreans back to the 38th and would use necessary force to prevent the South Korean forces from advancing further.

anything less than reunification to come out of these great sacrifices of Koreans and their powerful allies would be unthinkable."³³

Similarly, on July 13 MacArthur told Generals Collins and Vandenberg of the Joint Staff: "I intend to destroy and not drive back the North Korean forces. I may need to occupy all of North Korea."³⁴ MacArthur added, however, that this second statement was only speculative at that early stage.³⁵

In the State Department, John M. Allison, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, and his boss, Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, were the most hawkish.³⁶ They started an early campaign for greater war aims. In a memo to Rusk, Allison expressed his opinion cogently:

A determination that the aggressors should not go unpunished and vigorous, courageous United States leadership to that end should have a salutary effect upon other areas of tension in world. Notice would be served on the aggressor elsewhere, who is the same as the covert aggressor in Korea, that he cannot embark upon acts of aggression with the assurance that he takes only a limited risk--that of being driven back only to the line from which the attack commenced.³⁷

Allison was unconcerned with the threat of general war if the U.S. expanded its war aims. On more than one occasion did he express the sentiment: "That this may mean war on a global scale is true--the American people should be told and told why and what it will mean to them. When all legal and moral right is on our side why should we hesitate?"³⁸

³³ Quoted in Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1954), pp. 306-307.

³⁴ Quoted in Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 51.

³⁵ Quoted in Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 83.

³⁶ Dean Rusk, as told to Richard Rusk, *As I Saw It*, ed. Daniel S. Papp (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 166-167.

³⁷ *FRUS*, 1950, 7:394 (July 15).

³⁸ Allison memo to Nitze, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:461 (July 24). See also, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:567-573 (August 12); Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, pp. 181-182.

The Pentagon shared Allison's overall assessment, if not his grit-your-teeth enthusiasm. For example, a Department of Defense (DoD) memo argued that restoring matters to June 24, 1950 would solve nothing. "The former military instability would again obtain. The U.S.S.R. would re-arm a new striking force for a second attempt. Thus, a return to the *status quo ante bellum* would not promise security."³⁹ A second DoD memo continued this line of argument: "The establishment of a free and united Korea and the elimination of the North Korea Communist regime, following unprovoked military aggression, would be a step in reversing the dangerous strategic trend in the Far East of the past twelve months."⁴⁰ This was a view generally shared by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Secretary of Defense George Marshall, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others.⁴¹

Fear of Outside Intervention: Opposing New War Aims

The main argument against expanding war aims against North Korea at this early stage was systemic: Large-scale Soviet or Chinese intervention may follow from a U.S. effort to unify the peninsula under the South Korean government. Paul Nitze's Policy Planning Staff (P.P.S.) reflected this concern. In its draft contribution to the President's N.S.C. request, the P.P.S. argued: "The risks of bringing on a major conflict with the U.S.S.R. or Communist China, if U.N. military action north of the 38th parallel is employed

³⁹ Draft DoD memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:503 (July 31).

⁴⁰ Draft DoD memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:533 (August 7).

⁴¹ Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 144-146; Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur*, pp. 89-90. In his memoirs, General Collins states that he and Admiral Sherman, members both of the J.C.S., favored the new war aims: "We agreed with the General (MacArthur) that he should be authorized to continue the attack across the 38th Parallel to destroy North Korean forces, which otherwise would be a recurrent threat to the independence of South Korea." Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 144.

in an effort to reach a 'final' settlement in Korea, appear to outweigh the political advantages that might be gained from such further military action."⁴² The C.I.A. agreed:

Although an invasion of North Korea by U.N. forces could, if successful, bring several important advantages to the U.S., it appears at present that grave risks would be involved in such a course of action. The military success of the operation is by no means assured because the U.S. cannot count on the cooperation of all the non-Communist U.N. members and might also become involved in hostilities with Chinese Communist and Soviet troops. Under such circumstances there would, moreover, be grave risk of general war.⁴³

The C.I.A. analysis also pointed out that even the conquest of Korea would not necessarily eliminate the North Korean threat. The Soviet Union could and probably would withdraw North Korean forces into Manchuria and rebuild them for later use.⁴⁴

Synthesis: N.S.C.-81/1

As its final report in answer to Truman's request to study U.S. war aims, the National Security Council submitted N.S.C.-81/1. It was given to Truman on September 9--six days before Inchon. N.S.C.-81/1 reflected the policy debate and compromised in its policy recommendations accordingly. The document restated the initial U.S. and U.N. war aim: push the North Koreans back to the 38th parallel. It argued that unifying Korea militarily would have political and security advantages for the United States as well as for Korea.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the report strongly reflected the caution of Nitze and the Policy Planning Staff. It recommended against an invasion of the North if the Soviet Union or China were expected to intervene in the conflict. Such a development would shift the balance

⁴² Draft PPS memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:453 (July 22).

⁴³ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:600 (August 18).

⁴⁴ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:602 (August 18).

⁴⁵ NSC-81/1, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:712-721 (September 9).

of power in Korea and risk general war. "It would not be in our national interest, however, nor presumably would other friendly members of the United Nations regard it as being in their interest, to take action in Korea which would involve a substantial risk of general war." The report added that the Soviet Union was unlikely to permit the elimination of an ally in a region it considered strategically vital. Only in the unlikely event that the Soviet Union adopted a "hands-off policy" could U.N. forces safely advance into North Korea without precipitating a general war.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the N.S.C. report argued that crossing the 38th parallel would not be in the U.S. interest without the approval and authorization of the United Nations: "Accordingly, United Nations approval for military actions in furtherance of this political objective is a prerequisite to their initiation."⁴⁷

In short, N.S.C.-81/1 argued that the potential future threat from North Korea warranted expanding aims to unify the peninsula under a friendly government. Yet, the document argued that if the administration expected Soviet or Chinese intervention in Korea as a result of a decision to cross the parallel, then the risks of unifying the peninsula were greater than the potential advantages. The United States should refrain from expanding its war aims and halt at the 38th parallel. Furthermore, if U.S. forces cross the 38th parallel and the Soviets or Chinese then intervene, the army should halt its advance and pull back to defensive positions. Truman accepted the conclusions of the N.S.C. report. But he postponed a final decision on crossing the parallel until after the Inchon operation.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ NSC-81/1, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:714 (September 9). The NSC was unsure how to tell if the Soviet Union adopted a hands-off policy. But administration officials felt certain that if Soviet intervention were being contemplated or even planned, it would be preceded by increasingly hostile rhetoric and propaganda from Moscow aimed at the United States.

⁴⁷ Report of the NSC to the President, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:715 (September 9).

⁴⁸ Memorandum of NSC Executive Secretary, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:712n (September 11).

Inchon and the Pursuit of Total Victory

MacArthur's Inchon plan was designed to cut off the North Korean army operating in the South. It was a bold and risky plan.⁴⁹ The Joint Chiefs were reluctant to approve it. As one planning officer remarked: "We drew up a list of every conceivable and natural handicap and Inchon had them all."⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Truman and the JCS did approve it. On September 15, 1950, U.N. forces landed at Inchon, near the 38th parallel. Military surprise was total. What had been MacArthur's gamble now threatened to cut off the North Korean army's supply lines and avenue of retreat. North Korean forces frantically retreated north to escape destruction. The victory vindicated MacArthur's judgment; his popularity and prestige sky-rocketed, even with Truman.⁵¹

After the success at Inchon the administration focused on whether it should expand its war aims and cross the 38th parallel to unify Korea. A steady drumbeat for unification from the domestic political front began. General Collins noted in his memoirs: "By and large, news commentators, columnists, and editorial writers indicated a strong public opinion in favor of continuing military operations to eliminate the Communist satellite state of North Korea and thus, hopefully, prevent a recurrence of the Korean War."⁵²

Yet, the euphoria that Inchon created in the administration did not lead instantly to a decision to expand war aims. But it appeared to create the opportunity for a low-cost

⁴⁹ The details of the operation are not important here. See James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1972).

⁵⁰ Quoted in Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 44.

⁵¹ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 80-81.

⁵² Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 148. See also Foote, *Wrong War*, 69-70; Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 41; Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 52.

military victory to unify the Korean peninsula.⁵³ The decisive factor was that the Truman administration concluded that it also had a systemic opportunity. That is, it did not expect the Soviets and Chinese to intervene. Thus, in accordance with the analysis in N.S.C.-81/1, the path was clear for an advance into North Korea.

SYSTEMIC "OPPORTUNITY"

After Inchon the State Department received some initial reports which led it to believe that neither the Soviet Union nor China would intervene. One official media organ of the Chinese government declared that "China also has adopted the principles of non-intervention in Korea's domestic affairs...the Soviet Union, each new democratic state, and all peace loving peoples in the world sympathise with the Korean people's liberation movement but that does not imply that they should intervene with arms."⁵⁴ On September 21, the Indian Ambassador to Beijing, Panikkar, relayed a message of Chinese nonintervention to Acheson. The Indian Foreign Minister, Bajpai, supplied the following paraphrase to U.S. officials:

As regards Korea, they (the Chinese) have shown no undue interest beyond expression of sympathy. Even that has been notably slackened during the last two weeks. In the circumstances direct participation of China in Korean fighting seems beyond range of possibility unless of course a world war starts as a result of UN forces passing beyond 38th parallel and Soviet Union deciding directly to intervene. I am satisfied that China herself will not interfere in the conflict and try to pull others' chestnuts out of the fire.⁵⁵

The U.S. General Consul in Hong Kong reported a similar message from a source "believed reliable": "Chou En-lai stated...that Chinese Communists would not get involved in Korean

⁵³ See Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies* (Montgomery: University of Alabama Press, 1963), p. 596.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, p. 183.

⁵⁵ Ambassador in India (Henderson) to Acheson, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:742-743 (September 21).

war or fight in any area outside China unless attacked."⁵⁶

With respect to the Soviet Union, the Truman administration believed that if Soviet leaders were planning to intervene, they would ratchet up tensions first, providing a warning signal. The administration expected that any Soviet intervention would be preceded by increasingly hostile rhetoric, propaganda, and threats--especially in the U.N. But none of this materialized. In diplomatic encounters, Soviet officials were relaxed and friendly. At the U.N., the Soviet Union returned from a walk-out earlier in the year. American delegates expected the Soviets to try to seat the People's Republic of China, replacing Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists. Instead, Soviet delegates repeatedly offered peace proposals on Korea. Moreover, the Soviets reacted mildly to several incidents of U.S. forces accidentally attacking targets inside Soviet Manchuria. U.S. officials also expected Soviet leaders to raise the pressure in other potential trouble-spots around the world to force an easing of pressure in Korea. This, too, did not happen.⁵⁷ Consequently, most U.S. officials concluded that the Soviet Union, having had the North's invasion checked, was writing off the Korean affair as a gambit failed.⁵⁸

This apparent passivity from the Soviet Union led the C.I.A. to change its analysis. Earlier in the summer, the C.I.A. had argued that Soviet intervention in Korea was likely if the U.S. invaded the North. Now, the agency reported: "Since the beginning of hostilities the Soviet Union has sought in its official statements and in its propaganda to give the impression that it is not involved in the Korean situation. Moreover, the U.S.S.R. has taken

⁵⁶ Telegram from Consul General at Hong Kong (Wilkinson) to Acheson, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:765 (September 23).

⁵⁷ Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 86.

⁵⁸ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 75-78. See also, MacDonald, *War Before Vietnam*, p. 49.

no political or military actions that constitute direct armed intervention in Korea."⁵⁹ The agency concluded that the failure of the "Soviet" initiative in Korea would not precipitate Soviet intervention unless the U.S.S.R. was interested in a global war at the present time. C.I.A. analysis suggested that while Soviet power would be at its peak during 1950-1954, the probable high-point was in 1952. The implication was that the Soviet Union would not contemplate a global war until then.⁶⁰

Furthermore, on September 26 the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked MacArthur to determine whether there was any evidence of Soviet or Chinese intervention: "[Y]ou will continue to make special efforts to determine whether there is a Chinese Communist or Soviet threat to the attainment of your objective, which will be reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a matter of urgency."⁶¹ MacArthur reported that there was no evidence or likelihood of intervention.⁶²

Yet, suddenly the Chinese attitude changed. The reports of Panikkar in Beijing had shifted 180 degrees in four days. Panikkar reported to his government that the Chinese were alarmed at an accidental U.S. bombing in Manchuria and that he now considered Chinese intervention likely. In late September, Nieh Jung-chen, acting Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army, told Panikkar that China could not and would not "sit back with folded hands and let the Americans come up to the border."⁶³ Even more explicitly, Chou En-lai

⁵⁹ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:935 (October 12).

⁶⁰ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:937-938 (October 12).

⁶¹ JCS directive to MacArthur, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:781 (September 26).

⁶² Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, p. 186-187. Thomas Christensen argues that Chinese intervention was inevitable once the U.S. crossed the 38th parallel. See Christensen, "Last Chance for Peace," *passim*, including appendices.

⁶³ Quoted in Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, p. 93.

warned Panikkar late on October 3: "The South Koreans did not matter but American intervention into North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance."⁶⁴

But neither the Truman administration nor the British considered Panikkar a particularly reliable source. In his memoirs Truman wrote that "...Mr. Panikkar had in the past played the game of the Chinese Communists fairly regularly, so his statement could not be taken as that of an impartial observer. It might very well be no more than a relay of Communist propaganda."⁶⁵ British and American officials believed that the Chinese warning was a bluff and that Panikkar, who in the past had been friendly with China, was the logical conduit for such a bluff.⁶⁶ Despite doubting Panikkar's reliability, Truman sought to confirm the view that the Chinese would not intervene. The C.I.A. was reassuring. It reported that Chinese intervention was unlikely, but if it did occur, it would not be decisive:

The Chinese Communist ground forces, currently lacking requisite air and naval support, are capable of intervening effectively, but not necessarily decisively, in the Korean conflict. Despite statements by Chou En-lai, troop movements to Manchuria, and propaganda charges of atrocities and border violations, there are no convincing indications of an actual Chinese Communist intention to resort to full-scale intervention in Korea....[A] consideration of all known factors leads to the conclusion that barring a Soviet decision for global war, such action is not probable in 1950. During this period, intervention will probably be confined to continued covert assistance to the North Koreans.⁶⁷

Overall, three key assumptions buttressed the administration's views of China and the belief that Beijing would not intervene. First, China had recently emerged victorious from

⁶⁴ Kavalam M. Panikkar, *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), p. 110. For further discussion, see Lichterman, "To the Yalu," pp. 589-590.

⁶⁵ Truman, *Memoirs*, pp. 361-362; on the British, see *FRUS*, 1950, 7:793-794 (September 27). Furthermore, Panikkar's own Foreign Office tended to distrust him and they made no secret of their reservations regarding him. See MacDonald, *War Before Vietnam*, p. 53.

⁶⁶ Ambassador in Soviet Union (Kirk) to Acheson, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:850 (October 3); 912-913 (October 7).

⁶⁷ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:933-934 (October 12).

a long guerilla civil war. The U.S. government's Joint Intelligence Committee believed that China was now too preoccupied with internal security and that its army was in no condition for conventional combat.⁶⁸ The C.I.A. stated that China's "domestic problems are of such magnitude that the regime's entire domestic program and economy would be jeopardized by the strains and the material damage which would be sustained in war with the US. Anti-Communist forces would be encouraged and the regime's very existence would be endangered."⁶⁹ Expectations of Chinese weakness appeared crucial. Spanier quotes one official in Washington as stating: "I don't think China wants to be chopped up."⁷⁰

Second, Washington considered North Korea a Soviet satellite; therefore, the thinking went, if anyone were going to fight and save its communist government, it would be the Soviet Union. Even if the Chinese were willing to do the job for the U.S.S.R., they would require Soviet logistical support and air cover. Thus, since the Soviet Union had shown no evidence of an intention to intervene, it followed that China would not intervene either.⁷¹

Third, Washington did not consider that China might legitimately feel insecure. After all, the victorious American army advancing north on the Korean peninsula was following the historic invasion route to the Chinese industrial heartland of Manchuria.⁷² No one in Washington appreciated this.⁷³ The fact that U.S. warplanes had dropped some bombs on

⁶⁸ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 81-82.

⁶⁹ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:934 (October 12).

⁷⁰ Quoted in Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 98.

⁷¹ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 81-82.

⁷² Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 82.

⁷³ Nevertheless, as Allen Whiting points out, this was not so unreasonable. Early in the summer, China had made belligerent threats about liberating Taiwan in the face of Seventh Fleet opposition and had not made good on them. Korea was not as important politically or economically to China as Taiwan; intervention, therefore, seemed illogical. Moreover, China took no action at Pusan--when it would have mattered--or at Inchon--when the signal would have been unmistakable. See Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, p. 109.

Manchuria, accidentally or not, certainly did not help matters.

In his path-breaking work, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Robert Jervis observed that a state often holds the false belief that other states understand that it is not hostile.⁷⁴ The Truman administration fell into this trap in spades. Prior to the intervention, the administration held a relatively benign view of Communist China. They believed that the Sino-Soviet Treaty merely papered over the natural and fundamental geopolitical conflict between the Soviet Union and China. The two great powers of the Asian landmass were bound to conflict. This, of course, was ultimately true. But when it came to China in 1950 the administration's assumptions about international Communism fell away. Truman and Acheson minimized the extent to which Mao was motivated by Marxist-Leninist ideology which regarded all capitalist states, but especially the *leading* capitalist state, as threats to socialist states. The advance up the Korean peninsula was therefore unacceptable to the ideologues in Beijing. Yet, as Acheson later said, "no shred of evidence could have existed in the minds of the Chinese Communist authorities about the intentions of the forces of the United Nations. Repeatedly, and from the very beginning of the action, it had been clear that the sole mission of the United Nations forces was to repel aggressors and to restore to the people of Korea their independence."⁷⁵

In short, the logic was convoluted. North Korea was Moscow's ally. Moscow shows no sign of intervention. China and the Soviet Union, based on geopolitics, were really at odds. China is militarily weak. The United States poses no threat to China. China therefore would not come to the aid of a Soviet ally.

Finally, as N.S.C.-81/1 recommended, Truman sought United Nations approval for

⁷⁴ Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, pp. 68-69, 354-355.

⁷⁵ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 97.

an advance across the 38th parallel. The administration received it on October 7, albeit with reservations by some states. Initial consultations among the British, French, and American foreign ministers took place on August 30--two weeks before Inchon.⁷⁶ On September 30, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Warren Austin, began laying the groundwork for the General Assembly's approval to cross the 38th parallel and pursue a policy of unification:

Today the forces of the United Nations stand on the threshold of military victory.... The aggressor's forces should not be permitted to have refuge behind an imaginary line because that would recreate the threat to the peace of Korea and of the world....The question of whether this artificial barrier shall remain removed and whether the country shall be united now must be determined by the United Nations.⁷⁷

The British introduced the resolution authorizing an advance across the 38th parallel. It declared that "All appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea."⁷⁸ Despite its vagueness, everyone recognized that this was a euphemism for unifying Korea.⁷⁹ The debate on the resolution left no mistake about it. India declared that while it had reservations about unifying Korea, it would not oppose the resolution.⁸⁰ The British, too, were concerned that the Chinese might mean what they say.⁸¹ The Indian government, despite having relayed China's warnings, did not vote against the October 7 resolution. It abstained. At the time of the vote, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin "declared that in the future there could be 'no South Koreans, no North Koreans; just

⁷⁶ Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, p. 185.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Rees, *Limited War*, pp. 103-104.

⁷⁸ Text of U.N. General Assembly resolution, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:904 (October 7).

⁷⁹ Acheson later claimed in the MacArthur hearings that unification of Korea had never been made a U.N. war aim. On the technical language of the resolution, he was correct. But no one at the time saw it this way. As Lichterman noted, "The world did not see Korea actions in this light in October 1950." Everyone saw it as an expansion in war aims. Lichterman, "To the Yalu," p. 594.

⁸⁰ Henderson to Acheson, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:831-332 (September 30).

⁸¹ Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, pp. 192-193.

Koreans.' Confronted with this briefly aggressive British attitude, the General Assembly passed [the] resolution."⁸² As Higgins noted: "The principal American ally had not restrained Washington at the decisive moment."⁸³ Indeed, "no allies were estranged *by the announcement* of a new war aim."⁸⁴

5.5 CHINESE INTERVENTION AND THE CONTRACTION OF WAR AIMS

China did intervene, massively. On November 26, with 300,000 troops, the Chinese launched a counteroffensive against United Nations lines. This marked the start of the greatest defeat and longest retreat of the United States Army in history. In a report to the Joint Chiefs *after* November 26, even MacArthur was forced to admit that "We face an entirely new war."⁸⁵ How did this happen?

An Ambitious General and His War Aims

On October 10, China issued a strong public warning which was quoted in State Department documents: "The American war of invasion in Korea has been a serious menace to the security of China from its very start...The Chinese people cannot stand idly by with regard to such a serious situation created by the invasion of Korea by the United States and its accomplice countries and to the dangerous trend toward extending the war..."⁸⁶ The first evidence of Chinese troops operating in Korea came in mid-October; evidence of a major

⁸² Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 55.

⁸³ Higgins, *Fall of MacArthur*, p. 55.

⁸⁴ Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, p. 92. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁵ MacArthur to JCS, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1237 (November 28).

⁸⁶ *FRUS*, 1950, 7:914 (October 10).

intervention was clear by late October.⁸⁷ Whatever one may think of the administration's disregard of China's warnings before the crossing of the parallel, there was no ambiguity about Beijing's intentions by November.

N.S.C.-81/1 specifically stated that in the event Russia or China intervened after U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel, MacArthur should pull back to the 38th and stand on the defensive, pending further directives from Washington.⁸⁸ Military directives to MacArthur reiterated this policy. Nearly all government memoranda and documents which discuss crossing the 38th parallel state that in the event of intervention, the U.S. should pull back and stand on the defensive at the border.⁸⁹ Systemic constraints were tightening. Why was the U.N. offensive to the north not halted and defensive positions taken up near the 38th parallel before the Chinese attacked?

The Cleon problem hypothesis, in my judgment, provides the best explanation. On October 15, Truman flew to Wake Island to meet MacArthur. Truman asked whether he thought the Chinese would intervene. MacArthur replied no and it would not matter anyway: "If the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang, there would be the greatest slaughter."⁹⁰ General Bradley, who took the "minutes" of the conference, recorded no dispute or objection to this statement by any conference participant, including Truman, Bradley, Rusk, and Philip Jessup.⁹¹ Nevertheless, after Truman's return to Washington, reports of large-scale Chinese Communist forces operating in Korea increasingly concerned the administration. MacArthur

⁸⁷ Lowe, *Origins of Korean War*, pp. 196-197.

⁸⁸ NSC-81/1, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:716-718 (September 9).

⁸⁹ See *FRUS*, 1950, 7:passim, especially from middle August to middle October.

⁹⁰ Wake Island Conference, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:953 (October 15).

⁹¹ Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 78. Some State Department officials who did warn the government that the Chinese may be serious were ignored. See Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 79-80.

remained optimistic and down-played their significance. He told Washington that the Chinese intervention was not significant and that his existing forces could handle it.⁹²

Despite their growing fear over Chinese intentions, Truman and his top advisors let MacArthur, as the man on the field, determine the situation. When asked about this years later, Truman replied: "You pick your man, you've got to back him up. That's the only way a military organization can work. I got the best advice I could and the man on the spot said this was the thing to do....So I agreed."⁹³ When the J.C.S. suggested that MacArthur halt the offensive, he replied that it could not be done. From MacArthur's perspective, "The drive to the Yalu had now become an end in itself divorced from political necessity."⁹⁴

Furthermore, MacArthur's prestige made him an authority difficult to challenge, much less contradict. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur was the prophet of Inchon and the architect of victory. When nearly all of Truman's military advisors believed and predicted Inchon would fail, MacArthur pushed it and won a tide-turning victory. This achievement, along with his already formidable reputation established in the Second World War, imbued the general with a towering prestige and authority in any military matter and many political ones. At the Wake Island conference, for example, Truman awarded MacArthur a fourth oak leaf cluster for his Distinguished Service Medal for his Inchon victory. In the citation, Truman said that the general had "so inspired his command by his vision, his judgement, his indomitable will and his unshakable faith, that it has set a shining example of gallantry and tenacity in defense and of audacity in attack matched by few

⁹² Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 373.

⁹³ Quoted in Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, pp. 94-95.

⁹⁴ David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (London: MacMillan, 1964), p. 151.

operations in military history."⁹⁵ General Collins admitted: "The success of Inchon was so great, and the subsequent prestige of General MacArthur was so overpowering, that the Chiefs hesitated thereafter to question later plans and decisions of the general, which should have been challenged."⁹⁶

Thus, when the signs of serious Chinese intervention became increasingly apparent in late October and early November and when MacArthur resisted suggestions from Washington to halt his relentless and increasingly risky drive to the Yalu, Washington did not impose its will. As MacArthur advanced north to the Yalu, the Korean peninsula widened considerably. To cover his conquests, MacArthur spread his forces out. The Joint Chiefs expressed to him their concerns regarding the disposition of his forces, but they did not overrule his tactical judgment.⁹⁷ On November 6, Truman, at Acheson's urging and in accordance with United Nations policy, prevented MacArthur from bombing bridges over the Yalu. Two days later, however, Truman reversed himself. MacArthur had complained that the restriction would endanger his command. The bridges were then attacked.⁹⁸ On November 8, the Joint Chiefs suggested to MacArthur that the scale of Chinese intervention was such that his objective of completing the conquest of North Korea be "reexamined," with the implication that he should go on the defensive.⁹⁹ MacArthur replied that he must pursue the North Koreans to the border: "In my opinion it would be fatal to weaken the fundamental

⁹⁵ Quoted in Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 288.

⁹⁶ Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 141-142.

⁹⁷ MacDonald, *War Before Korea*, pp. 58-59.

⁹⁸ David S. McLellan, "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," *Political Science Quarterly* 83 (1968), p. 26. See also his *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976).

⁹⁹ J.C.S. to MacArthur, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1098 (November 8, 1950). See also, James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vol. III: The Korean War* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazer, 1979). p. 301.

and basic policy of the United Nations to destroy all resisting armed forces in Korea and bring that country into a united and free nation....Any program short of this would completely destroy the morale of my forces and its psychological consequence would be inestimable." He even warned that the South Koreans might turn against the U.S.¹⁰⁰ Thus, despite the evidence and a recognized increase in the risk of general war, the J.C.S. recommended that MacArthur's mission not be changed. Instead, they urged finding a political settlement to end the war quickly.¹⁰¹

After November 9, the Chinese forces operating in Korea appeared to disengage from the battlefield. The reasons for this are much debated. Diplomatically, the Truman administration was trying to reassure the Chinese that it had no intention of advancing beyond North Korea. China may have pulled back to see if Truman would halt MacArthur's offensive in light of the warnings it had made. Or China may have may have been preparing the trap into which MacArthur later walked. But the disengagement relieved Washington's anxiety somewhat over Chinese intentions. It certainly emboldened MacArthur.¹⁰² That, combined with the chronic underestimation of the size of the Chinese force in Korea, reinforced MacArthur's intention to launch his end of the war offensive on November 24.¹⁰³ The Chinese replied in kind two days later.

Even two days after the Chinese counteroffensive, November 28, the administration was reluctant to confront MacArthur squarely. In a special N.S.C. meeting called by

¹⁰⁰ MacArthur to J.C.S., *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1108 (November 9, 1950). See also, Schnabel and Watson, *History of J.C.S.*, p. 302.

¹⁰¹ J.C.S. to Marshall, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1121 (November 9, 1950).

¹⁰² Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy. Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 211.

¹⁰³ Schnabel and Watson, *History of J.C.S.*, p. 308.

Truman, Vice President Barkley expressed considerable anger at MacArthur for having stated earlier that American troops would be home by Christmas. General Bradley argued that he had been "misinterpreted." Truman, according to his memoirs, replied: "I told him that, whatever we might think of the statement, we would have to be very careful not to pull the rug out from under the general. We simply could not afford to damage MacArthur's prestige."¹⁰⁴

Contract or Expand? The Second Debate over War Aims

China's attack forced Truman to rethink war aims again. He had four options: 1. Withdraw from Korea and abandon all war aims; 2. Reduce war aims to the original objectives of June 25; 3. Maintain war aims and fight China to unify Korea; or 4. Expand aims again and launch a preventive war against China. Between Washington and Korea, there were voices for all four options, but mainly for the second and fourth. Truman chose to reduce his war aims back to the original objective of restoring the 38th parallel.

The Chinese attack precipitated an intense and polarizing debate in Washington that blurred the distinction between military escalation and expanded war aims. Some officials advocated military escalation in Korea, including attacking military targets in Manchuria. Others, notably MacArthur, proposed a massive preventive war against China. The debate over war aims began soon after the Chinese counteroffensive and continued throughout the spring until MacArthur's dismissal on April 6, 1950. In the following sections, I discuss MacArthur's proposal, Truman's rejection of it, and the decision to contract war aims back to the 38th parallel.

¹⁰⁴ Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 387.

MacArthur's response to the Chinese intervention was that of a man who thought the battle had at last been joined. MacArthur long believed that America's future was in Asia and that Europe would become a second-rate backwater. In 1944 he had declared:

Europe is a dying system. It is worn down and will become an economic and industrial hegemony of Soviet Russia....The lands bordering the Pacific with their billions of inhabitants will determine the course of history for the next ten thousand years...¹⁰⁵

It seemed to him that Communism was now making its bid for control of this vital region and that the U.S. should fight. MacArthur argued that the Chinese intervention had strong logistical and organizational support from the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ He proposed a four-point policy for war against China: 1. Blockade China; 2. Employ air and naval bombardment to destroy China's industrial capability to wage war; 3. Reinforce U.N. forces in Korea with National Chinese forces from Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek; 4. Unleash Chiang for counterinvasion of the Chinese mainland. MacArthur's objective was clear: "I believe that by the foregoing measures we could severely cripple and largely neutralize China's capacity

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Rees, *Limited War*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁶ The available evidence, for the most part, does not support this claim. In recently opened archives in Russia, we now have evidence that the Soviets did send some military support to China. In November 1950, Stalin sent two air force divisions (200 planes) to defend the Yalu bridges. By March 1951, Moscow began deploying a division from the Moscow Air Defense District to Manchuria. Soviet pilots detailed their planes with North Korean markings and wore Chinese uniforms. "During the spring of 1951, the Soviet involvement grew much larger and Soviet pilots engaged in intensive air combat with American fighters. However, throughout the war, Soviet pilots were prohibited from flying over enemy-held territory so that they would not be taken prisoner if shot down." Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, November 1983), pp. 27-28. It is also true that Stalin supplied Mao with equipment for more than 60 army divisions and 10 air force divisions. It supplied 80 percent of its ammunition. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," *China Quarterly* 121 (March 1990), pp. 111-112.

Nevertheless, Stalin had been most reluctant to do anything to save North Korea. He was relieved when Mao told him that China would do it. There is no evidence that he provided the Chinese "with strong logistical and organizational support" in the early stages of the conflict. Indeed, promises had been made initially and later withdrawn. Stalin provided the great support MacArthur referred to, but not in the time frame that he thought. See Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhilai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War."

to wage aggressive war and thus save Asia from the engulfment otherwise facing it."¹⁰⁷ He advocated an atomic bombardment of Chinese targets in Korea and China in conjunction with the other measures.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, MacArthur was not concerned with the potential reaction of allies or adversaries to his program. The only allies that counted were those in Asia and they were already with the U.S. He believed that Soviet intervention was unlikely: "I have always felt that a Soviet decision to precipitate a general war would depend solely upon the Soviets' own estimate of relative strengths and capabilities, with little regard for other factors."¹⁰⁹

MacArthur promoted his program relentlessly. First, he advocated preventive war while he and his army retreated down the Korean peninsula. Later, he advocated preventive war as new U.S. offensives restored the U.N. line to the 38th parallel. In short, the actual military situation in Korea had little bearing on the proposal.¹¹⁰ MacArthur's view was that Korea was at the center of Soviet strategy and the worldwide struggle against Communism. So there was no better time or place in which to fight.¹¹¹

No one doubted what MacArthur had in mind. Walter Lippman in the *New York Times* stated that "...General MacArthur's idea [is] that this is the time and the Far East is

¹⁰⁷ MacArthur to the Department of the Army, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1631 (December 30). MacArthur reiterated his program and general war aims in his speech before Congress and during the Congressional hearings which investigated the conduct of the war after his dismissal. See Rees, *Limited War*, pp. 180-181, 224-225; Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 224-226.

¹⁰⁸ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 114-115. D. Clayton James with Anne Sharp Wells, *Refighting the Last War: Command and Crisis in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 206, argues much less convincingly that MacArthur never advocated using nuclear weapons. Foote cites documentary evidence where MacArthur suggests dropping a number of atomic bombs on Chinese positions and formations.

¹⁰⁹ MacArthur to the Department of the Army, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1631 (December 30).

¹¹⁰ Truman, *Memoirs*, pp. 440-442.

¹¹¹ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 265-266. See also, MacDonald, *War Before Vietnam*, pp. 71-72.

the place to join issues with the Communist powers and seek a military solution."¹¹² Truman thought MacArthur's proposal was an effort to bring down on China the full military weight of the United States.¹¹³ General Matthew Ridgway, MacArthur's successor as U.N. commander, was blunt:

What MacArthur sought was, plainly, a preventive war--the destruction of China's war-making potential, regardless of the danger that such an effort might bring the Soviet Union in to the conflict and result in her overrunning Europe. Since we were already at war with Red China, MacArthur argued, there was every justification for such action. And in his view, Europe was already lost, no more than an industrial backyard for the Soviets. The future of the world, MacArthur believed, would be decided in Asia.¹¹⁴

MacArthur's program had strong support in Congress. Many congressmen and senators from the Republican Party wanted the U.S. to end the limited war, either by withdrawal from Korea or by a declaration of war against China.¹¹⁵ The Republicans had made large gains in the mid-term elections in November, largely by criticizing the Truman administration's foreign policy. Polls indicated that a majority of Americans supported MacArthur's program.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Quoted in Rees, *Limited War*, p. 211.

¹¹³ Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 442.

¹¹⁴ Ridgway, *War In Korea*, pp. 143-144.

¹¹⁵ Rees, *Limited War*, pp. 200-201, 228; Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 107-108.

¹¹⁶ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 165. When MacArthur was dismissed by Truman in April, overwhelming majorities in the Congress and among the American people supported MacArthur and his belief that total victory should be the goal in Korea. The rhetoric used by some Republicans was almost violent. A few Republican leaders in Congress openly discussed impeaching Truman and his cabinet. (Spanier, pp. 211-213.) Truman had his supporters in Congress, but theirs were not the voices that were heard. (Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 115.)

The first weeks after the Chinese attack led to confused and wide-ranging discussions within the administration on the course of U.S. policy in Korea. For the time being, the Joint Chiefs recommended retaining the policy of not attacking Chinese forces beyond the Yalu River. The J.C.S. feared Chinese retaliation against crowded U.S. bases in Japan.¹¹⁷ The administration hoped to get a cease fire and halt the fighting where the armies stood.¹¹⁸ But as the Chinese offensive progressed, a deep pessimism overtook most of the administration. The Joint Chiefs feared that the U.N. would be forced to evacuate the peninsula. If that should become necessary, they argued, the U.S. should retaliate with air and naval attacks against mainland China--or accept defeat in the war.¹¹⁹ The pessimism was so great at one point that some officials believed a general war with the Soviet Union was in the offing. In that case, a general evacuation from Korea would be warranted to shore up the U.S. position in Europe.¹²⁰ General Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, asserted that the Soviets were preparing for a general war in August 1951. As the minutes of a Pentagon meeting report: "He did not say so specifically, but the implication was that it would be better for us to precipitate hostilities at an early date in order to prevent further U.S.S.R. atomic buildup."¹²¹ General Bradley, while lacking Vandenberg's enthusiasm, did favor

¹¹⁷ JCS meeting, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1276-1281 (December 1); Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 117.

¹¹⁸ JCS meeting, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1276-1282 (December 1).

¹¹⁹ Pentagon meeting, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1323-1334 (December 3); Various memoranda, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1270-1276 (December 19).

¹²⁰ Cabinet-level meeting, the Pentagon, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1276-1281 (December 1).

¹²¹ Pentagon meeting, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1572-1573 (December 19). There was even some loose talk about nuclear weapons. In a press conference Truman said of the atomic bomb that "there has always been active consideration of its use." The importance of this statement, quoted alarmingly by some historians, has been exaggerated. There is no evidence in the documentary record that Truman actively considered using nuclear weapons in Korea. Rather, his statement--ill-advised in light of the circumstances--reflected the practical view of a commander-in-chief who could not help thinking about all the weapons at his disposal. See Truman,

attacking Chinese targets in Manchuria to relieve pressure on U.S. troops and to retaliate for Beijing's attack. "General Bradley recalled that we used to say that an attack on a platoon of United States troops meant war. Would anyone believe it now if we don't react to the Chinese attack."¹²²

Nevertheless, Truman did not expand his war aims or escalate the war, but not because the threat had lessened. On the contrary, the Truman administration's perception of the Communist threat in Korea or in Asia generally intensified with China's intervention in the war. Previously, most officials believed that Chinese foreign policy was motivated more by nationalist self-interest than by Communism. Now, they believed, it was clear that China was part of the Soviet-led international Communist movement. As T.J. Cory of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. General Assembly told his fellow U.S. delegates: "It follows from this that the new intervention in Korea stems not so much from the national interests of China as it does from the Chinese Communist role as a member of the Moscow-directed International Communist front. From this it follows in turn that the Chinese Communist intervention should be viewed as part of a global Communist program rather than in the more limited context of Manchuria or even of the Far East."¹²³ C.I.A. analysis supported this reasoning: "The minimal purpose of the USSR in the current situation is to render untenable the UN position in Korea." Furthermore, the Soviets would support China in any general war between the U.S. and China and they may be quite willing to risk global war now to fulfill their ambitions. "The Soviet rulers have resolved to pursue aggressively their worldwide attack on the power position of the United States and its allies, regardless of the

Memoirs, p. 395. The military also planned for this contingency. See Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 116-117.

¹²² Memorandum of Conversation by the Ambassador at Large, on the meeting at the Pentagon, *FRUS*, 1950, 7: 1330 (December 3).

¹²³ Quoted in Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 101-102.

possibility that global war may result....Further direct or indirect Soviet aggression in Europe and Asia is likely, regardless of the outcome in the Korean situation."¹²⁴ Truman himself was apocalyptic:

The forces of the United Nations are in Korea to put down aggression that threatens not only the whole fabric of the United Nations but all human hopes of peace and justice. If the United Nations yields to the forces of aggression, no nation will be safe or secure. If aggression is successful in Korea, we can expect it to spread through Asia and Europe to this hemisphere. We are fighting in Korea for our own national security and survival.¹²⁵

On February 1, 1951, after weeks of lobbying and with the reluctant acquiescence of major allies, the United States persuaded the General Assembly to declare Communist China as an "aggressor" in the Korean conflict.¹²⁶

Yet, if the threat was so great, why did the Truman administration reject MacArthur's expansion in war aims? Why did it contract war aims back to the original objective of June 25, 1950? The answer is that even if the threat appeared greater, the opportunity for a quick, cheap victory was gone. The costs and risks of both MacArthur's preventive war were too high to adopt. The costs and risks of the October war aims were too high to maintain.

The Chinese intervention had inflicted on the U.S. army the highest casualties of the war to that point. Truman wanted to hold down further losses. Directives from Washington to MacArthur began to stress the need to keep U.S. casualties low. In late December, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed MacArthur that "Korea is not the place to fight a major war." The J.C.S. wanted to inflict punishment on Chinese forces but only if the price was

¹²⁴ CIA memorandum, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1309-1310 (December 2).

¹²⁵ Truman statement, *Dynamics of World Power* (November 30, 1950), p. 397. Truman used similar language in his Special Message to the Congress Requesting Additional Appropriations for Defense, December 1, 1950. He called the Chinese attack "naked, deliberate, and unprovoked" aggression "without a shadow of justification." *Public Papers*, pp. 729-730.

¹²⁶ Text of U.N. resolution, *Dynamics of World Power*, p. 381.

acceptable: "[A] successful resistance to Chinese-North Korean aggression at some position in Korea and a deflation of the military and political prestige of the Chinese Communists would be of great importance to our national interests, if this could be accomplished without incurring serious losses."¹²⁷ The J.C.S. even authorized MacArthur to withdraw from Korea entirely if the costs of staying were too high: "Should it become evident in your judgment that evacuation is essential to avoid severe losses of men and materials you will at that time withdraw from Korea to Japan."¹²⁸

By mid-February, the administration wanted to get out of Korea with a cease-fire around the 38th parallel. General Vandenberg noted that the U.S. was "trading irreplaceable Americans for expendable Chinese. The question is not only how long will the Chinese be willing to take punishment but also how long will the U.S. public be willing to take American losses, even at the ratio of 20 Chinese to one American."¹²⁹ Acheson told Marshall that "the heavy additional drain on American manpower and resources" militated against a renewed offensive across the 38th parallel.¹³⁰ General Ridgway summed up the situation best:

And I was sure, as was the Eighth Army, that we could have pushed right on to the Yalu in the Spring of 1951, had we been ordered to do so. The price for such a drive would have been far too high for what we would have gained, however. We would have lost heavily in dead and wounded--my estimate at the time was 100,000--fighting against stern resistance across the rugged northern face of the country, and our prize would have been no more than many square miles of inhospitable real estate, much of it a-swarm with guerrillas for years to come.¹³¹

¹²⁷ JCS to MacArthur, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1625 (December 29).

¹²⁸ JCS to MacArthur, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:42 (January 9).

¹²⁹ State-JCS meeting, Memorandum of Record, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:176 (February 13).

¹³⁰ Draft State memorandum for the President, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:193 (February 23).

¹³¹ Ridgway, *War in Korea*, pp. 150-151.

In short, MacArthur's easy victory had vanished. The war aim of October 7 could not be fulfilled without large-scale reinforcements and the J.C.S. had no desire to provide them.¹³² Support for the war among the public dropped precipitously. By January, 66 percent of those surveyed believed that the U.S. should pull out of Korea and 49 percent thought the U.S. intervention had been a mistake.¹³³ As Spanier observed: "The price for a United Korea was too high; the *status quo* was therefore acceptable."¹³⁴ The same was true for MacArthur's program. In Ridgway's words, it demanded too high a price "to nick the edges of the enemy's military power."¹³⁵ The Soviet Union, after all, was the primary adversary and most dangerous threat, not China.

Furthermore, systemic constraints had tightened. First, Truman feared Soviet intervention in support of China could shift decisively the balance of power against the United States in Europe. With U.S. resources devoted to an Asian war, Europe would be left vulnerable to Soviet attack. Bradley, Acheson, Marshall, the Joint Chiefs, as well as Truman expected that attacking China would make it "impossible to continue the build-up of forces in Europe."¹³⁶

Second, the administration feared that should the U.S. escalate the war against China, the Soviets could and would intervene decisively in Asia. In the event of a U.S. attack on the Chinese mainland, China and the Soviet Union could invoke the Sino-Soviet treaty.¹³⁷

¹³² State-JCS meeting, Memorandum of Record, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:174-175 (February 13).

¹³³ Foote, *Wrong War*, p. 107.

¹³⁴ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, p. 253.

¹³⁵ Ridgway, *War in Korea*, p. 146.

¹³⁶ Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 386.

¹³⁷ Foote, *Wrong War*, pp. 124-125.

If the U.S. bombed Manchurian bases, Acheson told Truman, "Russia would cheerfully get in it."¹³⁸ Truman did not want to get bogged down in a land war in Asia:

If we allowed the Russians now to trap us inside their perimeter, however, we would run the risk of being sucked into a bottomless pit. There would be no end to it, and it would bleed us dry. The Russians had tried to lure us into traps time and again. This one differed only in being bigger than the earlier ones.¹³⁹

General Vandenberg warned Truman that bombing China and Manchuria risked high losses to the Air Force which would weaken it and make defense against the Soviet Union in Europe or Asia impossible.¹⁴⁰

Third, launching a preventive war would have undermined the power and effectiveness of the U.N. coalition. America's NATO allies, especially Britain, opposed any expansion of the war. The British warned the Truman administration that they would not support efforts to extend the Korean War to the Chinese mainland. In the first week of December, British Prime Minister Clement Atlee flew to Washington for discussions with Truman on the Korean War. He stressed three points: 1. The U.N. should not pull out of Korea unless it is forced out militarily; 2. The U.N. should endeavor to get a cease-fire in Korea and begin peace negotiations; 3. The war should not be expanded against China under any circumstances.¹⁴¹ Atlee was particularly concerned that the United States not divert attention and resources from strengthening European defenses.¹⁴² Truman assured the

¹³⁸ Truman, *Memoirs*, pp. 387-388.

¹³⁹ Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 388.

¹⁴⁰ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 240-241.

¹⁴¹ Fifth Truman-Atlee meeting, *FRUS*, 1950, 7:1449-1461 (December 7).

¹⁴² Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 166-168.

Prime Minister that the U.S. had no intention of attacking China.¹⁴³

Truman also feared that escalation in Korea would drive America's European allies toward neutralism. He believed that if the United States attacked China, the Europeans might abandon the U.S. and seek an accommodation with the Soviet Union:

[Our allies] do not believe we should take the initiative to widen the conflict in the Far East. If the United States were to widen the conflict, we might well have to go it alone. If we go it alone in Asia, we may destroy the unity of the free nations against aggression. Our European allies are nearer to Russia than we are. They are in far greater danger. If we act without regard to the danger that faces them, they may act without regard to the dangers that we face. Going it alone brought the world to the disaster of World War II. We cannot go it alone in Asia and go it with company in Europe.... I do not propose to strip this country of its allies in the face of Soviet danger. The path of collective security is the only sure defense against the dangers that threaten us.¹⁴⁴

Acheson shared this sentiment. The Europeans, he believed, were unlikely to remain allied with the United States if it took action which risked a war with the Soviet Union:

We cannot expect that our collective-security system will long survive if we take steps which unnecessarily and dangerously expose the people who are in the system with us. They would understandably hesitate to be tied to a partner who leads them to a highly dangerous short cut across a difficult crevasse. In relation to the total world threat, our safety requires that we strengthen, not weaken, the bonds of our collective security system.¹⁴⁵

Thus, Truman rejected MacArthur's program and told him so. "In reaching a final decision about Korea, I shall have to give constant thought to the main threat from the Soviet Union and to the need for a rapid expansion of our Armed Forces to meet this great

¹⁴³ That promise, however, was not unqualified. In early January 1951, Acheson repeated to British Foreign Secretary Bevin that the U.S. would not expand the war. "I want to assure you first that we here intend to do everything we can to prevent hostilities spreading from Korea to wider areas in the Far East." This assurance meant that the U.S. would not *initiate* an expansion of the war. But if the Soviets or Chinese made Korea a wider war *first*, then all bets were off. "Therefore, it seems to us that whether or not hostilities can be prevented from spreading depends upon the deliberate choice of Peiping (Beijing) or those who inspire that regime." Acheson to London Embassy (relaying message to Bevin), *FRUS*, 1951, 7:27 (January 5).

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 191-192.

¹⁴⁵ Acheson statement, *Basic Documents*, p. 2621.

danger."¹⁴⁶ On January 9, 1951, the Joint Chiefs informed MacArthur that a naval blockade cannot be imposed on China without British or U.N. consent--both of which were not forthcoming. Moreover, the J.C.S. told MacArthur that "Naval and Air attacks on objectives in Communist China probably can be authorized only if Chinese Communists attack United States forces outside of Korea..."¹⁴⁷ In an April 11, broadcast Truman summed up his policy: "By fighting a limited war in Korea, we have prevented aggression from succeeding and bringing on a general war....We are to prevent a world war--not start one."¹⁴⁸

These same considerations contributed to the decision to contract war aims and end the effort to unify Korea. By January 1951, U.N. forces had halted the Chinese offensive and were pushing back in several sectors. The military informed the administration that a major U.N. offensive to recapture North Korea would require substantial reinforcement of the U.N. army.¹⁴⁹ No such reinforcement was contemplated; resources were being devoted to the build-up in Europe. Truman requested from his advisors a re-evaluation of the U.N.'s political objectives in Korea. Acheson opposed a renewed drive on North Korea:

Our principal allies and the great majority of governments having troops in Korea would not support the unification of Korea as a *war aim*, although they continue to support it as a *political objective*. A decision to press for the unification of Korea by military action would constitute a vast increase in our present military commitments, would almost certainly require the extension of hostilities against China, would greatly increase the risk of direct Soviet participation, and would require a major political effort to obtain the agreement of other directly interested governments....The principal factors militating against a general advance across the 38th parallel are: (a) the capability of the Moscow-Peiping axis to inflict a decisive defeat upon United Nations forces if they make the decision to do so, (b) the risk of

¹⁴⁶ JCS to MacArthur (relaying Truman's message), *FRUS*, 1951, 7:78 (January 13).

¹⁴⁷ JCS to MacArthur, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:42 (January 9). The Joint Chiefs reiterated this point in their recommendations to the National Security Council on action in Korea. *FRUS*, 1951, 7:70-72 (January 12).

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Rees, *Limited War*, p. 223.

¹⁴⁹ State-JCS meeting, Memorandum of Record, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:174-175 (February 13).

extending the Korean conflict to other areas and even into general war at a time when we are not ready to risk general war, (c) the heavy additional drain on American manpower and resources without a clearly seen outcome of the effort, (d) loss of unity among our allies and in the United Nations in support of the Korean effort, and (e) the diversion of additional United States effort from other vital commitments.¹⁵⁰

The J.C.S. argued that unifying Korea militarily was risky and no longer practical.¹⁵¹

Britain and other U.N. members insisted that the U.N. should attempt to reach a peaceful settlement. Truman, not wanting to divide NATO or alienate other U.N. members, agreed.¹⁵² MacArthur's hostility to this policy led to his dismissal on April 11, 1951.¹⁵³

Peace was two years away but the war aims debate was over.

5.6 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the Predictions

In this section, I weigh and summarize the results of the predictions made by each hypothesis. I first restate the prediction and then note in bold whether it came true or not. Explanations of my coding, to the extent that they are necessary, follow in parentheses.

The Blood Price

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against North Korea. **True.**
- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand its war aims against China. **Not True.**
- * The Truman administration should express concern at increasing casualty rates as the war as the war continues. **True.** (But the statements were made after the Chinese intervention, not before the decision to unify Korea.)

¹⁵⁰ Draft State memorandum for Truman, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:192-193 (February 23). Emphasis in original.

¹⁵¹ Draft DoD memorandum for Truman, *FRUS*, 1951, 7:203-205 (February 27).

¹⁵² Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 193-195.

¹⁵³ See Truman, *Memoirs*, pp. 438-445.

- * Truman, Acheson, and especially the military, in internal policy discussions, should justify the decision to unify the peninsula using language which refers to the blood price. **Not True.**

Social Mobilization

- * Core Prediction # 1: The Truman administration will declare the universalistic goal of reversing Communist aggression in Asia as the U.S. war aim. **True.**
- * Core Prediction # 2: The administration will expand war aims against China once it enters the war. **Not True.**
- * The Truman administration should declare their intention to unify Korea early in the war, if not immediately after its outbreak. **Not True.**
- * American public opinion should favor the wider war aim of unification *before* Inchon. **Not True.** (The available evidence indicates that most, but not all, Congressional and public calls for unification came after Inchon.)
- * Truman, Acheson, and other high officials, in internal policy discussions, should voice the need to unify the peninsula in order to give the American people a universal aim for which to fight. **Not True.** (Although, Allison seemed to make such noises on occasion.)

The Clean Problem

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against Korea. **True.**
- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand its war aims against China. **Not True.**
- * MacArthur should favor wider war aims than Truman. **True.**
- * As MacArthur's prestige rises, U.S. war aims widen. As MacArthur's prestige falls, war aims shrink. **True.**
- * Civilian elites should be afraid of contradicting or challenging MacArthur's opinions and authority when his prestige is high. They should be more prone to contradicting and challenging MacArthur when his prestige is low. **True.**

Threats to Security

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. expands its war aims against North Korea. **True.**
 - North Korea grew stronger prior to the U.S. decision to unify the peninsula. **Not True.**
 - The U.S. bordered North Korea. **Not True.**

- The U.S. perceived the offense as the stronger form of warfare. **True.** (I have no direct evidence of this, but I think it reasonable to code this way after the events of World War II as well as the Korean War itself.)
 - The U.S. perceived North Korean intentions as aggressive. **True.**
 - + North Korea initiated the war. **True.**
 - + The U.S. perceived North Korean conduct as uncivilized. **Unclear.** (Probably true, but I do not know whether it had an impact at the highest levels.)
 - + The U.S. perceived North Korean propaganda as hostile and menacing. **Unclear.** (The same applies here.)
 - + North Korea pursued an offensive strategy. **True.**
 - + North Korea and the U.S. had different regime types. **True.**
- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand its war aims after the Chinese intervention. **Not True.**
- Communist forces in Korea grew stronger prior to the decision to contract war aims. **True.**
 - The U.S. borders China. **Not True.**
 - The U.S. perceived the offense as the stronger form of warfare. **True.**
 - The U.S. perceived Chinese intentions as more aggressive. **True.**
 - + China initiated its intervention. **True.** (The administration certainly perceived China as engaging in unprovoked aggression.)
 - + The U.S. perceived Chinese wartime conduct as uncivilized. **Unclear.**
 - + The U.S. perceived Chinese propaganda as menacing. **Unclear.**
 - + China pursued an offensive strategy. **True.**
 - + China and the U.S. had different regime types. **True.**
- * A shift in the Truman administration's estimate of the threat posed by North Korea and China should be followed by a corresponding shift in U.S. war aims. **Not True.** (The administration's estimate of threat in Korea rose after the Chinese intervention, but U.S. war aims contracted.)
- * MacArthur's perception of the Chinese threat should be greater than Truman's. **True.** (This is explained largely by his belief that Asia was more important than Europe.)
- * Members of the Truman administration, in internal policy discussions, should justify the effort to unify Korea in terms which describe the North as an increasingly dangerous state. **True.**
- * Later, the Truman administration should justify the contraction of war aims in terms which describe China as unthreatening. **Not True.**

Opportunistic Expansion

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand its war aims against North Korea. **True.**
 - The U.S. grew relatively stronger as the war progressed. **True.**
 - The U.S. won a decisive military victory over North Korea. **True.**
 - The U.S. thought expanding its war aims would cost few casualties. **True.**

- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will contract its war aims after China's intervention. **True.**
 - The U.S. was relatively weaker after China's intervention. **True.** (The U.S. was now fighting two enemies, instead of one.)
 - The U.S. suffered a decisive military defeat. **True.**
 - The U.S. thought expanding or even holding war aims steady would cost many casualties. **True.**

- * The Truman administration, in internal policy discussions, should expand its war aims as its estimate of opportunity rises and contract war aims as its estimate of opportunity declines. **True.**

- * American public opinion should support wider aims *after* Inchon and reduced war aims after the Chinese intervention. **True.**

Preventive Expansion

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. will expand the war to weaken North Korea. **Not True.** (The U.S. did not attack the North's source of supply, though MacArthur wanted to.)

- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. will expand the war against China in order to deprive it of power resources. **Not True.** (Again, the U.S. did not attack China's supply, even though MacArthur and others wanted to.)

Quid Pro Quo Expansion

- * Core Prediction: The U.S. should make promises to other states in order to get them to join the war on the U.S. side, stay in the war, or at least not to side with the North Koreans. **Not True.**

- * The Truman administration, in private discussions with representatives of other states, should be making promises of side payments or other benefits in return for specified behavior. **Not True.** (Except promises to Britain about limiting the war.)

Systemic Constraints

- * Core Prediction # 1: The U.S. should not expand its war aims against North Korea. **Not True.**
- * Core Prediction # 2: The U.S. should not expand its war aims against China and should contract them in Korea. **True.**
- * As the Truman administration's fear of outside intervention decreases, war aims should, or at least could, expand. As the fear of outside intervention increases, war aims should shrink. **Not True.**
- * MacArthur should be less concerned with outside intervention than Truman or other administration officials. **True.**

Table 5.1 Summary of Predictions and Results

Hypothesis	Core Predictions	Actual Results	#Subsidiary Predictions	# True	# Not True	# Unclear
Blood Price	1: Expand 2: Expand	Expansion Contraction	3	2	1	0
Social Mobilization	1: Expand 2: Expand	Expansion Contraction	5	0	5	0
Clean Problem	1: Expand 2: Expand	Expansion Contraction	3	3	0	0
Threats to Security	1: Expand 2: Expand	Expansion Contraction	22	13	5	4
Opportunistic Expansion	1: Expand 2: Contract	Expansion Contraction	8	8	0	0
Quid Pro Quo Expansion	U.S Makes Promises	None Were Made	1	0	1	0
Preventive Expansion	1: Expand War 2: Expand War	Not Done Not Done	0	0	0	0
Systemic Constraints	1: Not Expand 2: Contract	Expansion Contraction	2	1	1	0

Explanation:

Similar to previous chapters, the first column lists the hypothesis. The second column states the core predictions of each hypothesis. In this case, most hypotheses had two core prediction, one for the debate over whether to expand war aims and unify the peninsula; and the second for the debate over whether to expand war aims against China after its intervention in the war. The third column counts the number of subsidiary predictions. Columns five through seven report how many of those subsidiary predictions were true, not true, or unclear.

Conclusions

The blood price hypothesis explains poorly the evolution in U.S. war aims. There is little evidence that the casualties U.S. forces took in the early stages in the war were the decisive factor for administration officials when they decided to expand their war aims and unify Korea. Thus, while the first core prediction of this hypothesis correlates with the outcome, the details do not. With respect to the second core prediction, the hypothesis fails. It predicted an expansion in war aims and the outcome was a contraction. This is particularly telling. It was after the Chinese intervention when the administration was most explicitly concerned about the casualties U.S. forces were suffering; yet, war aims contracted.

The preventive expansion and quid pro quo expansion hypotheses fare the worst here. Neither the core nor the subsidiary hypotheses of preventive expansion and quid pro quo expansion came true.

The social mobilization hypothesis fared only slightly better. Neither of its core predictions came true. More importantly, none of its subsidiary predictions came true. Of course, these predictions may not be able to tell all of the story. It may be that the war aim of "stopping Communist aggression" was sufficiently universal that a wider war aim was not necessary to build support for the war. Even so, this still undermines the hypothesis.

Many authors argue that Truman became a captive of domestic politics when deciding to expand war aims. The Republican opposition in Congress had been attacking Truman's foreign policy and his foreign policy officials, notably Acheson, for years. After Inchon, there was great support in the Congress and in the media for an expansion in war aims to unify Korea.¹⁵⁴ Numerous scholars of the war and several biographers of Truman argue

¹⁵⁴ See Ronald J. Caridi, *The Korean War and American Politics: The Republican Party as a Case Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

that domestic political considerations played a central, if not the central, role in Truman's decision to expand war aims. Truman, they argue, feared that his administration would be severely undermined and his party would lose control of the Congress in the fall elections, if he did not yield to their demands to expand war aims.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, I do not find these arguments persuasive. First, the proponents of this view do not make the argument; they only assert it. In every book cited here that argues domestic politics played a role, there is not one citation to substantiate the view that Truman expanded his war aims in the fall of 1950 because of domestic political pressure.¹⁵⁶ Second, my own research reveals no indications of the influence of domestic politics on Truman, however oblique, in primary sources.¹⁵⁷ Truman blamed the Republicans and their media allies for not showing more loyalty to his administration during war. He blamed them, in effect, for divisiveness and emboldening the Chinese to intervene. In a famous outburst after the Chinese had intervened, Truman stated: "We can blame the liars for the fix we are in this morning. It's at least partly the result of their vicious, lying campaign. What has appeared in our press, along with the defeat of our leaders in the Senate, has made the world believe that the American people are not behind our foreign policy--and I don't think the Communists would ever have dared to do this thing in Korea if it hadn't been for

¹⁵⁵ See Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp. 326-327; Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, pp. 276-277; James, *Refighting the Last War*, p. 195; Lichterman, "To the Yalu," pp. 596-597; MacDonald, *War Before Vietnam*, p. 50; Rees, *Limited War*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁵⁶ Moreover, the following scholars do not mention or minimize the role of domestic politics in the decision to expand war aims: Lowe, *Origins of the Korean War*; Neustadt, *Presidential Power*; and Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*. Spanier discusses domestic politics a lot in his study, but not with respect to this particular decision. Finally, Rosemary Foote was vague and noncommittal: "And though domestic opinion had little direct influence on policy formation during the war years, neither president (Truman and Eisenhower) was immune to the suggestions and demands of domestic detractors and supporters, and both recognized the need to establish a sizable base of support for policy positions." *Wrong War*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁷ These include *FRUS*; Acheson's, Truman's, Collins's, and Bohlen's memoirs; and, to the extent it is representative, Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

that belief."¹⁵⁸ But Truman was not blaming the Republicans for forcing him to expand war aims; he blamed them for China's intervention. Furthermore, this argument fails to explain the contraction of war aims in December 1950-January 1951. The Republicans in Congress loudly attacked Truman's policy in Korea and demanded that he launch a preventive war against China. Yet, Truman contracted his war aims back to the status quo.

The Cleon problem demonstrates even greater explanatory power in this case than in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars. The first core prediction correlates with the outcome and all of its subsidiary predictions came true. MacArthur favored crossing the 38th parallel to unify Korea. While MacArthur did not gain direct political power to dictate war aims, his military victory at Inchon gave him great prestige and, especially, credibility. He used that prestige and credibility to argue for the unification of Korea.

Moreover, the Cleon problem provides an especially strong explanation for why the Truman administration did not pull back from the invasion of North Korea sooner, once evidence of Chinese intervention was clear. Pulling back on contact with Chinese forces was the stated policy in numerous documents and military directives. Yet, that policy was ignored in October and early November. Truman and the J.C.S. did not force MacArthur to halt his advance as more evidence of Chinese intervention filtered in. MacArthur assured them that there was nothing to worry about. Suggestions by the J.C.S. that a tactical withdrawal to a more defensible position were dismissed by the U.N. commander. No one overruled MacArthur. The reason for Washington's passiveness was that the general had been right before, especially at Inchon, when everyone else had been wrong. This made it

¹⁵⁸ John Hersey, "Profiles: Mr. President II--Ten O'Clock Meeting," *The New Yorker* (April 14, 1950), p. 54. Irving Janis argues that Truman was deflecting anger away from his group of advisors who led him astray. See Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), pp.66-69.

difficult to challenge his battlefield assessments. Moreover, at the Wake Island conference, MacArthur assured Truman that the Soviets and Chinese would not intervene in the Korean War. MacArthur's prestige, as nearly everyone involved later admitted, made it virtually impossible for other policy-makers to contradict his policy recommendations.¹⁵⁹ Thus, for nearly two months MacArthur's war aims became the administration's war aims. The Cleon problem hypothesis accurately predicted the group preferences which became the state preferences.

Nevertheless, this hypothesis generally was unable to explain why the administration contracted its war aims after the Chinese intervention. MacArthur favored a preventive war, but Truman decided to return to the status quo. Thus, although the second core prediction of the Cleon problem hypothesis did not correlate with the outcome, all of the process-tracing predictions did. Indeed, this single anomaly may be explained by the fact that MacArthur's prestige in the weeks and months after the Chinese attack was on the wane, at least within the administration. His judgment, which was extremely important, had been demonstrably mistaken. If there is any point at which Washington's civilians were likely to challenge MacArthur's views, it was after the Chinese intervention.

In the comparative framework, this entire episode provides strong support for the argument that generals are likely to gain a greater measure of political authority in democracies than in oligarchies. Truman was clearly more reticent about challenging MacArthur than Bismarck was with Moltke. Why? The answer may simply lie in the personalities of the two political leaders. However, the question is even more telling when one considers that Bismarck and Moltke, in the eyes of King Wilhelm, were equals. Truman

¹⁵⁹ See Walter Millis with Harvey C. Mansfield and Harold Stein, *Arms and the State: Civil-Military Elements in National Policy* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), pp. 292-295. This was Acheson's view as well. See Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 466. Also, Manchester, *American Caesar*, p. 577.

was clearly MacArthur's superior. MacArthur had access to the press in ways that Moltke did not. The U.N. commander was held in very high esteem by the American people; when he was unhappy, they knew about it and were unhappy too. This dynamic reverberated up into the White House. Bismarck, on the other hand, needed only to keep Wilhelm happy, not the Prussian people. Because Truman depended on public support for his political position in a way that Bismarck did not, he had less room to maneuver against a popular general. As Truman himself noted immediately after the Chinese intervention, he could not afford to undermine MacArthur's prestige (though that too had its limits).

The threat hypothesis produced mixed results. The first core prediction correlated with the outcome in the case. Also, a majority of its subsidiary predictions were true. In particular, many members of the administration constantly stressed the current and potential future threat North Korea could pose to the South if it were not eliminated. Thus, to some extent, the hypothesis was "working." Nevertheless, with respect to sequence, the hypothesis failed to explain the decision to unify the Korean peninsula. The administration's estimate of the North Korean threat had risen greatly after the North Korean attack and had not diminished during the summer. This was clearly expressed in the internal debate over war aims. Yet, the decision to expand war aims was not taken until after the Inchon operation in September. Furthermore, the second core prediction of an expansion against China did not correlate with the outcome in the case. There is considerable evidence in the narrative that the administration's estimate of the Chinese threat had increased after Beijing's intervention. Yet, the response was to contract war aims back to the status quo.

The systemic constraints hypothesis emerged from this case with some explanatory power. Its first core prediction did not correlate with the outcome of the case. It predicted that the U.S. would expand its war against North Korea. Objectively, the Chinese warnings

against crossing the 38th parallel should have persuaded the administration to back off from its plans to unify Korea. But they were ignored or discounted. However, the administration *believed* that it had a systemic opportunity to advance to the Yalu. So in that sense, Truman's actual decision-making on the expansion of war aims corresponded to the tenets of the systemic constraints hypothesis, even if the objective situation did not. The second core prediction of the systemic constraints hypothesis, however, came resoundingly true. The administration did not expand war aims against China because it feared that doing so would have provoked a war with the Soviet Union. The fact that a number of Soviet pilots fought for the Chinese makes this look like a sound assessment. Furthermore, fighting such a war risked more important foreign policy objectives, notably the security of Europe.

The opportunistic expansion hypothesis emerges with the most explanatory power in this case. Both of its core predictions correlate with the outcomes in the case, and *all* of its subsidiary predictions came true. With respect to the narrative, despite an increased threat and MacArthur's drumbeat to go for more, Truman did not expand his war aims until Inchon provided the opportunity. He consciously did not act on the policy recommendations of N.S.C.-81/1 until he could take measure of the Inchon operation. The decisive defeat of the North Korean army subsequent to that operation altered the balance of power on the peninsula in Washington's favor. Taking the North looked like a quick, cheap victory. Truman "chose his aim because it seemed to follow from the military movement at virtually no diplomatic risk. With the military opportunity before them and with diplomatic dangers out of sight, the men he leaned on for advice saw little risk of any sort."¹⁶⁰ When the Chinese intervened, however, the U.S. Army suffered the most decisive military defeat in its history. The opportunity for a quick decisive victory vanished. Truman then rejected

¹⁶⁰ Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, p. 100.

MacArthur's program for preventive war and contracted his war aims back to the status quo. As the estimate of opportunity rose and fell with fortunes on the battlefield, war aims rose and fell with them.

In explaining the first decision to expand war aims, there was a symbiosis between the Cleon problem and the opportunistic expansion hypotheses. The opportunity presented by the Inchon operation also served to enhance MacArthur's prestige. MacArthur, with such towering prestige, was better able to convince the administration that it had an opportunity in Korea to rollback Communism. And when the opportunity began to diminish in late October, early November, it was MacArthur's prestige which kept the ball rolling. Only when the Chinese intervened and launched their massive counteroffensive was the image of opportunity permanently eliminated.

The fundamental policy difference between Truman and MacArthur was that the general repudiated "the Administration's basic assumptions, above all the supposition that the Soviet Union might be ready and willing to fight a total war, and that the United States, therefore, must not provide an eager Kremlin with an excuse for attack."¹⁶¹ During the Congressional hearings that took place after MacArthur was dismissed, the general was asked what would happen if his assessment of the international situation was wrong and the United States were plunged into global war. MacArthur replied: "That doesn't happen to be my responsibility, Senator." This answer was quite similar to the one provided by Field Marshal von Moltke in response to the equally similar question asked by Crown Prince Friedrich at the end of the Franco-Prussian War. Generals directing armies in battle seem remarkably unwilling to consider political constraints.

¹⁶¹ Spanier, *Truman-MacArthur Controversy*, pp. 262-263.

CHAPTER SIX: BRITISH WAR AIMS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

"It is our system of civilization and government against theirs. It is our life or theirs."¹

-- Winston Churchill, First Lord of
the Admiralty, August 30, 1914

6.1 INTRODUCTION

British war aims in the First World War represent a case of multiple expansions in war aims. Britain declared war on Germany for defensive purposes, intending to defend the integrity of Belgium, the Channel coasts of France, and the balance of power in north-west Europe. Yet, it soon expanded war aims to include destroying "Prussian militarism," and several times more first by making promises to other states and then by enlarging its empire in the Middle East. The most important expansion was the first one, destroying Prussian militarism. The British government intended to continue the war until the Prussian military leadership no longer held any political power in Germany. That eventually committed Britain to fight a total war against Germany costing millions of casualties. It also led to many subsequent expansions in war aims. For example, Britain agreed to continue fighting until France regained Alsace and Lorraine, Russia acquired Constantinople, and a host of other powers received slices of territory from the Central Powers. In addition, London intended to dismember the Ottoman Empire and add large portions of it to British imperial holdings. None of these were part of Britain's initial war aims.

As in previous chapters, we begin by inferring predictions from the hypotheses as to the causes of Britain's widening war aims.

¹ "Mr. Churchill on the British Case," *The Times* (London), August 31, 1914.

What Do the Hypotheses Predict?

The predictions in this section refer to the general evolution of British war aims, not any specific one. I will discuss this evolution and the inability of Britain to contract its war aims in 1916 and 1917 more specifically in the narrative.

The Blood Price:

* **Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims.** This prediction is obvious in this case in light of the casualties Britain suffered (millions) and the fact that proponents of this theory cite the First World War as its preeminent example.

* **The expansion of British war aims should come after Britain has suffered significant casualties.**

* **As the war progresses, British leaders should express concern at the increasing casualty rates.**

* **Cabinet ministers should justify new war aims using language and terms that refer to the blood price.** It is more likely that such references, if they exist at all, will be found in internal discussions or memoirs.

Social Mobilization:

* **Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims toward a universal goal.**

* **The expansion of British war aims should come early in the war.** This is an important sequence prediction.

* **Cabinet ministers, in internal policy discussions, should voice the need to find a universal aim in order to build support for the war.**

The Cleon Problem:

- * **Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims.**
- * **Britain's generals should favor wider aims than their civilian counterparts.**
- * **As the prestige of the military rises, Britain's war aims should expand. As the military's prestige declines, Britain's war aims should contract.**
- * **As the military's prestige rises, British ministers should be increasingly reluctant to challenge or contradict the military's views on strategy and war aims. Conversely, as the military's prestige declines, ministers should be more willing to challenge or contradict military opinion.**

Threats to Security:

- * **Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims against Germany, because:**
 - Germany was perceived as growing stronger during the war.
 - Britain was geographically proximate to Germany.
 - Britain perceived the offense as the stronger form of war.
 - Britain perceived Germany's intentions as aggressive, because:
 - + Germany initiated the war.
 - + Britain perceived Germany wartime conduct as brutal and uncivilized.
 - + Britain perceived Germany's propaganda as excessively hostile and menacing.
 - + Germany adopted an offensive strategy.
 - + Britain and Germany were governed by different regime types.
- * **A shift in Britain's estimate of the German threat should lead to a corresponding shift in British war aims.**
- * **British ministers, in internal policy discussions, should justify wider war aims in language that describes Germany as a greater threat than they had previously realized.**

Opportunistic Expansion:

- * **Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims, because:**
 - Britain grew relatively stronger during the war.
 - Britain won a decisive military victory.
 - Britain leaders thought expanding war aims would be relatively cheap.

- * **A shift in Britain's estimate of opportunity should lead to a corresponding shift in British war aims.**

- * **British ministers, in internal policy discussions, should explain the decision to widen war aims in terms of opportunity.**

Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion:

- * **Core Prediction: Britain will expand the war to deprive Germany of power and access to resources.**

- * **Britain should attack neutrals that are giving aid to Germany.**

Quid Pro Quo Expansion:

- * **Core Prediction: Britain will make promises in order to win new allies in the fight against Germany.**

- * **British ministers, in back-channel or private diplomatic meetings with other European leaders, should make promises of territorial side payments in exchange for their entry into the war.**

- * **We should see evidence of territorial side payments after the war. Britain should support and agree to boundary shifts desired by its allies in the post-war peace settlement.**

Collective Action and Alliance Management:

* **Core Prediction:** Britain, along with its major allies, will expand aims to an absolute level. Germany's unconditional surrender would be one such example.²

* We should, therefore, see few disputes among the allies over war aims.

Systemic Constraints:

* **Core Prediction:** Britain may expand its war aims.

* Britain should not publicly adopt war aims which the United States opposes.

After 1915, the U.S. is the only major power not involved in the conflict. London does not want to alienate Washington.

Outline of the Chapter

The organization of the rest of this chapter is as follows. Section 6.2 presents a brief summary of the war. Section 6.3 provides the background to Britain's declaration of war in 1914 and identifies its initial war aims. Section 6.4 examines why Britain expanded its war aims in order to destroy Prussian militarism. Section 6.5 covers the adjustments made to war aims in order to win new allies in the fight against Germany. Section 6.6 explains why Britain wanted to conquer large tracts of the Middle East. Section 6.7 details the civil-military dispute within the British leadership. Section 6.8 asks why Britain's war aims against Germany did not contract after suffering over a million casualties in 1916 and 1917 or why a compromise peace was not reached with Austria or Turkey. Finally, section 6.9, the conclusion, assesses the relative explanatory power of the hypotheses.

² Germany's destruction as a Great Power could be another.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE WAR³

The purpose of this summary is not to write a history of the First World War. Numerous and excellent volumes on this subject fill many shelves in university libraries. This section provides only the basic names, dates, and events of the war, concentrating on the activities of Great Britain, to serve as general guideposts for analyzing the evolution in British war aims. Important details and sequences of events as they relate to war aims will be found in subsequent sections.

Nearly all of Europe went to war in early August 1914. Great Britain, France, Russia, and Serbia were on one side, with Germany and Austro-Hungary on the other. Turkey, siding with Germany, declared war on the Allies on October 29, 1914. Italy, once a member of Germany's pre-war alliance, declared war on the Central Powers, in May 1915. Romania and Bulgaria also became involved in the war. In 1917 the United States entered the war on the Allied side, whereas Russia dropped out.

The British government during this time was led by the Liberal Party under Prime Minister Henry Asquith. Although decision-making in Britain was conducted by the Cabinet as a whole, the central characters in this drama included Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary; David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty; and Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War. The Conservative opposition in the House of Commons was led by Andrew Bonar Law, who supported the war.

Britain declared war against Germany on August 3, 1914 after Berlin ignored

³ This summary is drawn largely from J.F.C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World: From The American Civil War to the End of World War Two*, vol. 3 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1956); and R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History: from 3500 B.C. to the present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986, Second Revised Edition), pp. 928-1026.

London's ultimatum to withdraw from Belgian territory. Germany was executing the Schlieffen Plan, an effort to knock France out of the war with a quick and massive hammer blow. The plan failed when France wheeled its army about, pulling back from a disastrous offensive in Alsace-Lorraine, and stopped the German advance on the Marne. The war in the West then degenerated into trench warfare.

The British had sent most of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) to France in the early battles of 1914. As the war settled into stalemate, the government sought alternatives to the war in the West. The Cabinet initiated an operation to force the Dardanelles and eliminate Turkey. The major British effort of 1915 went into this campaign. It ultimately failed, costing Britain a quarter million casualties. The country blamed Churchill for the failure and forced him to resign.

British strategy then returned to the effort to force a decision in the west. Britain raised and trained a massive volunteer army. In mid-1916, British military leaders unleashed it on German lines in the First Battle of the Somme. Over a period of five months, Britain's soldiers gained ground, but failed to win a breakthrough and a strategic victory. The trench warfare and stalemate continued. Britain suffered over 420,000 casualties, including 60,000 on one day alone.

Kitchener had died in June 1916. He had been sent on a mission to Russia when his ship struck a mine and sank into the North Sea. His influence had been waning, however. Since November 1915, the military direction of the war was in the hands of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, William Robertson.

Under sustained criticism from within the government and from without, Asquith's government fell in December 1916. A coalition government headed by David Lloyd George and Bonar Law replaced it. Lloyd George took over as Prime Minister.

In 1917, Lloyd George, over the strenuous objections of his generals, placed the British army under the command of French General Nivelle. The British army commander, Douglas Haig resisted the French commander's authority. This created problems when Nivelle launched new offensives in France. In mid-1917, the British army launched the Passchendale offensives, again with little success and at the cost of several hundred thousand British casualties.

Britain (and France) did not continue the same massive offensives in 1918. The British government was increasingly unwilling to supply Haig with reinforcements. Haig and Field Marshall Pétain, Nivelle's replacement, agreed to stand on the defensive and await the arrival of American troops and an expected German offensive. After Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare, the United States declared war in April 1917. Russia, on the other hand, withdrew from the war in the wake of revolution. Germany transferred nearly a million troops to the west for one last attempt to end the war before the Americans arrived in force. This final German offensive failed and, suffering under enormous strain and an Allied blockade, the Central Powers sued for peace in November 1918.

This very brief sketch of the main events of the war--focusing on British activities--provides only the basic background for understanding the evolution in British war aims. The subsequent sections of this chapter will analyze in detail Britain's declaration of war, initial war aims, and decisions to expand war aims.

6.3 BRITAIN'S DECLARATION OF WAR AND INITIAL WAR AIMS

Background: The Anglo-German Detente

Britain appeared to enjoy good relations with Germany in the several years prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Many scholars refer to this period as a "detente" between Britain and Germany.⁴ After the Agadir Crisis in 1911, in which Germany attempted to assert claims in French Morocco through gunboat diplomacy and nearly caused a general European war, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, tried to improve Anglo-German relations. The most important and ambitious initiative was the Haldane Mission in February 1912. R.B. Haldane, Britain's Secretary of State for War, went to Germany and attempted to persuade its leaders to negotiate mutual naval limits.⁵ This effort failed, but Britain and Germany cooperated in other areas. London and Berlin found room for negotiation and common ground during the Balkan Crises of 1912-1913, the division of the Portuguese colonies, and the Baghdad Railway.⁶ They settled differences peacefully and many in Britain and Germany believed that by 1914 relations had improved substantially.

Grey in particular saw improvement in Anglo-German relations. German cooperation and moderation with respect to Balkan issues especially pleased him. In June 1914, referring to the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, Grey wrote: "It seemed to me, that in essential matters of

⁴ See R. J. Crampton, *The Hollow Detente: Anglo-German Relations in the Balkans, 1911-1914* (London: George Prior, 1977); Michael G. Ekstein, "Great Britain and the Triple Entente on the Eve of the Sarajevo Crisis," in *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F. H. Hinsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 343; Sean Lynn-Jones, "Detente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911-1914," *International Security* 11 (Fall 1986): 121-150; Zara S. Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977); and Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War, 1914*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930). For historians who minimize the notion of a detente, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980); R. T. B. Langhorne, "Great Britain and Germany, 1911-1914," in *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey*; and K. G. Robbins, "The Foreign Secretary, the Cabinet, Parliament and the Parties," in *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey*.

⁵ Langhorne, "Great Britain and Germany," pp. 288-301.

⁶ For details, see Lynn-Jones, "Detente and Deterrence," pp. 129-133.

policy which are really important, Germany sometimes restrained Austria and Italy, particularly the former, and allowed them only to go to a certain point."⁷ On July 7, Grey declared: "We are on good terms with Germany and we wish to avoid a revival of friction with her."⁸ Furthermore, Grey believed that the warming of relations was mutually felt. Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor, relayed a message in which he "hoped, if new developments or emergencies arose in the Balkans, that they would be discussed as frankly between Germany and ourselves as the difficulties that arose during the last Balkan crisis, and that we shall be able to keep in as close touch."⁹

Other members of the British Cabinet and the professionals in the Foreign Office shared this belief in improved relations. David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer and future Prime Minister, declared in the House of Commons on July 23, 1914: "The two great Empires begin to realize that the points of cooperation are greater and more numerous than the points of possible controversy."¹⁰ Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, both believed that Britain's relations with Germany were remarkably good and calm prior to the July Crisis.¹¹

The July Crisis began after the Austrian heir to the throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was shot to death by a Serbian nationalist. There followed a chain of events

⁷ Grey to Buchanan, June 7, 1914, Grey Papers, F.O. 800/74, Public Records Office, Kew, England.

⁸ Quoted in Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 123.

⁹ Grey to Goschen, June 29, 1914, in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1878-1814*, ed. G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, vol. XI (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1926), document #4. Hereafter cited as *British Documents*, followed by volume and document numbers.

¹⁰ Quoted in A.J.P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers: Dissent Over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), p. 126.

¹¹ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 215.

which ended in world war. Austria sought to use the assassination to expand its interests in the Balkans at Serbian and Russian expense. Vienna threatened Serbia with war. Russia, siding with its small Slavic ally, threatened war against Austria if it moved against Serbia. Germany and France, in turn, supported their allies.

These events concerned Grey. He hoped that Britain would be able to talk and work with Germany to resolve the crisis peacefully, as they had with previous Balkan problems. Throughout the crisis, French officials urged Britain to declare unequivocally that it would stand beside France and Russia in a war against the Triple Alliance. In the hopes of resolving the crisis peacefully, Grey resisted making such a declaration. He feared it would make France and Russia more recalcitrant and less willing to negotiate.¹² The British Cabinet, moreover, would not have supported such a commitment.

Grey (and the British Cabinet) thought that the German government was divided between a war party and a peace party--a cleavage between hawks and doves at the highest levels. Grey believed that the German generals represented the war party and Kaiser Wilhelm II, Foreign Minister Jagow, and Bethmann Hollweg composed the peace party. Consequently, Grey took great pains to avoid threatening Germany during the crisis. By acting moderately and calmly, Grey believed he could strengthen the peace party within the German government, leading to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.¹³ As late as July 30, Grey instructed Sir Edward Goschen, the British Ambassador to Berlin, to tell Bethmann Hollweg: "If peace can be preserved and this crisis safely passed, my own endeavor will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she would be

¹² Michael G. Ekstein-Frankl, "The Development of British War Aims: August 1914-March 1915," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, 1969), p. 106.

¹³ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 112-114; Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, pp. 220-222.

assured that no hostile or aggressive policy would be pursued against her or allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately."¹⁴ Privately, Grey on July 29 had warned the German ambassador to London that in the event of a war between Germany and France, Berlin cannot and should not count on London remaining neutral.

But the crisis was not resolved as Grey had hoped. After Grey's private warning, Jagow attempted to reverse the course of the crisis and, in particular, restrain Austria. But overall, the Germans were not responsive to efforts to prevent war. The Russian mobilization had begun on July 29. The German military demanded the long-planned for countermobilization. It began on July 31.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the detente had not been not as real or certainly not as permanent as Grey and many British officials had imagined it to be. As Fritz Fischer and his students have demonstrated, the existence of a war party and a peace party in Berlin was a chimera. Grey was unable to reach an accommodation with Germany and that bitterly disappointed him.

The Outbreak of War and Britain's Initial War Aims

Despite Britain's attempts to resolve the crisis peacefully, the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia and the Russian mobilization on July 29, the German mobilization on July 31, and the French mobilization on August 1 were events which swiftly forced British leaders to chose between neutrality and war. Britain decided for war. The reasoning behind the decision is crucial to identifying Britain's initial war aims. Considerations of the balance of power motivated the British Cabinet's decision to intervene in the emerging European war. First, on the basis of a naval understanding between London and Paris, the British navy was

¹⁴ Telegram, Grey to Goschen, July 30, 1914, *British Documents*, vol. XI, #303.

¹⁵ Ekstein and Steiner, "Sarajevo Crisis," pp. 402-403.

obligated to defend France's Channel coastline from a German naval attack. Second, Britain resolved to defend Belgium's neutrality from German encroachments. While Cabinet leaders couched their support for Belgium in moral rhetoric, the real reason for intervention was in fact that Britain's security demanded that Germany, a hostile power, be prevented from controlling large tracts of the Channel coast. The next two sections develop these points in detail.

THE FRENCH COAST

Throughout most of the July Crisis, the Cabinet rejected the notion that Britain had an obligation to support France in a war against Germany.¹⁶ On July 24, the day Austria delivered its ultimatum to Serbia, Asquith wrote to his friend Venetia Stanley that "...we are within measurable, or imaginable, distance of a real Armageddon...Happily there seems to be no reason why we should be anything more than spectators."¹⁷ As the crisis worsened, repeated French appeals for a commitment of British support were turned down. As late as August 1, Grey told the French Government as it mobilized and prepared for war: "...[T]he present situation differed entirely from the Morocco incidents...France must take her decision at this moment without reckoning on an assistance that we are not now in a position to promise."¹⁸ Grey's statement was a reflection of the current Cabinet majority, not his own view. Grey and Asquith and other advocates of intervention feared that should they push the issue, they would probably win, but a large minority of the Cabinet would resign. Asquith in particular did not want this to happen. He believed that it was essential for Britain's

¹⁶ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 231. See H. H. Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, selected and edited Michael and Eleanor Brock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 146.

¹⁷ Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, p. 123.

¹⁸ Grey to Bertie, telegram, August 1, 1914, *British Documents*, vol. XI, #427.

government to lead the country to war united.¹⁹

The Cabinet meeting on August 2, however, was decisive. Grey marshalled his arguments in favor of intervention. A majority of the Cabinet at first still did not believe that England should go to war for France or for maintaining France and Russia against Germany and Austria. Grey relied on two relatively narrow arguments to make his case. First, in the years immediately prior to 1914, the British Admiralty had asked, and France had agreed, to concentrate the French navy in the Mediterranean so that Britain could concentrate its own in the home waters. Therefore, Britain had at a minimum an obligation to defend the French coast from German naval attack. Second, allowing the German navy to operate freely in the Channel and gain predominance there represented a serious threat to British security.²⁰ These arguments carried a majority of the Cabinet.²¹ It agreed that Britain should pledge to France protection of her Channel coasts. In the late afternoon of August 2, Grey was able to tell the French Ambassador: "I am authorized to give an assurance that if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts or shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power."²² This was not a promise to support France in a war against Germany. It only amounted to promising certain British fleet activity if the German navy entered the Channel. Absent that, there would be no intervention. Nevertheless, the promise to France caused two ministers' resignations. The commitment to fight waited on the violation of Belgium's neutrality.

¹⁹ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, pp. 235-236.

²⁰ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 141. These were the same arguments Grey then used in his discussion of France during his speech to the House of Commons on August 3. See Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five Years, 1892-1916*, vol. 2 (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), pp. 314-316.

²¹ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 235.

²² Grey to Bertie, August 2, 1914, *British Documents*, vol. XI, #487.

In 1839 the Great Powers of Europe signed a treaty guaranteeing Belgium's permanent neutrality. The British occasionally debated whether that meant in the event of a threat to its status all signatory powers were supposed to support Belgium simultaneously or whether each individual power was obligated to do so. The Gladstone Cabinet in 1870 decided it meant all five must support Belgium's neutrality and no one power was obligated to act individually.²³ This issue arose again in July 1914. As late as July 29, with war in the Balkans under way and war in the west imminent, a majority of the Cabinet (not including Grey, Churchill, or Prime Minister Asquith) determined again that all signatories were required to support Belgium, not one power alone.²⁴ Germany and France were not at war yet.

By July 31, it was clear that the July Crisis was doomed to end in a general European war. Britain asked from both France and Germany a guarantee of Belgian neutrality. France gave it at once. Germany wavered and delayed. This convinced Grey, Asquith, and several other Cabinet members that Germany intended to invade Belgium. As war between France and Germany drew closer--their mobilizations beginning on August 1--opinion in the Cabinet shifted. The possibility of a German-occupied Belgium changed the strategic thinking of a majority of Cabinet members. Many ministers realized that intervention in the European war was necessary and Belgium provided the justification. Britain could not tolerate a hostile power in control of Belgium's Channel coast.²⁵ When asked by the German ambassador what Britain's stance would be if Germany crossed over a corner of Belgium, Grey replied

²³ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 225.

²⁴ See Asquith's letters to the King, in J.A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. 2 (London: Hutchinson, 1932), pp. 80-81.

²⁵ David French, *British Strategy and War Aims, 1914-1916* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 21-22.

with an oblique warning: "All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here."²⁶

The decisive August 2nd Cabinet meeting had followed news of Germany's invasion of Luxembourg. The Cabinet decided that any violation of Belgium's neutrality would be a *casus belli*.²⁷ The news of Germany's ultimatum to Belgium reached London around noon on August 3.²⁸ Britain made its decision to intervene before London learned whether Belgium would accept Germany's ultimatum or fight the German army. In the late afternoon of August 2, Grey told the French ambassador that even if the Belgians joined the Germans, the violation of their frontier would still be a *casus belli* for Britain.²⁹ David Lloyd George, considered the only man in the Cabinet who could rally anti-war ministers and thereby threaten the unity of the government, found the German threat to Belgium decisive in making up his own mind. Although he had once stated that a violation of a corner of Belgium would not have necessarily provoked war, Germany's full-scale invasion was entirely different:

²⁶ Grey to Goschen, August 1, 1914, Relating a talk with the German Ambassador, *British Documents*, vol XI, # 448. On August 2, Asquith told the Conservative leaders in the House of Commons: "It is right before deciding whether any and what action on our part is necessary to know what are the circumstances and conditions of any German interference with Belgian territory." Quoted in Michael Brock, "Britain Enters the War," in *The Coming of the First World War*, ed. R. J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 157. Brock argues on page 161 that the full-scale nature of the German attack on Belgium is what brought Britain in. A violation of a small corner of the country may have kept both Britain and Belgium out. See also, Keith M. Wilson, "The Cabinet's Decision for War, 1914," in *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904-1914*, ed. Keith M. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 135-147.

²⁷ Spender and Asquith, *Asquith*, pp. 89-92. See also, Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

²⁸ Germany demanded from Belgium the right of passage of its armies through Belgium territory, on the trumped up grounds that the French were already threatening to attack Germany through Belgium. If Brussels did not consent, Berlin would consider it an enemy.

²⁹ *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, Series 3, Vol. XI, Document # 612. See also, Jonathan E. Helmreich, "Belgian Concern Over Neutrality and British Intentions, 1906-14," *The Journal of Modern History*, 36 (December 1964): 416-427.

"The invasion of Belgium made the vital difference, as far as I was concerned, between peace and war."³⁰ Thus, the Cabinet's decision on Belgium had more to do with British security, than with the principle of Belgian neutrality.

Belgium was in fact the unifying issue and symbol for the public, parties, and politicians. It brought to the surface latent anti-German feeling and united in common cause those who believed Britain had a moral commitment to Belgium and those who used Belgium to justify their support for a balance of power war.³¹ Belgium allowed the British to cloak their balance of power motivations in the rhetoric of international law and the defense of the rights of small countries.³² Belgium's resistance to the German invasion made the British cause seem that much more moral. Thus, the restoration of Belgium became the one "immutable" British war aim.³³ "The one thing which no minister, even in the darkest moments of the war, ever imagined was a settlement in which Belgium did not recover complete independence."³⁴ All public discussions of war aims--of which there were very few--in the first two and a half years of the war centered on this point. England fought with

³⁰ Quoted in J. Hugh Edwards, *David Lloyd George: The Man and the Statesman*, vol. 2, intro. James John Davies (New York: J.H. Sears, 1929), p. 391.

³¹ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 233. For example, *The Times* (London) on July 31, 1914 advocated intervention on strategic grounds: "...a German advance through Belgium into the north of France might enable Germany to acquire possession of Antwerp, Flushing, and even of Dunkirk and Calais, which might then become German naval bases against England. This is a contingency which no Englishman can look upon with indifference....The safety of the narrow seas is a vital, the most vital, British national and Imperial interest. It is an axiom of British self-preservation. France does not threaten our security. A German victory over France would threaten it irremediably."

³² Asquith speech at Guildhall, "The Prime Minister's Eloquent Speech," *The Times* (London), August 7, 1914. This did not, in my judgment, amount to an expansion of war aims. Defending international law and the rights of small countries was a method to couch to restoration of Belgium in more universalistic terms. The operationalization of that war aim remained the same: the restoration of Belgium.

³³ John Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy and War Aims in Britain 1914-1918," in Barry Hunt and Adrian Preston, eds., *War Aims and Strategic Policy in the Great War 1914-1918* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), p. 21.

³⁴ V. H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 32.

an easy conscience.³⁵ Asquith stated his opinion that in the absence of Germany's invasion of Belgium, "the British nation could not have then gone into war with a united front."³⁶

War for Security

The sum total of the British Cabinet's deliberations in the early days of August was that Britain went to war for security. Britain went to war, not for Belgium's sake, but for British interests in Belgium--which meant a neutral Belgium.³⁷ Britain's willingness to fight even if Belgium joined Germany belies the notion that Britain went to war for moral reasons. "The Liberal Government, for all its high-minded pacifism, was prepared to go to war only in defence of narrow national self-interest."³⁸ Britain feared that a German victory over France would jeopardize the security of the home islands and of the Empire. This required preserving the balance of power, specifically in north-west Europe, not necessarily the general European balance of power. As Asquith stated in a letter to Venetia Stanley, "It is against British interests that France should be wiped out as a Great Power."³⁹ The two ministers who resigned, John Burns and Lord Morley, did so because they did not believe Britain should fight for the balance of power.⁴⁰ But in an important speech before the House of Commons on August 3 Grey explained the decision to intervene in the war in

³⁵ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 142. See also, Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 359.

³⁶ Herbert Henry Asquith, *The Genesis of War* (New York: George H. Doran, 1923), p. 31.

³⁷ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 139.

³⁸ Michael G. Ekstein and Zara Steiner, "The Sarajevo Crisis," in *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey*, p. 407.

³⁹ Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, p. 146.

⁴⁰ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 4. See also, Spender and Asquith, *Asquith*, p. 99.

precisely those terms. The Foreign Secretary declared that Belgium's independence--and that of Holland, Denmark, and France--was vital "from the point of view of British interests."⁴¹

He added:

"I do not believe, for a moment, that at the end of this war, even if we stood aside and remained aside, we should be in a position, a material position, to use our force decisively to undo what had happened in the course of the war, to prevent the whole of the West of Europe opposite to us--if that had been the result of the war--falling under the domination of a single Power, and I am quite sure that our moral position would be such as to have lost us all respect."⁴²

These, then, were Britain's initial war aims: Belgium's neutrality and the preservation of France as a Great Power. Anything more than that was unacceptable to the Cabinet. Anything less than that jeopardized Britain's survival. As Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, wrote: "I only pray that England will prove true to herself and to her friends, as if she deserts them in their hour of need she will find herself isolated after the war, and the hours of our Empire will be numbered."⁴³ A German war against Russia alone or of Russia over Germany or Austria would in all probability not have brought Britain into the conflict.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Grey's speech before the House of Commons, reprinted in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 321.

⁴² Grey speech to the House of Commons, August 3, 1914 in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 322.

⁴³ Buchanan to Nicolson, August 3, 1914, *British Documents*, vol. XI, # 665.

⁴⁴ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 142; Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 242. See also, Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9 (Summer 1984), p. 92; Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision-Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 16.

6.4 THE EXPANSION OF WAR AIMS: DESTROYING PRUSSIAN MILITARISM

Neither Edward Grey's speech to the House of Commons on August 3 nor the Cabinet debates leading up to Britain's ultimatum to Germany on August 4 make reference to the destruction of Prussian militarism as a war aim. Nevertheless, within weeks after the outbreak of war Grey and other government officials had declared that the destruction of Prussian militarism was Britain's primary objective. This represented a substantial expansion in war aims. It involved far more than preserving Belgian neutrality and protecting the balance of power in north-west Europe. It was the most important expansion in British war aims during the war. It led to a long, drawn-out war of attrition as well as causing the adoption of other ambitious objectives. Consequently, it serves as an important test for the hypotheses offered in chapter two.

Some historians, notably V. H. Rothwell, consider the declared aim of destroying Prussian militarism to be so much "verbiage."⁴⁵ However, this view ignores the central role that this new objective played in shaping British attitudes toward the war and even military strategy. As Lorna Jaffe explains, statements about destroying Prussian militarism "reflected a basic presupposition about the origins of the war and a genuine belief about the purpose for which Britain was fighting. Private communications and departmental memoranda echoed these public statements..."⁴⁶

There was no meeting in which the Cabinet made the decision to destroy Prussian militarism. Nevertheless, the war aim quickly permeated official and private thinking. To

⁴⁵ Rothwell, *War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Lorna Jaffe, *The Decision to Disarm Germany: British Policy towards Postwar German Disarmament, 1914-1919* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 11. See also Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 82-129; Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy and War Aims," pp. 21-40; French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 22-23; Laurence W. Martin, *Peace Without Victory: Woodrow Wilson and the British Liberals* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 26.

evaluate effectively the explanatory power of the hypotheses offered in chapter two, we need clear answers to several questions: 1. What did destroying Prussian militarism mean? That is, how did British leaders define "destroying Prussian militarism" and what motivated British leaders to pursue this objective? 2. How was this objective to be operationalized in military strategy and operations? How much did British leaders expect this war aim would cost in material and manpower resources? Let us deal with each question in turn.

What it Meant

To British political leaders, "destroying Prussian militarism" meant that the military caste which ruled Germany and the values that they embodied must be removed from power. This conception harkens back to their theory that Germany was divided between a peace party and a war party. Prior to the outbreak of war, Grey thought that the peace party in Berlin--the Kaiser, Bethmann Hollweg, and Foreign Minister Jagow--held the upper hand and guided German foreign policy. They took Germany's unwillingness to resolve the crisis peacefully and its enthusiasm for mobilization as proof that the war party was in control. It was this group of men, led especially by the Crown Prince, Tirpitz, and the General Staff, that must be removed from power. Germany's conduct in the last stages of the crisis and its willingness to push matters to a finish through a clash of arms convinced Grey and other Cabinet members that the war party was in control. As David French wrote, "Germany's decision to go to war therefore shocked the British."⁴⁷ Indeed, "In attributing responsibility for the war to Germany, British leaders blamed the dominance of the Prussian military class for Germany's aggressive policy. This perception shaped their thinking about the purposes for which they were fighting, and the concept of the war as a crusade against Prussian

⁴⁷ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 22.

militarism soon became official policy."⁴⁸ British leaders did not conceive of the war as a fight against the German people, only their leaders who served them so irresponsibly. They were cause of the war and, therefore, they must be made to pay for it.⁴⁹

Grey was particularly angry at being deceived by the German government during the July Crisis. He was "outraged at the way Germany and Austria have played with the most vital interests of civilization, have cast aside all attempts at accommodation made by himself and others, and while continuing to negotiate have marched steadily to war."⁵⁰ Grey felt that the Germans lied to him and betrayed his trust. This behavior helped to convince him of German ruthlessness. The fact that Grey had believed in the detente made things worse. With the outbreak of war he felt deceived by the men who controlled Germany in the summer of 1914: "We had, I thought, during the Balkan crisis of a year ago or so, made some progress towards getting the European groups of Powers together. We got on very well with Germany at that time, because the Prussian military party did not think the time for war had come, and left the civil element alone."⁵¹ But after the July Crisis, Grey was bitter even with the German peace party: "Jagow did nothing, Bethmann Hollweg trifled and the military intended war and forced it. It was a huge and gratuitous crime, the outcome of pride and ambition."⁵²

⁴⁸ Jaffe, *Decision to Disarm Germany*, p. 8. See also, Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace* (London: Viking, 1970), p. 105; Paul Guinn, *British Strategy and Politics 1914 to 1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 122-124.

⁴⁹ Jaffe, *Decision to Disarm Germany*, p. 9; Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, trans. and ed. Isabella M. Massey, vol. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 498.

⁵⁰ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 227.

⁵¹ Grey to Roosevelt, October 20, 1914 in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 146. See also, Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse, *Inside Asquith's Cabinet: From the Diaries of Charles Hobhouse*, ed. Edward David (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p. 179.

⁵² Grey to Rodd, March 6, 1915, Grey Papers, F.O. 800/65, Public Record Office.

Grey concluded that "Prussian militarism" must be eradicated. In early September 1914, for example, Grey told his constituents that "It is against German militarism that we must fight...it is not the German people, but Prussian militarism which has driven Germany and Europe into this war."⁵³ A few days later, Grey wrote:

If the Germans win Prussian militarism will dominate the whole of Europe, with the exception of Russia, who will remain a Power in the East of Europe and in Asia. The ideals of right and wrong, and good faith in treaties, and other things that make for humanity and civilization, will all be subordinated in the whole of Western Europe to a rule of force, under the iron standard of what makes for German power is right, and everything else is to be crushed.⁵⁴

Once the war party is removed from power, Germany would no longer threaten Britain. In a letter written to Theodore Roosevelt in October, Grey described Britain's aims in stark terms: "Now, I can see nothing for it but to fight on till we get a peace that will secure us against Prussian militarism. Once freed of that, Germany will have nothing to fear, because we shall have no more to fear from her."⁵⁵ The fact that Germany started the war influenced Grey's thinking. As he noted in a diplomatic dispatch, "Germany has planned this war and chosen the time for forcing it upon Europe. No one but Germany was in the same state of preparation. We want in the future to live free from the menace of this happening again."⁵⁶

Other Cabinet officials echoed these sentiments. David Lloyd George, who had been a strong opponent of the war in the Cabinet until nearly the end of the crisis, stated: "We are not fighting the German people. The German people are under the heel of this [Prussian]

⁵³ Quoted in "Sir E. Grey on German Militarism," *The Times* (London), September 5, 1914.

⁵⁴ Grey to Roosevelt, September 10, 1914, in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Grey to Roosevelt, October 20, 1914, in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 146.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 121.

military caste..."⁵⁷ Prime Minister Asquith declared the destruction of Prussian militarism as a British war aim in a speech on November 9, 1914: "We shall never sheathe the sword...until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed."⁵⁸

The nature of German wartime conduct and military strategy seemed to intensify the Cabinet's malevolent perceptions of Berlin. Lloyd George was appalled by Germany's attack on Belgium. He would not have been too concerned about the violation of a small corner of the country, but the German offensive and full-scale effort to bring the Belgians to their knees was something else entirely.⁵⁹ German conduct in Belgium shocked and outraged Prime Minister Asquith. In a speech on October 2, he denounced the "the wanton invasion of Belgium and then of France by hordes who leave behind them at every stage of their progress a dismal trail of savagery, of devastation and desecration worthy of the blackest annals in the history of barbarism."⁶⁰ The major British ministers started to use the language of destroying Prussian militarism right after *The Times* published a series of reports in late August detailing German "atrocities" in Belgium. The most notorious of which included the alleged murder and mutilation of Grace Hume, a young nurse, and the hacking off of the hands of Belgian babies by German soldiers. Neither of these stories turned out about to be true, despite having received great play in Britain.⁶¹ There is no concrete

⁵⁷ "Through Terror to Triumph!", speech at the Queen's Hall, September 19, 1914, in David Lloyd George, *Through Terror to Triumph*, ed. F. L. Stevenson (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p. 12.

⁵⁸ Quoted in "Ministers on the War," *The Times* (London), November 10, 1914.

⁵⁹ Trevor Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935* (London: Collins, 1966), p. 36. See also Jaffe, *Decision to Disarm Germany*, p. 10; and Lloyd George, *Through Terror to Triumph*, pp. 1-16, 46-60.

⁶⁰ Asquith Speech at Carditt, "A Page of Secret History," *The Times* (London), October 3, 1914. See also, Spender and Asquith, *Asquith*, pp. 99.

⁶¹ *The Times* (London), August 27-29, 1914; and Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime* (New York: Garland, 1971), pp. 67-70, 78-82. While the British government took up a very active and effective propaganda campaign at home, and in enemy and Allied countries during the war, these initial stories were the work of individuals--Grace Hume's sister in the first case--and overzealous reporters, soldiers, and civilians in the latter.

evidence that these or other similar stories had any impact on British ministers. But one should not assume that they were irrelevant either. On September 5, Grey asserted that "The progress of the war has revealed what a terrible and immoral thing German militarism is."⁶² On September 18, he sent a cable to the British ambassador in Washington, stating: "A cruel wrong has been done to Belgium--an unprovoked attack aggravated by the wanton destruction of Louvain and other wholesale vandalism."⁶³

Implementing the War Aim

How was "destroying Prussian militarism" to be accomplished? The British leadership determined that a decisive military defeat of Germany's war machine would discredit the Junker military caste and bring about a social upheaval of sorts in Germany. The Prussian militarist influence would therefore be eliminated.⁶⁴ Grey refused to consider making peace with the German government as it was constituted and believed that a "military defeat would shatter the charisma of militarism and destroy the ascendancy of the military hierarchy."⁶⁵ In 1917, Chief of the Imperial Staff General Robertson affirmed this view when he said: "Our aim is, as I understand it, to deal German despotism such a blow as will for generations to come prevent a recurrence of the horrors of the last two and a half

See also, M. L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914-1918* (London: MacMillan, 1982); and Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1938).

⁶² Grey Speech, *The Times* (London), September 5, 1914.

⁶³ Quoted in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 121.

⁶⁴ Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy, and War Aims," pp. 29-32. See also, David Stevenson, *The First World War and International Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 110.

⁶⁵ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 121.

years."⁶⁶ No one thought, however, that the Entente would be able to invade and conquer Germany and thereby impose a new government by force. Germany's defeat would lead to the desired changes because the credibility and legitimacy of the Prussian leadership would be destroyed, not because an Allied occupation army would supervise the restructuring of the German government. In short,

[T]he political version of Britain's most ambitious and most fervidly proclaimed aim--the destruction of Prussian militarism--derived from assumptions about why and how Germany had started the war. Translated into military terms it dictated victories over Germany of such magnitude as to permit changing the social fabric and the political structure of Germany. This in turn would destroy the basis of Prussian hegemony over Germany and would also end the dominance of the military over German society.⁶⁷

In developing this theory of Germany's defeat, Grey was influenced more by political philosophy and intuition than in any personal knowledge of the German political situation or language. He almost never travelled abroad, despite his position as British foreign secretary. In Grey's view, one shared by his cabinet colleagues, the German military party was a hitherto successful dictatorship with great charismatic appeal. He had in mind the "demigod" status of the General Staff and the role which it played in unifying Germany. By inflicting a decisive defeat on its military forces and forcing it to admit defeat with respect to its political aims, its charisma would be shattered and its militarist ideals (defined as getting what it wants from the international system by brute force) shown to be bankrupt. This would discredit and delegitimize the military regime, sparking a social and political revolution which would overthrow it. A democratic state might then arise from the ashes.⁶⁸

Despite this apparently enormous aim, British ministers were not at first prepared to

⁶⁶ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy, and War Aims," p. 24.

⁶⁸ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 126.

do what was necessary to achieve it. Britain declared war on Germany expecting a relatively quick, cheap victory. Moreover, the expansion in war aims did not at first cause the British to reevaluate that assessment. The Cabinet envisioned that to achieve their gargantuan aims Britain would have to fight only a limited war with quite limited costs and risks.⁶⁹

When Asquith and Grey and Lloyd George led the Cabinet to war in early August, they in no way imagined a four-year war, a major continental commitment, or millions of British casualties. The decision for war was in large part predicated on a cheap war, quick victory assumption. As Zara Steiner writes: The Cabinet's "decisions were based on erroneous assumptions about the nature of war, its effects and costs."⁷⁰ Most of the Cabinet believed that Britain would fight a relatively inexpensive naval and economic war against Germany, not unlike British strategy during the Napoleonic Wars, while France and Russia crushed Germany between land pincers. "The enemy would be defeated by a combination of British gold and French and Russian soldiers."⁷¹

During the important Cabinet meeting on August 2, Grey, Asquith, and Churchill all stated that Britain's participation in the war would be limited to naval and blockading action. They did not even think that the British Expeditionary Force could or should be sent. As Asquith wrote in his *Contemporary Notes*: "The dispatch of the Expeditionary Force to help France at this moment is out of the question and would serve no object."⁷² In his August 3 speech before the House of Commons, Grey cautioned against any immediate or premature deployment of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) to France. Even if it were eventually

⁶⁹ In comparison, France and Russia were more realistic and had mobilized for total war.

⁷⁰ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 241. See also, Williamson, *Politics of Grand Strategy*, pp. 364-365.

⁷¹ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 15.

⁷² Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 9.

deployed, a naval and financial war would constitute the bulk of the British war effort: "For us, with a powerful fleet, which we believe able to protect our commerce, to protect our shores, and to protect our interests, if we are engaged in war, we shall suffer little more than we shall suffer if we stand aside." He referred only to the costs a disruption in Britain's trade.⁷³ "Grey supposed that British intervention would not carry much weight. He thought solely of naval action; it seemed impossible to him to send even an expeditionary force to France, and he certainly never imagined military intervention on a continental scale."⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Britain's generals and the French government pressured the Cabinet to deploy the B.E.F. to France. Within a few days, the Cabinet realized that this step would be necessary in order to support the French and signal Britain's commitment to the war effort. On August 6, four of the B.E.F.'s six divisions were sent to France. Even so, most ministers conceived of the deployment as a limited amphibious operation which could be ended quickly and the B.E.F. withdrawn if necessary. The Cabinet was not yet making a serious continental commitment.⁷⁵

The only member of the Cabinet who disagreed with the prevailing conventional wisdom of a naval war and quick victory was Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, the newly appointed war minister. Kitchener enjoyed a unique position in the British government during the first months of war. Public pressure, orchestrated in part by *The Times*, had brought about his appointment; Asquith had wanted to name Haldane to the post.

⁷³ Speech to the House of Commons, August 3, 1914, in Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 322. See also, Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 237-238.

⁷⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 526.

⁷⁵ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 26. See also, Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment: The dilemma of British defense policy in the era of two world wars* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Ashfield, 1989, paperback edition), pp. 54-55.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister consented and Kitchener's arrival in the Cabinet had a salutary effect on British morale and support for the government. As Asquith's daughter noted: "The psychological effects of his appointment, the tonic to public confidence, were instantaneous and overwhelming."⁷⁶ Aside from the aging Lord Roberts, Kitchener was the preeminent British military leader of his time--despite the fact that Britain was predominantly a naval power. He had earned great prestige with military success in Britain's colonial wars and in the Boer War. More important was the fact that he was the only man with actual military experience in the highest levels of government at a time when the country was going to war against the one power in Europe which was governed by a successful military class. British politicians versus the German General Staff did not inspire the same level of confidence as Field Marshal Lord Kitchener versus the German General Staff.

This popular confidence conveyed considerable political power to Kitchener, the sole military representative in the Cabinet. "The masses of his country-men were united behind Kitchener because they believed that he possessed plenary power to take decisions which would lead to victory. The government encouraged that belief, and allowed Kitchener to act as supreme war lord for many months."⁷⁷ As Lloyd George described it:

In 1914 he was practically military dictator and his decisions upon any questions affecting the war were final. The members of the Cabinet were frankly intimidated by his presence because of his repute and enormous influence amongst all classes of people outside. A word from him was decisive and no one dared challenge it at a Cabinet meeting.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Quoted in Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The raising of the New Armies, 1914-1916* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 32-33, 35.

⁷⁷ Philip Magnus, *Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist* (London: John Murray, 1958), p. 285.

⁷⁸ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (London: Ivor, Nicholson & Watson), p. 499. This was a view in which Churchill concurred. He described how Kitchener dominated Asquith such that Churchill's own position as First Lord of the Admiralty was weakened: "I had not the same weight or authority [in the War Council] as those two ministers (Kitchener and Asquith), or the same power, and if they said 'This is to be done, or not to be done,' that settled it." Quoted in Magnus, *Kitchener*, p. 286.

Kitchener told his Cabinet colleagues that the war would take at least three years and would require Britain to build and deploy a massive army to the continent. "Kitchener shocked his listeners by suggesting that the war would be a long one."⁷⁹ The Cabinet, while respecting Kitchener's opinion, was not persuaded. Kitchener had been Britain's minister in Egypt and had wanted to return there, rather than serve in the Cabinet. So Asquith, believing in a short war, kept Kitchener's post open for him, anticipating that he would soon return.⁸⁰ Yet, they approved his plans to begin the recruitment and building of a million-man army.

The war proved to be surprisingly popular. The Bank Holiday crowds in the streets cheered Cabinet ministers on August 3 as they went to and from the House of Commons. Grey in particular received loud acclaim. As Asquith noted in his memoirs: "It is curious how going to and from the House we are now always escorted and surrounded by cheering crowds of loafers and holiday-makers."⁸¹ But the government still wanted to minimize domestic disruption. No plans were made to take control of the economy and gear it up for war production. None of Britain's political leaders ever anticipated that Kitchener's call for volunteers for his New Armies would result in over one million recruits by Christmas. Kitchener asked for volunteers without giving a reason why they would fight. Recruitment stations found themselves swamped and overwhelmed.⁸² With such popularity behind them, the British government developed its war aims and military strategy almost unencumbered

⁷⁹ Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, p. 240. See also, Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 71; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 529-531.

⁸⁰ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon, 1987), pp. 80-81.

⁸¹ Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 20.

⁸² "'Boom' in Recruiting," *The Times* (London), August 5, 1914.

by public opinion.⁸³

Nevertheless, the elevation of British war aims to include the destruction of Prussian militarism did not initially affect the Cabinet's optimistic evaluation of Britain's war costs. For example, the Cabinet approved Kitchener's request to begin massive recruitment in order to build a continental army. However, neither the Cabinet nor Kitchener envisioned using this force to defeat Germany and win the war. He anticipated holding back until Britain could intervene and win the peace.⁸⁴ Kitchener believed that his armies would not be trained and ready to fight until 1917. British power would then be peaking. In the meantime, Britain's friends and enemies in Europe would have fought themselves to a standstill and near exhaustion. Britain would be the strongest power in Europe, able to finish off Germany, and ensure that no other power took Germany's place as the hegemon of the continent, (namely Russia). "The New Armies were not just intended to win the war for the Entente but to win the peace for Britain....They would be able to deliver the final blow against the Germans and allow the British to dictate their peace terms to allies and enemies alike."⁸⁵ There was, therefore, a disintegration in British war aims and military means. But it was this incongruence in part which led Britain to elevate its war aims in the first place. David French provides an excellent summary:

Initially British strategy was designed to maximize [Britain's] strengths and minimize her weaknesses. The British assumed that the major burden of fighting the continental land war would fall upon France and Russia. Britain made a token contribution to the land fighting by sending the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) to northern France, but her main contribution was in the shape of the Royal Navy,

⁸³ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 15, 25. Mayer states that Britain's leaders enjoyed nearly complete unity in the country over war aims--until 1917. See Arno J. Mayer, *The Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918* (New York: Fertig, 1969), p. 5.

⁸⁴ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 20.

⁸⁵ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, p. 25.

which quickly blockaded the Central Powers, and the economic and financial assistance which she extended to her allies. This was the strategy of "business as usual." "Business as usual" promised Britain maximum victory at minimum cost.⁸⁶

How realistic was Britain's strategy? Was the Cabinet day-dreaming when they made their decisions based on a faulty understanding of what the war would cost? Or was the analysis of an "inexpensive" naval and financial war, if not sound, at least plausible? On the basis of information available to the British Cabinet in August 1914, their strategy was probably not unreasonable. The overt economic and military resources of the Entente appeared to be more than a match for Germany and Austria. (See Table 6.1)

Table 6.1 Power Resources of the Entente and Central Powers, 1913-1914

Country	Population (Millions)	Military and Naval Personnel	Relative Share of World Manufacturing	National Income (Billion \$)	Total Industrial Potential**
Britain	45.6*	532,000	13.6%	11	127.2
France	39.7	910,000	6.1	6	57.3
Russia	175.1	1,352,000	8.2	7	76.6
Germany	66.9	891,000	14.8	12	137.7
Austria	52.1	444,000	4.4	3	22.5

* Does not include the population of the Empire or Dominions.

** Britain in 1900 = 100.

Source: Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, pp. 199-203, 243.

⁸⁶ David French, "Allies, Rivals and Enemies: British Strategy and War Aims during the First World War," in *Britain and the First World War*, ed. John Turner (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 25. French adds that: "The British did not completely commit themselves to playing a full part in the continental land war until the spring of 1916...This contradiction between limited means and total ends was to bedevil British war policy." (French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 20-21, 23).

The Entente held a commanding lead over the Central Powers in every category of power resources. Britain's strengths within the alliance were not in population or military personnel, but in financial and material resources. London possessed dominant shares of wealth and manufacturing capability, whereas Russia had an enormous population and France and Russia combined possessed large standing armies. From the British point of view, therefore, it seemed logical that the future would resemble the past. Britain would bankroll and supply French and Russian armies in their fight against Germany. Britain's mastery of the oceans (few envisioned submarine warfare at this time) implied that such supply would be successful. In the wars of the eighteenth century and the Napoleonic wars, Britain had aided its allies then in a similar way and was quite successful. In short, the Cabinet probably calculated that all they had to do was pay and arm Russia's millions; they would then take care of the Germans.⁸⁷ It was a miscalculation, but not an unforgivable one.

6.5 PROMISES AND ALLIES

In order to maintain and enlarge the coalition against Germany Britain soon made many promises to inspire existing allies--France, Russia, and the Dominions--and to win new ones--Italy, Rumania, and Middle Eastern Arabs. On September 5, 1914, Britain, France, and Russia exchanged notes agreeing that no power would make a separate peace with Germany or offer peace conditions without extensive consultations with the other allies.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ More recent history should have suggested something else. Despite, overwhelming economic and military power, Britain required years and far more troops than it had anticipated to impose its will on the Boers at the turn of the century.

⁸⁸ Stevenson, *First World War*, p. 110. The public text of the agreement read: "The British, French, and Russian Governments mutually engage not to conclude a peace separately during the present war. The three Governments agree that when terms of peace come to be discussed no one of the Allies will demand terms of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies." "Declaration of Allies," *The Times* (London), September 7, 1914.

This agreement temporarily saved the British Cabinet from having to agree to fight for the specific and possibly extravagant war aims of its major allies. Nevertheless, Britain realized that it had to guarantee that its friends would receive some compensation.⁸⁹ In the pages that follow, I report the promises Britain made to many states either to stay in the war or join it. In every case, the underlying purpose was to strengthen or change in Britain's favor the relative balance of power against Germany.

These promises, assuming they were to be kept and circumstances did not change, committed Britain in principle to continue fighting until the war aims of its allies were met, as well as its own. Nevertheless, they were in reality only a means to an end. The promises made to existing or prospective allies were intended to secure the means (more power) with which Germany could be stopped in its bid for hegemony in Europe, Belgium restored, and Prussian militarism destroyed.

France and Alsace-Lorraine

More than anything else, what France wanted from the war was to recover Alsace-Lorraine, which had been lost to Prussia in 1870. Britain did not declare right away that Alsace-Lorraine was a British war aim. Nevertheless, the agreement of September 5 became part of British thinking. In a speech given in November 1914, Asquith declared that there would be no peace with Germany "until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression," implying a return of Alsace-Lorraine.⁹⁰ In December 1914, for example, there were unsubstantiated rumors that Germany was looking for a compromise peace along the lines of evacuating and compensating Belgium. Asquith rejected the idea: "This, of course,

⁸⁹ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 143-145.

⁹⁰ Asquith speech, *The Times* (London), November 10, 1914.

will not be good enough either for France or Russia."⁹¹ Similarly, a month earlier in November, Grey had told the British Ambassador to Russia, Buchanan: "Discussion of terms of peace is academic till [the] war has progressed sufficiently to make Germany contemplate the most obvious terms of peace such as the restitution of the Lost Provinces to France."⁹²

By late 1916, after Lloyd George became Prime Minister, Britain was more forthcoming in its support for France's primary war aim. Arthur Balfour, Grey's replacement as foreign secretary in the new government, told the House of Commons that in his "own opinion, which is that, while France fights for Alsace and Lorraine, we should support her."⁹³ Lloyd George officially made the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine a British war aim on October 11, 1917: "However long the war may last, this country intends to stand by her gallant ally, France, until she redeems her oppressed children from the degradation of a foreign yoke."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 51. There was not much substance behind these rumors. In September, Grey had received through the German ambassador in Washington inquiries about ending the war through mediation. But the German ambassador was talking without authority and proposed only the status quo, not an evacuation of Belgium. In December, the German and Austrian ambassadors in Washington asked President Wilson to send Colonel House to Europe to mediate. They agreed to the evacuation of Belgium before negotiations would begin. However, it is not clear whether they were acting under authorization from the Berlin government. Grey could not get any confirmation from Berlin that such terms were being seriously considered. He believed it was an attempt to divide Britain from its Entente allies. See French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 60-61.

⁹² Telegram, Grey to Buchanan, November 16, 1914, F.O. 371/2174/71776, Public Records Office.

⁹³ Quoted in A.J.P. Taylor, *Politics in Wartime and Other Essays* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), p.115.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Taylor, *Politics in Wartime*, p. 116.

In August 1914, when Turkey was still neutral, Britain wanted to keep Russia focused on the forthcoming battles in northern and western Europe. The British feared that Russia was holding back troops and preparing to attack Turkey to realize long-standing ambitions against the Ottoman Empire. Grey vaguely promised Russia that if Turkey joined the Central Powers then Britain would not oppose Russia's acquisition of Ottoman territory. As Grey told one Russian diplomat: "If Turkey sided with Germany and Austria, and they were defeated, then we could not answer for what might be taken from Turkey in Asia Minor."⁹⁵

By November 1914, circumstances had changed considerably. Turkey had declared war on the Allies in October. It was now fighting in alliance with Germany and against Britain, France, and Russia. Hostilities between Turkey and Russia began all along the Russo-Turkish frontier. Russia believed Turkey was preparing to launch an attack through Persia, the neutral buffer state which separated the Russian, Ottoman, and British Empires in Asia. Consequently, Russia told its western allies that it was going to strike at Turkey first, also through Persia.

These developments alarmed British ministers. They feared that if the fighting continued and Persia were invaded, Russia might defeat Turkey and acquire a dominant position in Asia. Such Russian gains at Turkish expense threatened the balance of power and Britain's position in Persia and India in a post-war world.⁹⁶ In order to prevent the Russians from acting, Grey proposed to bribe them. In November 1914, Grey offered to give Constantinople and the Straits to Russia in exchange for its cooperation against Germany and

⁹⁵ Telegram, Grey to Buchanan, August 15, 1914, F.O. 371/2138/40438, Public Records Office.

⁹⁶ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 223-229. See also, Ekstein, "Russia, Constantinople and the Straits."

a promise to refrain from focusing much energy on the Ottomans.⁹⁷ Russia accepted Grey's proposal and agreed not to precipitate conflict with Turkey in Persia.⁹⁸ In short, the desire to prevent Russia from gaining too much encouraged Britain to give the Russians a little.

Grey's promises, however, did not yet have the formal endorsement of the British government. In March 1915, after many informal discussions, exchanged notes, and varying promises, the czar demanded that Britain formally agree to Russia's claim to Constantinople and the Straits. As Grey told the Cabinet, Russia deserved the city and the surrounding territory because: "Russia might claim that the sacrifices she had made in [the] East...in the early days of the war had saved the Allies from defeat."⁹⁹ The Cabinet, however, was not aware of the negotiations with and implied promises to Russia from August to November. Grey emphasized that there was a real danger of Russia leaving the war unless something were done to keep up its morale and give it something for which to fight. Grey argued that the political position of the Russian foreign minister, Sazonov, at St. Petersburg was in jeopardy. He had handled the negotiations with Grey over Constantinople and the Straits. Unless Britain agreed to yield them, Sazonov's position would be undermined. And it was necessary to keep Sazonov in power in order to keep Russia in the war. As Grey wrote in his memoirs:

Sazonof was represented as a tool of British policy; we were told that his position was being undermined; we believed that next after that of the Tsar himself, it was the loyalty of Sazonof to the Allies that was the pivot of Russian policy. At last there came a definite demand from Petrograd for an agreement promising Constantinople to Russia, with an intimation that this was absolutely necessary to save Sazonof's position and policy and to prevent serious mischief. This was not bluff; there was

⁹⁷ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," p. 222.

⁹⁸ Ekstein-Frankl, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 229-231.

⁹⁹ Minutes of the War Council, March 10, 1915, CAB 22/1, Public Records Office.

real danger.¹⁰⁰

The Cabinet agreed and one of the most significant secret treaties was drawn up.¹⁰¹ As Lloyd George stated: "I see no objection to their (the Russians) having an outlet [to the Mediterranean] at the expense of Turkey--let dog eat dog."¹⁰²

At a minimum Britain committed itself to continue fighting until Russia had conquered Constantinople. At a maximum, the promises to Russia may explain *in part* the British Dardenelles operation and Gallipoli campaign. Ekstein argues that, to some degree, these costly and ultimately futile efforts were launched to ensure that Russia would have something to fight for, since in London's view St. Petersburg was unlikely to achieve their vast aims in Eastern Europe. One must be careful, of course, not to overstate the argument. Conquering land to give to Russia was certainly not the only British motive in launching the operation against Turkey; I doubt it was even the primary motive (that being to knock Turkey out of the war, strengthening Allied communications, and striking a blow against Germany's alliance). Nevertheless, Grey began to encourage Russia to seek compensation at Turkey's expense at the same time the Dardenelles operation was being accepted by the British Cabinet in early 1915. The Dardenelles Commission, set up in 1916 to investigate these military failures, noted that had the operation been successful, it would have solved a problem which had been a constant source of trouble and tension in Europe for centuries.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, pp. 187-188. See also, Ekstein, "Russia, Constantinople and the Straits," p. 434.

¹⁰¹ Britain agreed to the demand with conditions protecting British commercial and strategic interests in the area. For readers wondering about long-standing British policy of keeping Russia out of this very city, Ekstein argues persuasively that British policy before the war, during the Anglo-Russian Entente, had moved away from the traditional British policy of keeping Russia from acquiring Constantinople.

¹⁰² Quoted in John Grigg, *Lloyd George: From Peace to War 1912-1916* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 422.

¹⁰³ Ekstein, "Development of British War Aims," pp. 240-244.

Britain's promises during the war extended far beyond its two major allies. It made offers to other states to join the fight against the Central Powers, including Italy. Prior to the war, Italy had been a member of the Triple Alliance, an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary. In August 1914, Italy declared that Germany had launched an aggressive war which invalidated the treaty of alliance; Rome remained neutral. From that moment, the Allies sought to bring Italy into the war on the side the Triple Entente. Russia was the early and first suitor of Italy, offering--with British support and consent--substantial tracts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, specifically, the Trent Valley up to the Alpine watershed and Trieste.¹⁰⁴ Fearing Germany would win, however, Italy excused and delayed, waiting to see how the war progressed.

By the time of the Dardanelles operation in March 1915, Britain had become the strongest advocate for Italy's entry into the war. To join the Allies, Italy demanded the Trentino, Trieste, Istra, and especially most of Dalmatia.¹⁰⁵ Britain supported these extensive Italian demands for several reasons. First, Italy's participation would tip the balance of power against the Central Powers. As Grey told the French and Russian foreign ministers: "The participation on our side of Italy...would enormously facilitate this object [of winning the war]; it probably would, in a comparatively short time, effect the collapse of German and Austro-Hungarian resistance."¹⁰⁶

Second and more specifically, Italy could help immediately and militarily in the

¹⁰⁴ George Macauley Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon: The Life and Letters of Sir Edward Grey, afterwards Viscount Grey of Fallodon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), pp. 331-332.

¹⁰⁵ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in C. J. Lowe, "Italy and the Balkans, 1914-1915," in *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, p. 416.

Balkans. The Gallipoli campaign was not going well. It originally was conceived in part as a cheap, quick victory which would sweep Italy and other Balkans states into a victorious war against the Central Powers through a display of dazzling military success.¹⁰⁷ By March 1915 the only thing that was dazzling about the effort was the number of British casualties relative to the gain. Britain's military leaders were unwilling to devote more troops and resources to the operation, so Cabinet ministers hoped that Italian participation would make the difference. Grey stated that Italian intervention "will be the turning point in the war and will very greatly hasten a successful conclusion."¹⁰⁸ On March 24, Asquith told the king that the "importance of bring[ing] in Italy without delay appeared to be so great that it was agreed to give general consent to what she asks and to press on Russia to do the same."¹⁰⁹ After some further negotiations, Italy received its terms. Under Foreign Minister Sonnino, the Italians had put themselves up "for sale to the highest bidder."¹¹⁰ Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary on May 16, 1915.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Lowe, "Italy and the Balkans," p. 412.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon*, p. 337.

¹⁰⁹ Asquith to the King, March 24, 1915, CAB 37/126, Public Records Office.

¹¹⁰ Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon*, p. 337.

¹¹¹ Italy did not declare war on Germany until months later. Rothwell notes that Britain's promises to Italy were "uniquely binding" for the treaty stated that it "will receive" the lands in question. The wording of other secret treaties during the war was not as forthright. See Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 30. Ironically, by the time May rolled around, the Allied campaign in Gallipoli was going so badly that the other Balkan states were unwilling to join what they believed was a losing cause. It did not look to them like Italy was going to make a difference. As Grey stated in his memoirs, "The attraction of a promise is not its size, but the prospect of its being fulfilled." Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, p. 204.

Once Turkey declared sides and joined the Central Powers, Britain intended to use Ottoman territory to buy off various states and groups in order to get them to join the war effort.¹¹² Britain had intended to divide up Ottoman territory among Greece, Romania, and other Balkan states as their prospective reward for joining the war. However, that plan was predicated on the assumption that the Gallipoli campaign would succeed and thereby encourage the Balkan states to believe that they were allying with the winning side. This victory of course never materialized and the Balkan states continued their neutrality.

The failure of this original plan did not discourage Britain from trying to give Ottoman territory away to other groups. For example, it offered the Arab populations within the Ottoman Empire an independent kingdom if they would rise up in revolt against their Turkish masters. Britain hoped that undermining the Turks from within would knock them out of the war. In a set of negotiations taking place between July 1915 and March 1916, Britain and the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein ibn Ali, agreed on a set of terms by which Hussein would launch a revolt against the Sultan of Turkey. Britain promised Hussein an independent Arab kingdom which he would rule under some sort of vague British tutelage. London also promised to transfer the Islamic Caliphate to Hussein's family.¹¹³ The British High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir Henry MacMahon, conducted the negotiations with Hussein. In a letter from MacMahon dated October 24, 1915, Britain agreed to give Hussein territory in and to the east of the Arabian peninsula, comprising Homs, Hamma, Aleppo, and Damascus. A month and a half later, MacMahon told Hussein: "You may rest assured that Great Britain

¹¹² Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 74.

¹¹³ This caused Britain some trouble later in that London thought the Caliphate was a spiritual title only, whereas in reality it incorporated spiritual and temporal authority.

has no intention of concluding any peace in terms of which the freedom of the Arab peoples from German and Turkish domination does not form an essential condition."¹¹⁴ Hussein agreed to those terms and launched his revolt. Despite the mythology of Lawrence of Arabia, the Sharif's efforts proved relatively ineffectual.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, Britain pursued that objective throughout the war, even if it did from back-track on some elements of the promises made to the Arabs. As Rothwell states, "The establishment of such a regime in the Arabian peninsula as being vital to the security of the Indian Empire was to remain a fundamental British aim throughout the war..."¹¹⁶

Africa and the Pacific

British promises extended all the way to Africa and the Pacific. Germany had a number of colonies in both regions, albeit not very substantial ones. Britain agreed to let its Dominion states take local German colonies for their own benefit. South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand all seized some German territory in their respective regions. London realized that it needed to let them do so in order to keep them satisfied and involved in the war effort. In addition, in February 1917 Britain promised support for Japanese's claims to Kiaochou and German islands in the north Pacific to keep them involved in the war effort. As Rothwell notes, "The Dominions fared rather less well than the Japanese whose loyalty, it was thought, could only be guaranteed by being bought."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 28-29. See also, Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 179-187; Stevenson, *First World War*, pp. 126-128.

¹¹⁶ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 27.

¹¹⁷ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 69.

6.6 SECURING THE EMPIRE

British war aims against Turkey did not stop with the British government's desire to use Ottoman lands to pay off existing or potential allies. Over the course of the war, Britain itself developed a thirst for Middle Eastern lands that did not exist in 1914.

Grey and the French foreign minister, Delcassé, discussed in February 1915 the possibility of partitioning the Ottoman Empire. At that time, both men believed that British and French interests were better served if most of the Ottoman Empire remained intact.¹¹⁸ As David Fromkin writes: "...when the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, Asquith, Grey, and Churchill did not intend to retaliate by seizing any of its domains for Britain. They did propose to allow Britain's allies to make territorial gains in Europe and Asia Minor at Turkey's expense; but Asquith's Britain had no territorial designs of her own on Ottoman lands, either in the Middle East or elsewhere."¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, this position changed. The British war minister, Field Marshall Kitchener, had spent most of his professional soldier's life serving in the Middle East and Asia. He strongly believed that it was in Britain's interest to seize large parts of the Ottoman Empire to control directly after the war.¹²⁰ In a March 16, 1915 memo to the Cabinet, Kitchener argued that the Ottoman Empire should be broken up and Britain should acquire the Mesopotamian provinces (present-day Iraq)--in addition to creating an independent Moslem state under Britain's overlordship. Kitchener also proposed that Britain take Alexandretta, the great port across from Cyprus, and build a railroad to Mesopotamia. The argument was mainly a strategic one: "The British railroad from the Mediterranean to the

¹¹⁸ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 95.

¹¹⁹ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 96.

¹²⁰ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 96. See also Magnus, *Kitchener*, pp. 313-315.

head of the Persian Gulf would enable troops to move to and from India rapidly. The broad swath of British-owned territory it would traverse would provide a shield for the Persian Gulf, as well as a road to India."¹²¹ This shield, Kitchener believed, would protect Britain's empire from whatever power may threaten it in the region, be it Germany, France, or, as he thought likely, Russia. After the war, Kitchener argued, Britain may again be "at enmity with Russia, or with France, or with both in combination."¹²² In August 1916, General Robertson echoed these sentiments: "I confess that I have anxiety when I think of the day on which we may be seated around the Council Table discussing the terms of peace. I am not thinking so much of the enemy as of the allies."¹²³ Annexing Mesopotamia would complement the Arab Kingdom Britain proposed set up in the Arabian peninsula. It would provide further security for the British life-line of empire.

This argument was persuasive to a majority of the Cabinet. The Cabinet set up a special committee to formulate the details of Britain's post-war aims in the Middle East. The British recognized that negotiations with the French would be necessary in any partition of the Middle East. Those negotiations, conducted in late 1915 and 1916, resulted in the Sykes-Picot agreement in which Syria and Lebanon would go to France and the Persian Gulf, Suez area, and Mesopotamia would go to Britain.¹²⁴ Only Asquith and Grey remained skeptical of the endeavor. Asquith wrote to a friend that he and Grey "both think that in the real interest of our own future, the best thing would be if, at the end of the War, we could say

¹²¹ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 141.

¹²² Quoted in Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 140.

¹²³ Victor Bonham-Carter, *The Strategy of Victory 1914-1918: The Life and Times of the Master Strategist of World War I: Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), p. 197.

¹²⁴ Stevenson, *First World War*, pp. 123-125. For an excellent discussion of the Sykes-Picot agreement, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 188-199.

that...we have taken & gained nothing." Nevertheless, the Prime Minister did come around to the plan: "[If] we were to leave the other nations to scramble for Turkey without taking anything ourselves, we should not be doing our duty."¹²⁵

In 1916, Britain suffered failed offensive after failed offensive in the Somme. In December, the Asquith government was replaced by a new coalition government headed by David Lloyd George. He quickly imposed a war dictatorship. He shrunk the War Cabinet to five members with himself at its head. He gathered the reins of power tightly in his hands. As Arthur Balfour, the new foreign secretary, stated: "If he wants to be a dictator, let him be. If he thinks he can win the war, I'm all for his having a try."¹²⁶

Lloyd George was even more determined to expand British war aims in the Middle East at Turkey's expense than Kitchener and the Asquith Cabinet. Lloyd George had been an ardent proponent of breaking up the Ottoman Empire since 1915. In March 1917, Lloyd George told his War Cabinet that destroying Turkey "as an Empire" was a fundamental and unequivocal war aim.¹²⁷

Lloyd George reorganized British forces in the Middle East. Some early British efforts in support of Hussein's revolt had been dismal failures. They had suffered from poor generalship, coordination, and logistics. In early 1917, after replacing almost all British military commanders in the Middle East, Britain launched much more successful offensives against Turkey's vast empire. In a well-planned campaign, Major General Stanley-Maude led an Anglo-Indian army into Mesopotamia, capturing Baghdad on March 11, 1917. An

¹²⁵ Quoted in Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 141, 142.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 234.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 127.

offensive launched by General Sir Edmund Allenby captured Jerusalem on December 9, 1917.¹²⁸

Lloyd George launched this new campaign for several reasons. First, the new prime minister personally loathed the Turks. He tended to divide up the world between "civilized" and "barbarous" peoples. The Turks were the preeminent example of the latter. Where "barbarous" peoples ruled, particularly where they ruled "civilized" peoples (such as Greeks and the Jews in Palestine), Lloyd George believed it was the duty and the right of the "civilized" peoples to liberate them and "restore these devastated areas to civilization."¹²⁹

Second, there were new security concerns which arose from the Entente's failures on the European battlefields. Lloyd George, while determined to continue the war in Europe, was nevertheless increasingly concerned by 1917 whether Britain would be able to defeat Germany, especially in light of Russia's collapse. Consequently, the government deemed it vital for Britain to smash Turkey and thereby expel German influence from the region. In August 1917, Britain's Director of Military Intelligence warned that if Germany's position in the Middle East and Balkans were not destroyed, Berlin "will then prepare for the next struggle against the British Empire and for the mastery of the world." Most British ministers agreed with this assessment.¹³⁰ If Britain and its allies must eventually accept a peace which was something less than complete victory, then the wartime alliance of Germany and Turkey could become a major geopolitical threat to the postwar British Empire. The Ottoman Empire stood astride two of Britain's most important possessions--India and the Suez

¹²⁸ For the details, see Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 305-314. See also, C. E. Callwell, *The Life of Sir Stanley Maude* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920); Archibald Wavell, *Allenby of Arabia: Lawrence's General*, intro. Lowell Thomas (New York: Cowad-McCann, 1966).

¹²⁹ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 126. See also Fromkin, *Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 234-235.

¹³⁰ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 286-287.

Canal. By taking from Turkey most of its holdings in the Middle East, Britain hoped to build a contiguous swath of territory from Cape Town in South Africa through Africa, Egypt, the Middle East, India, over to Australia and New Zealand. This would remove any German presence and potential threat to the British holdings.

Third, Lloyd George and his closest ministers believed that Britain could not find compensation for its sacrifices in Europe. What could Britain annex in Europe that would prove to be adequate compensation for the money and lives spent there? Lloyd George did not see any. The Middle East, however, represented vast, ripe pickings with which he could present to British people as tangible gains for their sacrifices. Moreover, this was a gain to which Lloyd George himself believed Britain was entitled. He wanted physical British hegemony in the Middle East. As Fromkin writes, "Where the Asquith Cabinet eventually came to see hegemony over portions of the Middle East as something that Britain wanted, the Lloyd George government came to see it as territory that Britain *needed*."¹³¹

Last but not necessarily least, it should be noted that a sustained attack on Turkey's empire was, in Lloyd George's view, a means to an end. The prime minister was not sure in 1917 whether Britain and its allies could defeat Germany to their satisfaction. The losses in Europe had been horrendous with little observable gain. It was Lloyd George's opinion, as it had been in 1915 at the start of the Dardenelles Expedition, that the less expensive and more efficient way to defeat Germany and to force Germany to admit defeat was by driving its allies out of the war--"knocking off the props," to use his own words.¹³² Closely connected to this idea was his view that while continued operations in France held little prospect for success, attacks on Turkey promised movement and great success. Lloyd

¹³¹ Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 301. Emphasis in original.

¹³² Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 196.

George pushed this strategy on his colleagues. As Lord Hankey, secretary of the War Cabinet and the most influential of the civil servants, wrote in his diary: "Milner (a member of Lloyd George's War Cabinet) seems to have come completely around to Lloyd George's view that the Western Front affords no opportunity for achieving complete success and that it is necessary to devote our main efforts against Turkey."¹³³ The Middle East, Lloyd George felt, was an opportunity; victory there *was* achievable.

Why knocking Turkey out of the war should have brought the Allies much closer to Germany's defeat is not clear from the documentary evidence or secondary histories. Turkey was not holding down large Allied armies which were trying to drive on to Germany. (British forces in the Middle East at their height numbered approximately 100,000 men, primarily under Generals Allenby in Palestine and Maude in Iraq.) Nor were the Ottomans a major source of supply for Germany. It is conceivable, perhaps, that if Turkey were forced to sue for peace, a new front might have been opened up in southeastern Europe. Or perhaps the blow to Berlin's prestige in losing such a prominent ally would have undermined Germany's morale. But in this highly material war, the defeat of Turkey seemed unlikely to bring the Allies any closer to victory on the western front than they already were with Turkey's participation on Germany's side.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the British effort in the Middle East went forward and, because of Lloyd George's personal interest and support, it did not want for adequate resources.

¹³³ Lord Hankey, *The Supreme Command 1914-1918*, vol. 2 (London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 1961), p. 697.

¹³⁴ See, for example, Guinn, *British Strategy*, pp. 177-178.

6.7 SOLDIERS VERSUS CIVILIANS: DIVISION OVER STRATEGY AND WAR AIMS

With the exception of Kitchener's preference for an expanded British Empire in the Middle East, my discussion has neglected the military view of war aims. This should not imply that British ministers and British generals were in accord on all matters of objectives and strategy. On the contrary, there were fundamental, even bitter, differences between these two groups of men, primarily over strategy. But because means are related to ends, these disputes spilled over to war aims.¹³⁵

Kitchener, as I noted above, was the preeminent strategy and policy-maker in the first six months of the war. He, like his Cabinet colleagues, seemed to adopt the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism in the first month of the war. He did not foist this war aim on his counterparts, nor did they foist it upon him. At no time did Kitchener contradict or demure from this stated objective. The government appeared to be of one mind on this matter. Kitchener also advocated and supported wider war aims in the Middle East. He did at first object to the Dardenelles operation and the Gallipoli campaign, but was persuaded by Lloyd George and Churchill to drop his objections. After those attacks failed, however, the main British military effort was concentrated on helping the French in Europe and preparing for the deployment of Britain's armies to the continent. While Churchill had been publicly blamed for the failure of the Dardenelles and Gallipoli operations, Kitchener, as war minister, had lost much of his luster within the Cabinet. While Asquith could not dismiss the man the British public still believed was Britain's best hope, he increasingly ignored him. In his stead, the Cabinet constituted direction of the war under William Robertson, chief of the

¹³⁵ I confine this discussion to the views of Britain's generals. The admiralty did not appear to play a major role in policy-making, other than insisting on the war aim of the destruction of the German navy. Few in the government disagreed with this objective.

Imperial General Staff.¹³⁶

In 1916, after horrendous losses by the French and Russians in the first eighteen months of the war, the Asquith Cabinet finally realized that Britain would have to play a major role in the land war if Germany were to be defeated and Prussian militarism destroyed. Robertson's prescription was the Somme. This major British effort was a four and a half month battle of continuous British attacks on German lines which netted an eight-mile advance. British casualties alone amounted to over 400,000 men.¹³⁷ This highly unsatisfactory and costly outcome sapped the will of most British ministers, especially Lloyd George, for further offensives on the western front.

While there were differences over strategy between Kitchener and the civilians before his death, the real civil-military dispute came to the fore with Lloyd George's ascension to the prime ministership. Lloyd George was the premier advocate for pursuing alternative strategies against Germany; the first such effort had failed in Gallipoli. Robertson was the premier advocate of the western front strategy; the first such (British) effort had failed in the Somme. Now both men would struggle throughout 1917 over which course would be tried again. At the core of this dispute, however, were different assumptions about how the war began and, by implication, a different conception of what Allied war aims should be.

To the military, there was no "peace party" or "war party" in Berlin. They saw only Germany, a rising ambitious power which intended to expand its power and influence in the international system through the use of force. This is why the war began. Consequently, Britain's main, if not only, objective should be to inflict a decisive military defeat on

¹³⁶ Fromkin, *Peace to End All Peace*, p. 216.

¹³⁷ Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia*, p. 961.

Germany such that Berlin would not try to use force to expand its power again.¹³⁸ "Destroying Prussian militarism" meant nothing to the generals or it meant the simple military defeat of Germany. Robertson and Haig never expressed an interest in changing the political structure of Germany. "Few of us feel," Haig wrote to the king, "that the 'democratising of Germany' is worth the loss of a single Englishman!"¹³⁹ The only legitimate aim in the military view was the physical defeat of Germany's armed forces.

This defeat, however, was not intended to destroy Germany as a Great Power. Robertson and Haig believed in a strict balance of power logic. After the war, the interests and security of the British Empire demanded a Germany strong enough to resist potential French and, especially, Russian expansion. Berlin should be reduced to a European power (no navy or colonies), but excessive war aims should be rejected. Administer a corrective lesson, rap Germany's knuckles, but do not undermine the European balance of power.¹⁴⁰

In some ways it could be argued, as the historian John Gooch does, that the military's war aim--the defeat of Germany--was more moderate than the civilian one--destroying Prussian militarism.¹⁴¹ But the means which Robertson and Haig needed to achieve their aim versus those preferred by Lloyd George were considerably more costly. They resolutely insisted on sticking to the western front, attrition war strategy, despite the Somme's revelation that, in a tactical sense, the losses were not worth the gains. The military also preferred negotiating a separate peace with Austria and Turkey in order to concentrate

¹³⁸ Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy, and War Aims," p. 25.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 183.

¹⁴⁰ Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 183.

¹⁴¹ Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy, and War Aims," p. 31.

resources in France.¹⁴² In contrast, Lloyd George, on his assumption of power, wanted to pursue operations against Turkey and Austria in order to knock them out of the war. He hoped that this would bring about the swift collapse of Germany's resistance. As I mentioned above, how realistic the civilian strategy was relative to its goal is open for debate. On the other hand, it was no more plain that the military's objective and strategy would prove more successful.

These differences produced constant conflict between Robertson and Haig, and Lloyd George. The prime minister insisted on pursuing his war aims. In 1917 he expanded the British force in the Middle East and gave that region his personal attention. In June he supported an Italian offensive against Austria with British artillery in order to force the latter to sue for peace.¹⁴³ Italy met with no great success in this campaign and was all but knocked out of the war by its defeat in the Battle of Caporetto in October. Lloyd George was then forced to reinforce the Italian front with eleven French and British divisions. At the same time, the military pursued their objectives and strategy. They persuaded the War Cabinet to agree to major new offensives in 1917--Flanders and Passchendale--both of which cost much and gained little. After these failures, however, Lloyd George constricted the resources available to Haig and forced Western strategy onto the defensive at least until the United States was fully mobilized and deployed in Europe.

The overall result of this civil-military dispute was confusion, waste of resources, and unnecessary division in the leading Allied power at the most critical time since August 1914. Britain's generals did not impose their war aims on the civilians, though their strategy was followed to a large degree. Conversely, British civilians did not convince their generals that

¹⁴² I shall discuss this point in the next section.

¹⁴³ Guinn, *British Strategy*, pp. 243-250.

their war aims and strategy were the ones which would produce victory, though they were pursued as well.

6.8 THE DIFFICULTY OF CONTRACTING WAR AIMS

By early 1917 Britain had suffered over a million casualties on the battlefield with little appreciable gain. By the government's own consensus, it was no closer to winning the war then than it was in August 1914. In light of such awful sacrifice, a question arises: Why did British war aims not contract? The question was not ignored within the highest British councils. In fact, at various points in the war, it was proposed by one minister or another to negotiate a separate peace with Austria or Turkey. In December 1916, Lord Lansdowne asked whether the government should not try to reach a compromise peace with Germany. Yet, little came of these efforts. It was not until 1918 that Britain began to rethink its war aims.

The Failure to Compromise with Austria and Turkey

In the early stages of the war, Britain promised chunks of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to other states, notably Russia and Italy, to keep them in the war or to encourage them to join it.¹⁴⁴ Yet, as the war dragged on, top political and military leaders in London accepted the desirability, if not the very necessity, of reducing the power of Germany's coalition. As Rothwell states, "What the British wanted above all in the Great War was the defeat of Germany and there was much feeling--as strong in the General Staff as anywhere--

¹⁴⁴ Stevenson, *First World War*, p. 121. Italy I have already discussed. There were additional proposed territorial changes benefiting Russia at Austria's expense. Britain also attempted to use Polish, Czech, and Yugoslav nationalities as a weapon against the Central Powers by promising them states of their own carved out of Austria-Hungary. See Kenneth J. Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

that a separate peace with at least one of her allies was essential for such a victory."¹⁴⁵ For example, Robertson clearly desired a compromise peace with Germany's allies. In a memorandum dated November 29, 1917, he wrote: "There is no prospect of ever acquiring all those vast enemy territories which the different members of the Entente have been promised or wish to acquire; and, therefore, leaving aside these territorial gains, the question is can we get what we must get if we are to secure the future peace of the world."¹⁴⁶

Yet, the promises Britain made to its allies thwarted a compromise peace with Austria. In the spring of 1917, the new Austrian emperor, Karl, offered to negotiate a separate peace with the Allies. These peace feelers came through British and French officials. Karl offered to support Allied territorial claims against Germany in exchange for the Allies dropping their demands against his empire. In other words, Karl proposed to sacrifice German territory in order to maintain the integrity of his own. Britain rejected the overture. Such terms conflicted with the promises Britain had made to Italy two years earlier.¹⁴⁷ But in the wake of Russia's collapse, Lloyd George, especially keen on making a separate peace with Austria, sought to get around these agreements. For example, he offered Italy some Turkish possessions instead. But Rome wanted both.¹⁴⁸ Ultimately, the secret treaties in which Britain had made so many promises gave Italy "a formidable weapon in seeking to thwart Anglo-French efforts...to bring about a separate peace with Austria on the basis of only minimal territorial losses to the Monarchy."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 1-2. See also, Wilfried Fetz, *Peace or Partition: The Habsburg Monarchy and British Policy, 1914-1918* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Calder, *Origins of the New Europe*, p. 112.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor, *Politics in Wartime*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁴⁸ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁴⁹ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 30, and 76ff.

In the two years since joining the Allied cause, Italy's military effort had been devoted entirely to winning territorial conquests from Austria-Hungary. Rome contributed almost nothing to the fight against Germany. In light of that fact, why did Italy's participation in the war matter so much that London allowed it to thwart the chance of a separate peace with Austria?

One answer is that the secret treaty which Britain signed with Italy was, according to Rothwell, "of a uniquely binding sort. According to the treaty, Italy 'will receive' the stated gains. This contrasts with the other secret treaties in which the territorial provisions were made contingent on the outcome of the war."¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Britain regarded the alliance with Italy, at least at this stage, as a serious commitment. When Lord Esher suggested in January 1917 that Britain pursue a separate peace with Austria, Arthur Balfour, the foreign secretary in Lloyd George's government, replied: "What does Esher think we can give Austria without letting down our allies?"¹⁵¹

Another reason was more practical. Italy wanted the Trentino and Trieste. These were long-standing goals of Italy's since its unification. It was expected by the Italian people that no peace would be signed which did not include the transfer of these territories as part of the settlement. Italy's sacrifices up until this point had been enormous. Rome had launched ten major efforts to oust Austria from the Trentino, all without appreciable gain, other than contributing to the weakening of Austria. Italian casualties from 1915 to June 1917 numbered over 600,000 men. Any Italian government which signed a peace that did

¹⁵⁰ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 30. This treaty and the others like them were kept secret from the populations of the respective countries as well as interested neutrals, such as the United States, which opposed the European practice of trading land and peoples in Great Power exchanges.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 83.

not include the expected territorial gains guaranteed its downfall and, possibly, revolution.¹⁵² Thus, there was little leverage Britain and France could bring to bear on the Italians. No Italian government was going to make a peace which meant its downfall. And if Rome did not agree to end hostilities, Austria could not as well. Practically, therefore, the Allies could not offer Austria peace unless Rome moderated its terms or Vienna ceded the disputed territory. Since neither was going to happen, Austria continued the war.

In October and November of 1917, however, Italian military incompetence seemed to solve Lloyd George's problem. Italy suffered a massive defeat at the Battle of Caporetto. The catastrophe cost the Italians 40,000 casualties, 250,000 prisoners, 2500 guns, and large amounts of supplies. The losses of the combined Austro-German army were 20,000. Britain and France were forced to rush eleven divisions to Italy out fear that the Italian peninsula might be overrun. This development helped spur Britain and France to try again to reach a separate peace with Austria, only this time they gave little concern to Italian war aims.¹⁵³ Lloyd George concluded that if Italy could not make a useful contribution to the war by winning an occasional battle, then the western powers were under no obligation to win the Italians' war aims for them. And after Caporetto, if Britain and France wanted to make peace with Austria, Italy was in no condition to continue fighting without their help.¹⁵⁴

This second peace effort also failed, but for entirely different reasons. The strategic situation looked rather favorable to the Central Powers in early 1918. Russia had been defeated and had withdrawn from the war, Italy had been crushed militarily, Turkey showed

¹⁵² Guinn, *British Strategy*, pp. 247-250.

¹⁵³ Dupuy and Dupuy, *Encyclopedia of Military History*, p. 971.

¹⁵⁴ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 85-86. Russia's collapse also convinced the British government to conclude a peace with Austria quickly, the perception of Austrian strength being greater than the reality warranted.

no signs of collapse, and Britain and France neared exhaustion on the western front. In these circumstances, Austria decided to cast its lot irrevocably with the Germans. Berlin was preparing an "end of the war" offensive in the west, using a million additional troops freed from the fighting in Russia. In short, Vienna chose to gamble on German military victory rather than Allied diplomacy.¹⁵⁵

Britain's inability to reach a compromise peace with Turkey replicated the pattern with Austria almost exactly. When Turkey declared war on the Allies in October 1914, London thought that it would not take much to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. As London realized that Turkey's resilience was far greater than anticipated--demonstrated by its success at Gallipoli and the failure of Hussein to rally a major revolt--British leaders contemplated reducing their war aims in order to persuade the Ottomans to leave the war. One of the first to broach the suggestion was William Robertson. In February 1916 he suggested that Britain abandon its war aims against Turkey so Turkey would abandon Germany. The problem was that London could not afford to tell St. Petersburg that it was not going to get Constantinople and the Straits. They were a primary reason why Russia continued to fight Germany and Austria and, despite many setbacks, the Russians tied down large numbers of German troops which might otherwise be engaged in the west. In short, Russia in the war was more valuable to France and Britain than Turkey out of the war. The promise of Constantinople ensured that Britain could not have both.¹⁵⁶

The collapse of Russia in late 1917, however, freed Britain of this obligation. So in

¹⁵⁵ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 158-169.

¹⁵⁶ Gooch, "Soldiers, Strategy, and War Aims," pp. 27-28. See also, French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 165-168.

early 1918 London tried again to reach a separate peace with Turkey. The advantages of doing so were pointed out by a senior Foreign Office official, George Clerk:

[P]eace with Turkey frees us from a heavy military, naval and financial drain and gives us fresh resources with which to press home our attack upon Germany. And we can well afford to be generous in our terms to Turkey if we thereby are enabled definitely to defeat Germany. A peace of exhaustion leaves Germany and Turkey free to carry out a *Mittel Europa* policy to a logical conclusion which means that we have lost the war.¹⁵⁷

The terms proposed by Lloyd George's government to persuade Turkey to leave the war were not light but were better than London's original war aims. They included preserving all Turkish speaking areas under Turkish authority, sacrificing Italian war aims against Turkey, limiting the extent of the new Arab kingdom, and foregoing the crushing military defeat of Turkey that had often animated the prime minister.¹⁵⁸ In hindsight these terms look rather generous, but from the Turkish point of view, Lloyd George still proposed the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the Brest-Litovsk armistice in December 1917 convinced Turkey that Germany would win the war. Thus, it believed that it had nothing to gain from a separate peace with the Allies.¹⁵⁹

The Failure to Compromise with Germany

One reason why World War I became a total war was because the antagonists were unwilling to consider seriously alternatives to "peace through victory." Why was this so in Britain? Although there were several points when the issue was raised, the Cabinet never pursued a compromise peace with Germany. In this section, I shall discuss the domestic and systemic motivations which contributed to the Cabinet's rejection of a moderate settlement

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 136.

¹⁵⁸ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 131-138, 171-184.

¹⁵⁹ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 184.

of the war.

In late 1914, the war of movement was over and trench warfare had begun. Grey and Asquith rejected an indirect offer of mediation on the basis of Germany's evacuation of Belgium. But they did not believe the offer was serious, as there was never any direct evidence that Berlin was interested in such a peace. More importantly, while the evacuation of Belgium would have met one of Britain's principal aims, France and Russia would have found such terms unacceptable. In that event, peace was out of the question.¹⁶⁰

By late 1916, the Somme offensive had just ended with unspectacular results. The Asquith government (now a coalition, but still dominated by the Liberal Party) was rapidly losing its stomach for further all-out fighting. Politically it was quite weak. Asquith was criticized from within by Lloyd George, many conservative ministers, and Britain's own military leadership for not being willing to prosecute the war vigorously enough. In the House of Commons and the press, conservatives vigorously challenged Asquith's right to govern.

It was against this backdrop that Lord Lansdowne, a moderate conservative, asked his Cabinet colleagues to consider negotiating a compromise peace. British casualties after the Somme totalled 1.1 million men, including 15,000 officers killed. In a memorandum to the Cabinet outlining his thoughts, Lansdowne wrote:

We are agreed as to the goal, but we do not know how far we have really travelled towards it, or how much nearer to it we are likely to find ourselves even if the War be prolonged for, say, another year. What will that year have cost us? How much better will our position be at the end of it? Shall we even then be strong enough to "dictate" terms?¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ French, *British Strategy and War Aims*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 139.

He added: "Can we afford to go on paying the same sort of price for the same sort of gains?"¹⁶² Lansdowne did not propose specific terms. He did suggest that total victory, the crushing military defeat of Germany, was at worst impossible and at best unaffordable.

Lansdowne asked in his memo that the general and admirals be requested to render a military judgment as to whether a "knock-out blow" could be delivered against Germany. The chief of the Imperial General Staff, William Robertson, wrote the primary response. Lloyd George, a man who hoped to ascend to the prime ministership and energize the war effort, encouraged him to not "be afraid to let yourself go." Robertson wrote that only "cranks, cowards, and philosophers" would consider a peace before Germany was crushed. To do otherwise would be "an insult to [the] fighting services." He also stated that the government in London needed to show the same courage as Britain's generals and admirals have. Finally, he assured the Cabinet that a knock-out blow was possible: "We shall win if we deserve to win."¹⁶³ Robertson's views here were not insignificant. He had not ruled out military intervention in British politics. He told General Murray in March 1916: "Practically anything may happen to our boasted British Constitution before this war ends and the great asset is the army--whose value will be fixed largely by the extent to which we at the top stick together and stand firm."¹⁶⁴

Optimistic reports on the military situation were a common staple which Robertson fed to the Cabinet. Each time an offensive was being prepared, Robertson told his civilian counterparts that this would be the one to turn the tide--even when he was much less

¹⁶² Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 143. See also, Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne, A Biography* (London: MacMillan, 1929), p. 449.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 175.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 7-8.

optimistic in private.¹⁶⁵ Each time the civilians found it difficult to argue for a reduction in war aims when the professional military men were always optimistic about victory. As Rothwell states: "The knowledge that Robertson and almost all other senior officers favoured a *guerre à l'outrance* undoubtedly had a restraining influence on ministers who otherwise might have been more ready to consider a negotiated settlement with Germany. The years 1916 and 1917 in British history were in a real sense the age of Robertson."¹⁶⁶

There were other, more reasoned responses to Lansdowne's memorandum, however. Lord Robert Cecil, for example, asked what kind of peace was possible under existing conditions. He believed that peace at the end of 1916 promised eventual German hegemony in Europe. In his reply to Lansdowne, Cecil wrote: "A peace now could only be disastrous. At best we could not hope for more than the *status quo* with a great increase in the German power in Eastern Europe. Moreover, this peace would be known by the Germans to have been forced upon us by their submarines, and our insular position would be recognized as increasing instead of diminishing our vulnerability. No one can contemplate our future ten years after a peace on such conditions without profound misgivings."¹⁶⁷ Even if Germany evacuated Belgium and returned Alsace and Lorraine (the only terms which France would ever accept), Germany could rightly claim to have won the war.¹⁶⁸ Russian power was largely destroyed, France was exhausted, and Britain would have few means with which to check the continued growth of German prosperity and power once peace was concluded.

Finally, some historians have noted that the British public probably viewed the

¹⁶⁵ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 40. See also, Stevenson, *First World War*, p. 110.

¹⁶⁶ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 148.

¹⁶⁸ It is extremely remote that Germany would have even accepted such terms. See Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 185.

mounting casualty lists as reason to finish the job. As Paul Guinn writes: "One could not betray the cause for which so many had either died or laid waste their lives....Nor could, in hundreds and thousands of homes, the thought that one's love had given up or marred his life in vain be endured or tolerated."¹⁶⁹

In any event, the Asquith coalition soon collapsed. Lloyd George became prime minister with the backing of the Conservative Party. Few Liberals joined the new government. He was now determined on a fight to the finish--*guerre à l'outrance*. As he had said in a letter a year earlier, "Only a crushing military victory will bring the peace for which the Allies are fighting, and of which Germany will understand the meaning. That victory we shall have; it will be complete and final."¹⁷⁰

In the first six months of 1917, there was a marked increase in domestic discontent in Britain. Various groups, such as labor, socialists, and intellectuals, began agitating for a moderation in war aims and a negotiated peace. Engineering strikes disrupted production. Socialist agitators organized demonstrations for an end to the war. The reaction of Lloyd George, the War Cabinet, and the military leadership was a stronger determination to win. General Haig continued to insist on military victory because in that event, "The chief people to suffer would be the socialists who are trying to rule us at a time when the right-minded of the Nation are so engaged on the country's battles that they [the socialists] are left free to work their mischief."¹⁷¹ Civilians shared this view. Lord Esher, in a letter to the King's private secretary, wrote:

If we really defeat the enemy England will recover her balance quickly enough. If we fail to beat the enemy and have to accept a compromise peace, then we shall be

¹⁶⁹ Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 184.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*. p. 184n.

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 98.

lucky if we escape a revolution in which the monarchy, the Church and all our 'Victorian' institutions will founder...the institutions under which a war such as this was possible whether monarchical, parliamentary or diplomatic, will go under. I have met no one who, speaking his inmost mind, differs from this conclusion.¹⁷²

In short, as Rothwell states: "To almost everyone in ruling circles the only really satisfactory answer to such developments seemed to be to press on for victory, thus vindicating their leading position in society."¹⁷³

Yet, Russia's final collapse in the latter half of 1917 placed the Allied cause in mortal danger. The first Russian revolution in March had overthrown the czarist government. This, Lloyd George and his colleagues expected, would undermine Russia's ability to fight. They were right. A new government under Alexander Kerensky took power but soon proved to be ineffectual. It defeated a monarchist counterrevolution organized by General Kornilov, but was ultimately overthrown by Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution in November. Russia sued for peace which was granted in early December. The loss of the Russian front and the expected transfer of a million German troops to the west sparked the British government to rethink its war aims.

The change in the balance of power was significant. In March 1917, before the year's major battles and Russia's collapse, British and French divisions outnumbered their German opponents 178 to 129. By January 1918, Russia had been defeated and Italy required reinforcement. Germany was transferring most of its divisions on the Eastern front to the west. It had already reached a balance with the Western allies, 177 divisions to 173. Thirty-one more would arrive in the spring. Moreover, Britain and France (as well as

¹⁷² Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 242. Lord Esher held a unique role in British government circles. He held no office, but was a close confidante of many ministers and certainly an influential personage. Asquith, for example, had asked him to request Sir John French's resignation, then the British commander-in-chief. He was the preeminent member of the government's "Kitchen Cabinet."

¹⁷³ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, pp. 97-98.

Germany) had reduced the strength of each division from 12 battalions to nine. France and Britain could not defeat Germany in large battles of 1917. In January 1918, despite American intervention, the expectation of decisive victory of the kind Cabinet ministers talked about in 1915 had all but evaporated.

Lloyd George now doubted that the decisive and crushing military victory which he had once advocated could be had. It was true that the United States had declared war on Germany in April 1917, but American help, it was believed, would not arrive in sufficient time to arrest the impending German offensive. Lloyd George decided to jettison idea of destroying Prussian militarism. In his famous war aims speech of January 5, 1918, Lloyd George explicitly rejected this aim (without reminding his audience that it once was a war aim):

Nor did we enter this war merely to alter or destroy the Imperial constitution of Germany, much as we consider that military autocratic constitution a dangerous anachronism in the twentieth century. Our point of view is that the adoption of a really democratic constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that in her the old spirit of military domination had indeed died in this war, and would make it much easier for us to conclude a broad democratic peace with her. But, after all, that is a question for the German people to decide.¹⁷⁴

In a rare public speech Lord Milner, a member of Lloyd George's War Cabinet, declared that the British people were "fighting for our lives." He added: "It is not now a question of destroying Prussian militarism. The question is, whether Prussian militarism should destroy us...neither America nor this country is fighting in order to dismember the German people or to interfere with their clear right to decide for themselves under what constitution they choose to live."¹⁷⁵

Lloyd George contemplated a peace in which Germany and England divide Europe,

¹⁷⁴ War aims speech of David Lloyd George, January 5, 1918, in Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, pp. 2517-2518.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Guinn, *British Strategy*, p. 275n.

primarily at Russia's expense. Prior to his war aims speech, "Lloyd George spoke almost with equanimity of Germany annexing Lithuania and Courland and added that in that case 'two great Empires would emerge from the war namely the British Empire and Germany.'"¹⁷⁶ Russia's defeat convinced almost all of Britain's leading politicians and even General Robertson that it was no longer possible to defeat Germany decisively. Nevertheless, the Allies were not willing to make peace at any price. Allied war aims were still considerable. According to Lloyd George's speech, they included the self-determination for peoples, the preservation of the rights of small nations, restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, the restoration of Belgium, the loss of non-Turkish lands for Turkey, recognition of the legitimate claims of Italy, Romania, and Serbia, democracy, the loss of German colonies, compensation and reparations, and a permanent peace.

Anything less than this was unacceptable in light of the casualties Britain had suffered. A major reason why Lloyd George made a public statement on war aims in January 1918 was to justify the sacrifices the British people had made. The speech was given before a trade union conference on manpower, one of the groups that favored a quick end to the war. At the beginning of his speech, Lloyd George declared:

When men by the million are being called upon to suffer and face death and vast populations are being subjected to the sufferings and privations of war on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, they are entitled to know for what cause or causes they are making the sacrifice. It is only the clearest, greatest and justest of causes that can justify the continuance even for one day of this unspeakable agony of the nations.¹⁷⁷

In the final line of his speech, Lloyd George stated: "In these conditions the British Empire would welcome peace, to secure these conditions its peoples are prepared to make even

¹⁷⁶ Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy*, p. 106.

¹⁷⁷ War aims speech, in Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, p. 2515.

greater sacrifices than those they have yet endured."¹⁷⁸

The reason why these terms failed to produce a peace was not that Britain failed to make a formal offer to Germany along these lines (though no such proposal was made). The problem, as I noted in the previous section, was that Germany's defeat of Russia and Italy in 1917 convinced the German government, now dominated by Generals Ludendorff and Hindenburg, that peace through victory was possible. They would have refused a peace offer which did not legitimize the territorial status quo of January 1918, i.e., no restoration of Belgium, no return of Alsace and Lorraine. If Britain negotiated on these terms, particularly the former, the government would surely have fallen. In light of how prominently Belgium figured in the justification for war and British war aims, the war would have been deemed as lost. Thus, while Britain's and France's strategic situation was critical in January 1918, it was not yet desperate. The United States was mobilizing and arming. Unlimited credit and supplies were available. And the tide had been turned against the submarine campaign.¹⁷⁹ Germany chose to exhaust itself on one last desperate throw of the dice and Britain and France barely escaped with their lives.

¹⁷⁸ War aims speech, Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, p. 2527.

¹⁷⁹ I have not discussed the German submarine campaign against Britain at all. The near strangling of Britain during the second half of 1916 and 1917 also influenced the Cabinet's estimate of whether victory was possible. British ministers realized that they might be forced to sue for peace if the submarine campaign continued unabated. But they were unwilling to contemplate a reduction in war aims unless and until they were face-to-face with starvation. Fortunately, in April 1917 Lloyd George forced the Admiralty to introduce the convoy system which eventually provided the margin of victory.

6.9 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The expansion in British war aims in the First World War is without question the most complicated case of this study. In an attempt to sort it out, let us first evaluate how the predictions inferred at the beginning of this chapter fared. As in previous chapters, I first restate the prediction. Then I note in bold my coding as to whether the prediction came true or not. To the extent that explanation is necessary, it follows in parentheses.

Results of the Predictions

The Blood Price

- * Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims. **True.**
- * The expansion of British war aims should come only after Britain had suffered significant casualties. **Not True.** (The decision to destroy Prussian militarism came within the first few weeks of the war, though other expansions came later.)
- * As the war progresses, we should find evidence of British leaders expressing concern at the increasing casualty rates. **True.**
- * Policy elites will justify new war aims using language and terms that refer to the blood price. **Not True.** (British leaders used such language, not to justify additional aims, but to maintain existing ones.)

Social Mobilization

- * Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims toward a universal goal. **True.** (Destroying Prussian militarism is clearly such a goal. Fighting for the rights of small nations--to justify the defense of Belgium--is also a universal goal, though it did not require an expansion of war aims.)
- * The expansion of British war aims should come early in the war. **True.** (Destroying Prussian militarism was declared no later than September and perhaps as early as August 1914.)
- * Cabinet ministers, in internal policy discussions, should voice the need to find a universal aim in order to build support for the war. **True.** (Cabinet ministers, in deciding to intervene in the war were concerned with finding an objective which the people would support.)

The Cleon Problem

- * Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Britain's generals should favor wider aims than their civilian counterparts. **Unclear.** (This, however, is a mixed bag. Civilians pushed the aim of destroying Prussian militarism, not the military. Kitchener advocated wider aims in the Middle East and persuaded the Cabinet to agree. Robertson favored a compromise peace the Austria.)
- * As the prestige of the military rises, Britain's war aims should expand. As the prestige of the military declines, Britain's war aims should contract. **Unclear.** (Kitchener's prestige helped persuade the Cabinet to expand aims in the Middle East. He did not, however, comment very much on the aim of destroying Prussian militarism. Robertson's and Haig's prestige, in the eyes of the public, never really declined, yet Lloyd George abandoned the aim of destroying Prussian militarism anyway.)
- * We should find evidence that as the military's prestige rises, Cabinet ministers should be increasingly reluctant to challenge or contradict military authority. **True.**

Threats to Security

- * Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims against Germany. **True.**
 - Germany was perceived as growing stronger during the war. **True.** (Germany had conquered valuable resources and territory from Belgium, France, and Russia.)
 - Britain was geographically proximate to Germany. **True.** (Actually, by conquering Belgium and acquiring its channel ports, Germany "moved closer" to Britain.)
 - Britain perceived the offense as the stronger form of war. **True.** (This was true in the beginning when Britain expected a short war, though over time, the Cabinet became increasingly skeptical of the offensive.)
 - Britain perceived Germany's intentions as more aggressive. **True.**
 - + Britain perceived that Germany initiated the war. **True.**
 - + Britain perceived Germany's wartime conduct as brutal and uncivilized. **True.**
 - + Britain perceived Germany's propaganda as excessively hostile and menacing. **Unclear.** (While there is one quotation in which a Cabinet minister referred to Germany's propaganda, generally there was little evidence that they cared at all.)
 - + Germany adopted an offensive strategy. **True.**
 - + Britain and Germany were governed by different regime types. **True.** (This seemed to matter a lot.)
- * A shift in Britain's estimate of the German threat should lead to a corresponding shift in British war aims. **True.** (This seems to explain at least part of the decision to destroy Prussian militarism.)
- * British ministers, in internal policy discussions, should justify wider war aims in language which describes Germany as a greater threat than they had previously realized.

True. (The Cabinet realized the "war party" was in control and expanded aims accordingly. Likewise, the expansion of war aims against Turkey was justified in part by the threat Germany could pose to Britain's empire after the war--if German influence were not expelled from the region.)

Opportunistic Expansion

* Core Prediction: Britain will expand its war aims. **True.**

- Britain grew relatively stronger during the war. **Unclear.** (This was certainly not true in the first year of war when Germany made its initial conquests. On the other hand, in later years Britain mobilized its society, resources, and army in a way that had hitherto never been done. Whether that meant Britain grew relatively stronger is still unclear, because Germany was also mobilizing its society for a total war.)
- Britain won a decisive military victory. **Not True.** (At no time could the description "decisive victory" be applied to any British campaign, except, perhaps, the last, and even that is debatable.)
- Britain's leaders thought expanding war aims would be relatively cheap. **True.** (They did not expect to fight a full war in 1914, nor did they think expanding their war aims against Turkey would prove to be an expensive proposition.)

* A shift in Britain's estimate of opportunity leads to a corresponding shift in British war aims. **True.** (When the Cabinet determined that the chances of military victory on the Western front were declining, they tried to persuade their generals to limit operations there. When they determined that there was a military opportunity in the Middle East, they pursued it. Finally, when Russia departed the war, Britain abandoned the aim of destroying Prussian militarism.)

* British ministers, in internal policy discussions, should explain the decision to expand war aims in terms of opportunity. **Unclear.** (Historians argue that Lloyd George wanted a bigger empire in the Middle East because it was achievable, but usually the justification was security for the empire.)

Preventive Expansion

* Core Prediction: Britain will expand the war to deprive Germany of power and access to resources. **Not True.**

* Britain should attack neutrals that are giving aid to Germany. **Not True.** (Germany did not receive much support from outside its alliance; nevertheless, Britain left the Netherlands alone which was of some help to the Central Powers. The attack on Turkey does not qualify because Turkey declared war first; Britain had hoped to keep the Ottomans out of the war.)

Quid Pro Quo Expansion

- * Core Prediction: Britain will make promises in order to win new allies. **True.** (Patently so.)
- * British ministers, in back-channel or private diplomatic meetings with other European leaders, should make promises of territorial side payments in exchange for their entry into the war. **True.**
- * We should see evidence of territorial side payments after the war. **True.** (Russia's claims, of course, were ignored, but most everybody received some of what they wanted. See below.)

Collective Action and Alliance Management

- * Core Prediction: Britain, along with its major allies, will expand aims to an absolute level, such as Germany's unconditional surrender. **True.** (The Treaty of London in September 1914 forced Britain, France, and Russia to continue fighting until Germany was completely defeated.)
- * We should, therefore, see few disputes among the allies over war aims. **True.** (In Europe this was the case, though there was much more suspicion and bitterness with respect to each power's war aims against Turkey.)

Systemic Constraints

- * Core Prediction: Britain may expand its war aims. **True.**
- * Britain will not publicly adopt war aims which the United States opposes. **True.** (Britain did not want to alienate the United States and often couched its objectives in language that it thought would appeal to Americans. This was also one reason why all the secret treaties of territorial exchanges were kept secret until the U.S. entry into the war.)

Table 6.2 Summary of Predictions and Results.

Hypothesis	Core Prediction	Actual Results	Subsidiary Predictions	# True	# Not True	# Unclear
Blood Price	Expand	Expansion	3	1	2	0
Social Mobilization	Expand	Expansion	2	2	0	0
Clean Problem	Expand	Expansion	3	1	0	2
Threats to Security	Expand	Expansion	11	9	0	2
Opportunistic Expansion	Expand	Expansion	5	2	1	2
Quid Pro Quo Expansion	Make Promises	Many Promises Made	2	2	0	0
Preventive Expansion	Expand to Deprive	No Such Expansion	1	0	1	0
Collective Action	Absolute Aim	Military Victory	1	1	0	0
Systemic Constraints	May Expand	Expand	1	1	0	0

Explanation:

The first column states the hypothesis. The second column presents the core prediction of the hypothesis and the third column reveals the actual result. The fourth column totals the number of subsidiary predictions. The fifth, sixth, and seventh column reports how many of those predictions were true, not true, or unclear.

The decision in September 1914 to destroy Prussian militarism provides the strongest confirmation yet for the threat hypothesis. *All* of the hypothesis' tenets came true in that first decision. Germany had grown materially stronger with its conquest of Belgium and northern France. Germany (or German power) actually moved geographically closer to Britain with the acquisition of Belgium's channel ports. The offense was still perceived as the strongest form of war in September 1914; the war of movement was under way and had not yet stalemated. And Britain perceived Germany's intentions as more aggressive in September than they had in July or even early August. Britain blamed Germany for starting the war, engaging in a brutal invasion of Belgium, employing harsh occupation procedures, using menacing propaganda (though this latter point is weakly documented), and pursuing an offensive strategy. Above all, Britain perceived that the Prussian autocratic, military caste controlled Germany. Overall, this amounts to an overwhelming case for the threat hypothesis. As Winston Churchill told an American press reporter:

In a word, it is the old struggle of 100 years ago against Napoleon...England stands right in the path of this overgrowing power. Our military force is perhaps small, but it is good and it will grow; our naval and financial resources are considerable; and with these we stand between this mighty army and a domination which would certainly not be content with European limits....The French, English, and American systems of Government by popular election and Parliamentary debate, with the kind of civilization which flows from such institutions, are brought into direct conflict with the highly efficient imperialist bureaucracy and military organization of Prussia. That is the issue. No partisanship is required to make it plain. No sophistry can obscure it....now that it has begun it has become a war of self-preservation. The British democracy with its limited monarchy, its ancient Parliament, its ardent social and philanthropic dreams, is engaged for good or for ill in a deadly grapple with the formidable might of Prussian autocratic rule.¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the point should be slightly modified by the opportunity hypothesis. British Cabinet ministers made the decision to enter the war and to destroy Prussian militarism under

¹⁸⁰ "Mr. Churchill on the British Case," *The Times* (London), August 31, 1914.

erroneous assumptions about how much the war would cost. But even when they were confronted with the reality of total commitment to the land war, they did not shirk from it and rethink their war aims.

The blood price, quid pro quo expansion, preventive expansion, and Cleon problem hypotheses do not offer competing explanations as to why Britain decided to destroy Prussian militarism. And because all Europe was at war, Britain faced no systemic constraints. Admittedly, this objective made the government's efforts at social mobilization easier. It was featured prominently in nearly every public speech by Cabinet ministers. However, its frequent occurrence in private documents and correspondence suggests that it was more than that. It was a real war aim. Moreover, Britain's declaration of war was enormously popular. Britain, Grey and Asquith declared, would defend the rights of small countries and uphold international treaties. These apparently were sufficiently universal objectives to inspire the British public to war. Crowds cheered Cabinet ministers; young men swamped the recruiting stations to volunteer for Kitchener's armies, all in response to Britain's pledge to defend Belgium and stand by France. "Destroying Prussian militarism" came a little later.

Britain's adoption of the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism inspires other theoretical insights. The threat hypothesis was in large measure borrowed from Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory.¹⁸¹ Walt developed the hypotheses on aggregate power, geography, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. In chapter two, I adapted them to serve as theories for the expansion of war aims. Walt, however, never explained which factors policy-makers use to determine "aggressive intentions," a frequent criticism of his book. I offered a "theory" of aggressive intentions, at least with respect to war aims, based on the initiation of war, wartime conduct, rhetoric and propaganda, military strategy,

¹⁸¹ See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*.

and regime structure. These factors proved fairly useful in this case, though they were somewhat less useful in previous cases. A task for future research would be to incorporate this "theory" of aggressive intentions back into Walt's balance of threat theory and retest his argument regarding balancing versus bandwagoning.

In addition, Walt treated the four tenets of balance of threat theory as equals. He gave no indication as to whether he thought one was more powerful than another. My British case allows us to explore, in a minor way, whether one of his tenets is stronger or weaker than the others. Specifically, offense dominance appears to be a weaker driver of war aims than aggregate power, geography, or aggressive intentions. For example, by 1917 it was patently clear to the British Cabinet that the offense was not dominant. Ministers were increasingly skeptical about the likelihood of success of further Allied offensives against the Germans. At the same time, their estimate of Germany's power and intentions had not changed. Nor had the geographical extent of the German military diminished in any way. In other words, the reality that the offense was *not* in fact dominant had no material effect on Britain's perception of the German threat. It was still real and great, and had to be destroyed.

The issue of Prussian militarism provides an additional point with which we can compare the threat, opportunistic expansion, and blood price hypotheses. In early 1918, Britain's perception of the German threat was as high as ever. Russia had just been defeated. Germany was transferring a million troops to the western front. German power had grown substantially in relative terms. Nevertheless, Lloyd George abandoned the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism. He believed that the Entente was no longer capable of achieving that war aim militarily. The opportunity had greatly diminished with Russia's departure from the war. Thus, British war aims contracted--a little. Why did they not

contract more? The blood price hypothesis provides the best answer. As Lloyd George indicated in his war aims speech, the restoration of Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine, the rights of small countries, and the like were worthy aims for which Britain had fought and sacrificed. They were worthy aims for which Britain would continue fighting and sacrificing.

The quid pro quo hypothesis, of course, explains the promises Britain made to existing and prospective allies. Moreover, after the war, most of these states--Russia excepted--received some measure of territorial compensation in the Versailles Peace Conference.¹⁸² This is not all that surprising. Britain wanted to bring the greatest amount of pressure possible to bear on Germany; therefore, it was quite prepared to make whatever promises were necessary--even contradictory ones--to bring new allies into the war and to inspire existing ones.

Why did Britain make such promises in 1914-1918, but Prussia in 1866 or 1870 and the U.S. in 1950 did not? The U.S. case is easy to explain. The U.N. already backed and supported U.S. actions in Korea. The U.S. was by a clear margin the strongest power on the planet and certainly among the western and neutral countries. Who would the U.S. have made promises to? It bore the lion's share of the fighting. The comparison between Prussia and Britain is more difficult to explain. The difference may lie in the types of war each nation was fighting. In 1866 and even 1870, Prussia fought a limited war for limited objectives. In World War I, Britain believed it was fighting for its very survival. Thus, the quid pro quo hypothesis is more likely to apply in total wars, rather than in more limited conflicts. Furthermore, Prussia in both its wars very quickly gained the upper hand. It dominated and won its wars against Austria and France. Throughout most of the First World

¹⁸² See Michael L. Dockrill and J. Douglas Goold, *Peace without Promise: Britain and the Peace Conference 1919-23* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1981).

War, it was not at all clear to the British that they would win. For Prussia, allies were an unnecessary complication; for Britain, they were essential for survival.

Britain's desire for a larger empire in the Middle East is more difficult to explain, primarily because the motivations for these new aims changed as the fortunes of war changed in Western Europe. The Cleon problem is part of the explanation. The Middle East project was first proposed and initiated by Lord Kitchener. Asquith and Grey doubted the wisdom of enlarging Britain's holdings in the Middle East, but the field marshal persuaded the Cabinet otherwise. In light of Britain's history as an imperial power, however, the Cabinet probably did not need much persuading. Kitchener's motives centered on making the existing British Empire more secure--from France and Russia. He feared that after the war, they may once again become Britain's rivals. In that event, the Empire required more security.

In 1917, the war was not going well for the Entente. It was not at all clear that Germany would or could be defeated. This made the Cabinet under David Lloyd George even more determined to defeat Turkey and annex large parts of the Ottoman Empire. But the new prime minister's motives were somewhat different from those of the old secretary of state for war. First, if Germany emerged from the war without being defeated, the German presence in the Ottoman Empire would threaten the British Empire's postwar security. Thus, by acting first and destroying the Turkish empire, Britain engaged in preventive expansion. Second, the failure to gain ground against the German army in Europe led Lloyd George seek compensation in the Middle East for Britain's sacrifices. He knew that if Germany were not defeated, his government would fall after the establishment of peace--unless he could present to the public other tangible gains. Third, Turkey provided a military opportunity that did not exist in Europe. The government believed that a relatively small force (and therefore a small risk) could reap substantial gains in the open deserts of the

Middle East. Finally, Britain was able to expand its war aims because it faced no systemic constraints. It negotiated with France the Sykes-Picot agreement to ensure that French would not thwart Britain's Middle East project. Russia was bought off with Constantinople and the Straits. In short, the decision to enlarge Britain's empire at Turkey's expense is explained by the preventive expansion, the blood price, and opportunistic expansion hypotheses.

The collective action and alliance management hypothesis is not particularly helpful except that it does explain why the three Entente allies signed the London Treaty of September 5, 1914. That treaty was intended to prevent any individual declarations of war aims, thereby limiting Germany's ability to make a separate peace with any one of its enemies. The treaty also committed Britain, France, and Russia to fight on until Germany had been defeated. It was hoped that this would ensure the full participation of all the Allies in the war effort and keep disputes among them to a minimum. It was reasonably successful, at least until Russia's exhaustion and defeat.

What about the Cleon problem? If there was ever a case where generals gained domestic political power with the outbreak of war, Great Britain in 1914 was it. The public and press demanded the appointment of Lord Kitchener as war minister when the prime minister would have preferred someone else. Kitchener, by virtue of his prestige as a military professional, virtually dictated government policy in the first months of the war. Few in Cabinet believed Britain needed a large land army. Kitchener did; the army was raised. Few British ministers were willing to challenge his authority. Both Churchill and Lloyd George described the government in the first six months of the war as virtually a Kitchener dictatorship. But military setbacks in 1915 and 1916 removed the internal tarnish to his prestige. Other ministers became more willing to challenge his opinions or ignore

them altogether. By the time of his death in 1916, many responsibilities of the war minister had been stripped from the office and placed elsewhere. Yet, his external prestige remained intact until the end. Asquith did not dismiss Kitchener because his government could never have survived the political storm which would have ensued.

Kitchener's decline, however, did not free the government from domination by generals. William Robertson, chief of the Imperial General Staff, assumed direction of the war. While he did not favor wider aims than the Cabinet, he did attempt, with considerable success, to make military strategy his exclusive purview. The persistence of the western front, attrition war strategy was due largely to Robertson's insistence, and acts of manipulation and misinformation. Robertson also squelched Cabinet debate over a compromise peace with Germany. When Lloyd George assumed the premiership, he tried to assert his authority over all aspects of military strategy. He directed the war in the Middle East according to his own objectives, but did not acquire control of the western front until February 1918 when he forced Robertson's resignation.¹⁸³ In short, the military dictated strategy, but not war aims.

Finally, World War I is the crucial case for the blood price hypothesis. Many observers have explained the extensive war aims programs of the major belligerents with this theory. Nevertheless, while it emerged from this case with more explanatory power than it had in the previous three, but it appears weaker in this crucial case than conventional wisdom suggests. It cannot explain Britain's decision to destroy Prussian militarism or the promises made in order to hold and win allies. It does, as I noted above, help in part to explain the enlargement of Britain's empire in the Middle East. It also helps to explain why war aims

¹⁸³ Lloyd George managed this by creating a new military advisory position to denude the chief of the Imperial General Staff of his role as the primary military advisor to the Cabinet. Robertson chose to resign rather than be rendered impotent.

did not contract in late 1916 and early 1917. Domestic political agitation in favor of reduced war aims convinced Cabinet ministers to drive on "to vindicate their leading position in society." Lloyd George in his war aims speech publicly used language that referred to Britain's enormous sacrifice of men to justify continuing the fight against Germany. Thus, it seems that while the dead do not drive war aims up, they do not let them go down.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

"The office of the statesman is to determine and to indicate to the military authorities the national interests most vital to be defended, as well as the objects of conquest or destruction most injurious to the enemy in view of the political exigencies which the military power only subserves."

--Alfred Thayer Mahan

7.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS

I began this study by asking a number of questions about the phenomenon of expanding war aims. At the most general level, I asked what causes states to expand their war aims at the outset of war and in the midst of war. More important, and because this is not a universal phenomenon, I asked why war aims expand in some wars but not in others? I was also interested in understanding why states contract their war aims during war. But since the problem of *expanding* war aims is the more interesting, dangerous, and important phenomenon, this study concentrated mainly on that question.

War aims are the political ends for which a state fights during war. The means of achieving those ends are men, weapons, doctrines, and strategies. Theoretically, as Clausewitz has pointed out, this relationship is linear. Political objectives are set; force proportionate to the value of the political objectives is employed to achieve them. In reality, as he realized, war is not so linear and the relationship between means and ends not so static. States miscalculate the amount of force required to achieve objectives. The means are often insufficient to meet the political goals statesmen have set. This raised subsidiary questions. When and why do states contract aims rather than escalate means? When and why do states escalate means rather than contract aims?

To answer these questions, I developed and employed nine hypotheses of expanding war aims:

1. The Blood Price.
2. Social Mobilization.
3. The Cleon Problem.
4. Threats to Security.
5. Opportunistic Expansion.
6. Cumulative Resources and Preventive Expansion.
7. Collective Action Problems and Quid Pro Quo Expansion.
8. Collective Action Problems and Alliance Management.
9. Systemic Constraints.

The first five and the ninth hypotheses were the most important. Cross-case predictions were inferred from each hypothesis. They were then tested against four historical cases: Prussian war aims in Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars, U.S. war aims in the Korean War, and British war aims in the First World War. In these cases, I focused on seven major decisions to expand, hold steady, and contract war aims:

- A. Prussia's decision in 1866 not to expand war aims against Austria.
- B. Prussia's decision in 1870 to expand war aims and annex Alsace-Lorraine.
- C. The U.S. decision in September 1950 to expand war aims and unify Korea.
- D. The U.S. decision in December 1950 to contract aims back to the 38th parallel.
- E. Britain's decision in 1914 to expand aims and destroy Prussian militarism.
- F. Britain's decision in 1915-1916 to expand aims and enlarge its empire in the Middle East.
- G. Britain's decision in 1918 to abandon the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism.

The explanatory power of each hypothesis was evaluated against each decision. This section and the next evaluate the explanatory power of the hypotheses in cross-case comparisons. Section 7.3 discusses the recurring theme of hard to contract war aims. Section 7.4 addresses when states escalate means rather than contract ends and vice versa. Section 7.5 considers policy implications.

The blood price hypothesis holds that political leaders will expand their war aims in the wake of higher-than-expected casualties on the battlefield. States begin wars with some defined set of war aims and with some idea as to how much it will cost in men and resources to fulfill those aims. When after a period of fighting the costs come to outweigh the real or prospective gains, then statesmen will expand their war aims. Since sacrifices are already great, goals must be expanded to bring costs and benefits into proportion. Policy elites worry that where costs of war exceed real or anticipated gains, their domestic political positions will be undermined; their legitimacy to govern questioned. Thus, they expand their war aims. In chapter two, I inferred from the blood price hypothesis a number of cross-case predictions. How did they fare? (See Table 7.1)

Overall, the evidence that increasing casualties cause statesmen to expand their war aims is weak, even in the British case. There was no expansion in Prussian war aims in the Austro-Prussian War; however, Prussian casualties were light. Prussian losses in the Franco-Prussian War were greater and war aims did expand, but the decision to annex Alsace-Lorraine came within the first few weeks of the war. Moreover, there is no direct testimony that the casualties Prussia suffered *caused* its expansion in war aims. In the U.S. case, American forces took many casualties during the Pusan Perimeter period. War aims then expanded. The sequence is thus correct. But that is the only thing the hypothesis has going for it in this case. The Truman administration expressed concern at the casualties U.S. forces were taking, but not until *after* the Chinese intervention. It then contracted war aims. With respect to the British case, the blood price hypothesis cannot explain why Britain sought to destroy Prussian militarism. The Cabinet adopted that objective very early in the war. The hypothesis does help to explain why Britain sought to enlarge its empire in the Middle East

Table 7.1 Results of the Cross-Case Predictions of the Blood Price Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Explanation
1. As time and casualties mount, a state's war aims should expand.	Not true in any case. Prussian war aims in 1866 did not expand. Prussian war aims in 1870 and British war aims expanded <i>before</i> casualties were great. U.S. war aims expanded after the Pusan perimeter but shrank after China's intervention.
2. The biggest and most intense wars should see the largest aims.	Partially true. Britain in WWI saw the largest aims. <i>But</i> Prussia in 1870 fought an all-out war for limited aims.
3. In a world war, the country with heaviest losses should have biggest aims.	Unclear. Britain in WWI was the only case; no basis for a comparison.
4. Societal groups which pay the blood price should favor the largest aims.	True in two cases. The Prussian military paid the blood price and favored higher aims. But in the U.S. case, the military favored unifying Korea, but as a whole did not favor a war on China, whereas many members of Congress did. And the British Cabinet early on decided to destroy Prussian militarism.
5. Only when a state is on the brink of collapse will its war aims shrink.	Not true in any case. In 1950 military defeat forced the contraction of war aims, but the U.S. was not about to collapse. In 1918 Britain contracted war aims a little after Russia left the war but was not on the brink of collapse.
6. Internally, elites should express concern over the costs of war.	True in three cases. Wilhelm in 1870, the Truman administration, and the British Cabinet all expressed concern at one time or another at the casualties its armies were suffering in the field.
7. Elites justify larger aims using language which refers to the blood price.	Not true in any case. Elites often justified the refusal to <i>contract</i> aims in these terms (Wilhelm, 1870 and Britain, 1917-18), but <i>new</i> war aims were never justified in terms of the casualties the state had suffered.

after several years of war. By 1916 Britain had suffered enormous casualties in the battlefields of France, with little prospect of victory. British ministers, Lloyd George in particular, looked around to find compensation for Britain for these enormous losses. The vast expanses of Turkey's empire in the Middle East were a logical candidate.

In short, the blood price hypothesis emerged from this study weaker than expected.

It was unlikely to serve as a powerful explanation of expanding war aims in conflicts which were limited, but in the First World War, and especially in casualty-sensitive Britain, we find that casualties did not drive Britain's primary war aims--the restoration of Belgium and the destruction of Prussian militarism. This is not to say that it was completely useless, however. The losses Britain had suffered in Europe made the Cabinet even more determined to pursue a larger empire in the Middle East. But it does not appear to be a particularly fruitful avenue for future research.

The Social Mobilization Hypothesis

The social mobilization hypothesis holds that in order for policy elites to build support for a war policy, they will expand war aims to include a popular, universal goal. In this modern age of mass politics, the people of a state may be unwilling to fight for an objective that policy elites deem important. To win popular support for a war effort, therefore, elites choose a war aim which will win popular backing. Usually this means fighting for ideas, rather than the balance of power or a slice of territory. These universal aims, however, are invariably larger than original reason for going to war and represent an expansion in war aims.

Across the cases, the social mobilization hypothesis looks even weaker than the blood price hypothesis, at least with respect to the expansion of war aims. (See Table 7.2) Its predictions in the individual cases did not fare well. In 1866, Prussian public opinion generally opposed the fratricidal war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at least until Königgrätz. Bismarck did not declare any universal aim at the outset of war, nor did he expand his war aims at any time, despite pressure from King Wilhelm, Moltke, and public opinion to do so. In the 1870 war against France, the Prussian and even the German people

for the most part were extremely supportive of Bismarck's war policy. He helped rally the people by proclaiming a nationalist war against France, but they needed little rallying. Several weeks later he expanded his war aims to include the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.

Table 7.2 Results of the Cross-Case Predictions of the Social Mobilization Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Explanation
1. War aims are more likely to expand at the outset or early stages of a war.	True in two cases. War aims did not expand in 1866. War aims in 1950 expanded months later. In 1870 and 1914 war aims expanded early in the war.
2. The more war resistant a state's population, the more war aims will expand toward universalistic goals.	Not true in any case. The Prussians in 1866 were war resistant; war aims did not expand. In the 1870, 1950, and 1914 cases, none of the populations could be described as war resistant; yet, war aims expanded.
3. Where a war policy enjoys wide support, war aims are unlikely to expand.	Not true in any case. War in 1870 and 1914 enjoyed wide support in Prussia and Britain. War aims expanded. In 1950, the American people supported intervention to "stop Communist aggression."
4. Wars of limited aims should be rare.	Unclear. This is too small a sample. Yet, 1866 and 1870 were wars of limited aims, even if the latter was an all-out war. The U.S. fought a war of unlimited aims against North Korea.
5. Authoritarian states will be more likely to fight wars of limited aims than democracies.	True. Autocratic Prussia fought two wars of limited aims. The U.S. fought a war of unlimited aims against North Korea. Britain fought for unlimited aims.
6. Elites, in internal discussions, defend an enunciation of messianic war aims to mobilize support for war.	True in one case. The British Cabinet felt it needed a universal war aim to get the British people to support the war, though it did not cause an expansion of aims.

The Truman administration declared that it was going to intervene in the Korean War to "stop Communist aggression." Truman himself argued that Korea was the Communist Munich. But war aims did not expand until several months later. In 1914, the British Cabinet, somewhat to its surprise, found an enthusiastic public willing to fight against

German aggression and uphold Belgium's neutrality. Within a few weeks, Grey and other Cabinet ministers had declared that Britain also intended to destroy Prussian militarism. This universal aim, however, was not required to build support for the war. Ministers were cheered. Recruiting stations for Kitchener's volunteer armies were swamped. The predictions in this case fared well because the war was extremely popular from the get-go.

Nevertheless, the social mobilization has merit, albeit not as a hypothesis of expanding war aims. While it is evident that policy elites did not *expand* war aims toward universalistic goals, they did make some effort to couch real war aims in universalistic *language*. Bismarck propagandized that *Germany* was defending itself against another war of aggression by France, the ancient enemy. The Truman administration declared that stopping the North Koreans from taking over South Korea was like reversing the outcome of Munich. The only way to make the world safe for democracy was to stop Communist aggression wherever it occurred. And the British Cabinet found that defending Belgium's neutrality and the rights of small countries, standing by its friends, and upholding international law were sufficiently universal and popular goals which disguised the real war aims--the need to maintain the balance of power, that most unpopular of objectives. In short, political leaders in all three of these cases formulated their public statements of objectives in the starkest possible terms: good versus evil, us versus them, civilization versus barbarianism.

The Cleon Problem Hypothesis

The Cleon problem holds that with the outbreak of war, military men gain greater authority and greater political power over the war process and policy. This occurs because as the professionals of war, they have the expert knowledge needed to run the war effort.

This credibility then carries over to war aims policy. Moreover, the public will trust and support a government more when the generals are given greater authority because, it is assumed, "they know what they are doing." Thus, even if civilians leaders do not want to give military officers greater authority, they may do so in order to strengthen their domestic political position. Since the military for organizational reasons prefers wider war aims than civilians, its war aims gradually, if not immediately, become the war aims of the state.

The predictions of this hypothesis produced strong, but limited results in the cases. (See Table 7.3) The central insight of the hypothesis, that a state's professional military men gain greater political power in war, was clearly demonstrated. In the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars, Bismarck had to work extraordinarily hard--much harder than in peacetime--to prevent Moltke from hijacking Prussia's war aims policy. In both wars Moltke tried to make his war aims Prussia's war aims. Bismarck barely thwarted these efforts.

In the Korean War, while he did not force Truman to adopt the unification of the peninsula as a war aim, MacArthur's prestige after the successful Inchon operation inhibited the administration from questioning his tactical and strategic judgments. Increasing evidence of and concern at Chinese intervention should have led the administration to halt MacArthur's offensive and pull back the parallel--the stated policy in N.S.C.-81/1. This did not happen. From about September 15 through November 26, MacArthur, in effect, hijacked the Truman administration's war aims policy. MacArthur's war aims became the United States' war aims. In all the cases examined in this study, the Cleon problem attains its highest degree of explanatory power in that two month period. It was not until after the Chinese counteroffensive that Truman reasserted control, in the face of much domestic criticism, of war aims policy and the strategic direction of the war. Moreover, even after the Chinese counteroffensive MacArthur did not give up. He vigorously pushed a preventive war on the

Table 7.3 Results of the Cross-Case Predictions of the Cleon Problem Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Explanation
1. Military officers will generally favor larger war aims than civilians.	True in three cases. Moltke in both Prussian wars and MacArthur in Korea favored wider aims than their civilian superiors. Britain's generals were no worse than the Cabinet, and sometimes better.
2. As the prestige of the military rises, war aims should increase.	True in one case. As MacArthur's prestige grew, U.S. war aims grew. This was not true for Moltke in 1866 or 1870. In Britain the sequence is unclear.
3. Military officers are most likely to favor wider aims after military victory.	True in three cases. This was the case in 1866, 1870, and 1950. In WWI, Britain's generals never won a clear victory until the armistice.
4. The domestic political power of the military establishment generally increases as the war progresses.	True in every case. Wilhelm held Moltke in even higher esteem after his victories, though his influence never exceeded Bismarck's. MacArthur's power grew until Truman reasserted control after China's intervention. Britain's generals wielded enormous political power during the war, until <i>repeated</i> lack of success caused Lloyd George to reassert control in 1918.
5. The military will generally favor military escalation.	True in three cases. Moltke favored military escalation in his wars, as did MacArthur (and the JCS to some degree). Britain's generals did not, probably because they could not. It was a total war.
6. Civilian elites are more likely to see the unintended political consequences of military escalation than the military, who will discount them.	True in three cases. Bismarck was much more in tune to the political consequences of military actions than Moltke or Wilhelm. The same was true for Truman, especially after China's intervention.

administration. Through various domestic political end-runs, MacArthur initiated and sustained a debate over war aims and the strategic direction of the war. A majority of the public and the Congress supported MacArthur over Truman. When the President finally fired his field commander in April 1951, ending the war aims debate once and for all, Truman suffered the most savage political attacks of his administration.

In the First World War, Britain's generals gained a greater degree of sustained

political authority and control than in any other case. Kitchener, according to some contemporaries and observers, reigned as warlord for the first six months of the war. Because of his efforts, Britain built a million-man army and committed it to the land war in Europe. He also began the project to enlarge the empire in the Middle East. Later, when his influence waned under questions of his competence, that of the chief of the Imperial General Staff, William Robertson, rose to take its place. The military direction of the war, at least, was practically his exclusive domain. However, neither Kitchener nor Robertson ever really favored wider war aims than the civilian ministers. The war aim of destroying Prussian militarism was not forced on the government by a cabal of generals. And once that war aim was adopted, there was little for the military to do but achieve victory. There was, quite simply, little room for further expansion.

Substantively, these cases suggest that generals pursue wider war aims through the back door of military escalation. Moltke in 1866 favored an invasion of Bohemia to annex large tracts of the Austrian Empire. In 1870, Moltke's desire to continue the war after the fall of Paris until all French military resources were annihilated amounted to, in Crown Prince Friedrich's words, a "war of extermination." In the Korean War, MacArthur never used the words "preventive war" after the Chinese counteroffensive, but his proposed program of military escalation undeniably implied it. MacArthur wanted, as he himself stated, to destroy Chinese military power, and Asian Communism, once and for all.

The most dangerous kind of general, therefore, is the very senior officer who has taken to the field to command himself and who has won a decisive military victory. One may surmise that they become mesmerized with their own prestige, abilities, and perceived infallibility. Moltke, for example, was *the* senior general in the Prussian army. In 1866 and 1870 the entire Prussian government went to the seat of the war, including Wilhelm and

Bismarck. The king was nominally in command, but Moltke directed the armies. After Königgrätz and Sedan, Moltke vigorously advocated wider war aims. MacArthur had led America to victory in the Pacific War during World War II, was for all intents and purposes the emperor of Japan, and after Inchon, had won a tremendous military victory which his superiors had doubted was possible. (In contrast, the Joint Chiefs, who were located in Washington, supported Truman's view of war aims after the Chinese intervention.) Finally, Britain's generals were relatively quiescent on war aims, partly because they were unable to achieve a decisive military victory in Europe. Robertson insisted in determining strategy, but left war aims formulation to the Cabinet--as long as no one detoured from the objective of defeating Germany.

The Threats to Security Hypothesis

I argued in chapter two that states will expand their war aims as their perception of an enemy threat increases during war. The different sources of threat include aggregate power, geography, offensive advantage, and aggressive intentions. The means of determining whether an enemy is even more aggressive than originally thought include the enemy's decision to initiate war, rhetoric and propaganda, wartime conduct, military strategy, and state structure. Overall, the threats to security hypothesis emerges from these cases with a fair amount of explanatory power, though it needs quite a bit of sorting out. (See Table 7.4) Let us deal with each component in turn.

Aggregate power. The fact that its opponent grew stronger in the early stages of the war occurred only to Britain in 1914. In the other three cases, Prussia did not expand war aims against Austria; Prussia expanded war aims against France even as it was defeating it militarily; and the U. S. expanded war aims against North Korea after it had annihilated

Table 7.4 Results of Cross-Case Predictions of the Threats to Security Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Explanation
1. Where a state's estimate of threat has increased during war, it will expand its war aims.	True in three cases. Austria was not a greater threat. Bismarck grew more concerned about German security from France after unification. Truman believed North Korea would attack again. Britain's view of Germany radically changed.
2. As the enemy appears stronger, a state's war aims should widen.	True in one case. France and North Korea looked weaker to Prussia and the U.S. when they expanded their war aims. Only Germany had grown stronger when Britain decided to destroy Prussian militarism.
3. Wars between neighbors should see larger aims than wars between distant adversaries.	Not True. Prussia's wars were fought against neighbors for limited aims. The U.S. pursued unlimited aims against distant North Korea. Britain the island fought for unlimited aims.
4. Wars in which military technology is perceived to favor the offense should see larger aims than where it favors defense.	Not True. The offense dominated in 1866 and 1870; war aims were limited. The offense appeared to dominate in 1950. In 1914, it was thought that the offense dominated; by 1918 it clearly did not. Yet there was little change in war aims.
5. States that have been attacked are more likely to expand war aims than states which initiated a war.	True in two cases; not true in one. U.S. interests were attacked in Korea; war aims expanded. British interests were attacked in 1914; war aims expanded. Prussia initiated war in 1866 and 1870, expanding war aims in the latter instance.
6. Wars with the most intense propaganda should see the largest aims.	True in one case; unclear in the others. The evidence to evaluate this proposition was spotty. WWI had the most intense propaganda and Britain's war aims were highest.
7. Wars in which the participants engage in the most brutal conduct should see the largest aims.	Unclear. 1866 was a benign conflict and Prussia did not expand war aims. The others were worse and war aims expanded. But it is not clear, however, that WWI was worse than 1870, though Prussia's and Britain's war aims differed radically.
8. Wars between states with different political structures should see larger aims than wars between states with similar regimes.	True. 1866 saw the two most similar states fight. France and Prussia were dissimilar; war aims expanded. The states in 1950 and 1914 were most dissimilar and war aims became unlimited.
9. Wars between primary adversaries should see larger aims than wars between secondary adversaries.	Not True. Prussia's main adversaries in 1866 and 1870 were Austria and France; war aims were limited. North Korea was a secondary adversary against which the U.S pursued unlimited aims. Britain and Germany were primary adversaries.
10. Policy elites should justify wider aims using language that describes the enemy as a greater threat.	True in three cases. Bismarck described Austria as a future friend; war aims did not expand. Bismarck characterized France as a future threat. Truman thought the North would attack again. Britain's fear of Germany grew with the outbreak of war.

its army. Expectations of *future* power, however, seemed to make a great deal of difference. Bismarck expected that France would recover its strength after 1870 and threaten Germany again. Consequently he took Alsace-Lorraine. Similarly, the Truman administration believed that North Korea would be rearmed by the Soviets and renew the offensive at another time. Thus, perhaps we need to modify the aggregate power component of the threat hypothesis to include latent power or perception of future power.

Geography. I would argue that proximity mattered more than the results of the cross-case prediction actually reveals. Admittedly, Prussia's moderate aims against neighbor Austria contradicted this proposition. In the remaining cases, however, geography appeared to play a role in war aims formulation. In the Franco-German War, geography seemed especially crucial. The unification of Germany incorporated all of the South German states into Bismarck's new reich. France's traditional invasion route into Germany became part of the unified German state. For the first time Berlin had to consider how it was going to protect South Germany from France. Alsace-Lorraine provided that protection. In the Korean War, geography can be discounted somewhat. In a bipolar world geography matters less. Each point on the map looks important to the rival superpowers. One pole's loss is the other's gain. Once it intervened the U.S. made a security commitment to South Korea and defending South Korea in the future would simply be easier if there were no North Korean threat right next door. In the First World War, the proximity of German power and, especially, the German navy controlling Belgium's channel ports, heightened Britain's fear that Germany could invade the seemingly untouchable British Isles.

Offensive Advantage. The perception of whether prevailing military technology favored the offense or defense did not seem to influence political elites. Prussia's demonstration in 1866 that the offense dominated did not change Bismarck's war aims. In

1870, however, Alsace-Lorraine was justified in part by the argument that only Prussia's speedier mobilization in 1870 had prevented a French invasion of the South. In future wars, Alsace-Lorraine could provide more breathing space. In 1950 and 1914, there is no evidence that this issued mattered at all. By 1918, however, when the defense clearly dominated, the British only gave up the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism.¹ All others remained intact.

Aggressive Intentions. The initiation of war clearly mattered in the Korean War and the First World War. North Korea's willingness to resort to war was perceived negatively in Washington, to put it mildly. The willingness to attack once convinced the Truman administration that the North Korean regime would be willing to do it again unless it were eradicated. Similarly, the British Cabinet was shocked at Germany's willingness to push the July Crisis to war. They quickly regarded Germany's government as an aggressor and disturber of the peace.²

With respect to rhetoric and propaganda, and wartime conduct, the evidence was far too spotty to make a determinate conclusion. Germany's propaganda *may* have mattered to the British in 1914, but in the rest of the cases, there is no evidence for it. Germany's wartime conduct certainly seemed to influence the British leadership, but it is hard to find evidence of the exact causal connections. And the war aims conveyed by the offensive strategies that North Korea and Germany adopted also contributed to Truman's and the Cabinet's perception of threat.

Finally, regime structure influenced the perception of threat in at least two cases.

¹ It should be noted, however, that 1916 and 1917 had demonstrated that the defense was dominant and war aims did not contract until 1918. The difference was that Russia left the war in late 1917.

² One can also argue that it mattered in the 1870 war if you are willing to believe Bismarck's line that the French were primarily responsible for the war.

That Prussia and Austria were both governed by oligarchic monarchies may have contributed to Bismarck's desire for a moderate peace and his perception that Austria would be a future ally, but convincing evidence is lacking. Regime structure did not seem to matter at all in 1870. Bismarck was happy to make peace with any form of government so long as it surrendered Alsace and Lorraine. In 1950, however, the Truman administration considered Communism as a long-term, grand strategic threat to the security of the United States. It also defined all Communists as allies. Thus, to ensure peace and "stability" on the Korean peninsula, the U.S. had to overthrow the Communist regime in Pyongyang. Korea would only be at peace and U.S. interests protected if Communism on the peninsula were eliminated. And Britain in 1914 is the strongest case where regime structure mattered. In the view of leading Cabinet ministers, Prussia's aristocratic military caste controlled Germany and willingly provoked the war. They believed that the only way to ensure that this would not happen again was by "destroying Prussian militarism," hoping that some sort of social democracy would rise in its place. In 1907 Edward Crowe's famous foreign office memorandum attributed the danger posed by Germany to its intentions, not its power.³ The British debated his point on and off for the next seven years, especially during the Anglo-German detente. The outcome of July Crisis ended that internal debate once and for all. Now it was simply a question of doing what was necessary to change those intentions such that Germany would not make war on Europe again.⁴

³ Crowe wrote: "The mere existence and healthy activity of a powerful Germany is an undoubting blessing to this world....So long, then, as Germany competes for an intellectual and moral leadership of the world in reliance on its own natural advantages and energies England cannot but admire....[S]o long as Germany's action does not overstep the line of legitimate protection of existing rights it can always count on the sympathy and good will, and even the moral support of England....It would be of real advantage if the determination not to bar Germany's legitimate and peaceful expansion were...pronounced as authoritatively possible, provided that care was taken...to make it quite clear that this benevolent attitude will give way to determined opposition at the first sign of British or allied interests being adversely affected." Quoted in Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 26.

⁴ Barry Posen made this observation to me.

Overall, the elements of the threats to security hypothesis which mattered most in each case were as follows: 1. The Franco-Prussian: (future) power, geography, and offensive advantage. Bismarck also made much of the French national character and their desire for revenge, but the threats to security hypothesis does not capture those points. Perhaps it should. 2. The Korean War: (future) power because of Soviet rearming, geography, and especially aggressive intentions (initiation of war, offensive strategy, regime structure). 3. The First World War: all elements of the hypothesis operated here, though German power, proximity, initiation of war, and regime structure seemed to matter most.

Nevertheless, the threats to security hypothesis tells only part of the story in each case of expanding war aims. In Korea, the hypothesis failed a clear test after the Chinese counteroffensive. The Truman administration's perception of the Chinese Communist threat to South Korea and to U.S. interests in Asia was greater than ever. Yet, it contracted war aims. In 1918 Britain's perception of the German threat greater than any time since 1914, perhaps even more so. German military power had been augmented by the transfer of dozens of divisions from the Eastern front to France. Yet, Britain's war aims did not expand further and actually contracted. These developments are explained by the opportunistic expansion and systemic constraints hypotheses.

Opportunistic Expansion Hypothesis

This hypothesis holds that states will expand their war aims after an increase in opportunity, defined as a situation where the costs of a particular action are lowered relative to expected benefits. Usually this happens as a result of a favorable change in the balance of power, caused by the acquisition of additional allies, territory, or resources or a decisive military victory. It may also be caused by a revised estimate of the costs of prolonging a

war. In other words, if a state thinks a new set of war aims would be cheap to implement, it will be strongly tempted to pursue them. Usually, of course, these two points work hand in hand. Expected costs are revised as a result of a favorable change in the distribution of power. Nevertheless, other factors may cause a state to revise its costs estimates. The opportunistic expansion hypothesis emerged from this study with a fair measure of explanatory power. (See Table 7.5) In three cases it helped to explain the decisions to expand, contract, or hold steady war aims; moreover, it appeared to be the dominant factor in two important decisions.

The opportunistic expansion hypothesis had its weakest showing in the Austro-Prussian War. Prussia's victory at Königgrätz, according to this theory, should have caused Prussian war aims to expand. I explain this outcome below with systemic constraints hypothesis below.

In the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck's behavior is at least consistent with this hypothesis. Prussia invaded France and defeated the French army in a succession of battles leading up to Sedan. About mid-way through these successive victories, Bismarck announced that Germany was going to keep Alsace and Lorraine. Bismarck did not expect to fight for five more months to convince a French government to agree to his peace terms.

The strongest case for the opportunity hypothesis was U.S. war aims in the Korean War. Prior to Inchon landing, the Truman administration thought that unifying the Korean peninsula was a desirable war aim for a number of reasons. It would prevent the North from rearming and attacking the south again. It would represent a clear victory against Communist expansion. It would demonstrate that the United Nations could be an effective force in international relations. Nevertheless, none of these motives was sufficient to cause U.S. war aims to expand. The Truman administration made the conscious decision to wait until they

Table 7.5 Results of the Cross-Case Predictions of the Opportunistic Expansion Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Conclusion
1. War aims should expand after a state acquires new allies.	Unclear. Prussia in 1866 and 1870, and the U.S. in 1950 did not gain allies during the war. Britain in WWI did not expand aims after acquiring allies other than agree to territorial side-payments after the war.
2. War aims should expand after a state has conquered new material resources.	True in one case. This only occurred in Prussia's war against France. It conquered Alsace-Lorraine and kept them.
3. War aims should expand after decisive military victory. The more decisive the victory, the larger the expansion.	True in two cases; not true in one. Prussian war aims in 1870 and U.S. war aims in 1950 expanded after military victories. The U.S. victory was arguably more decisive, the expansion greater. Prussia restrained aims after Königgrätz. Britain did not experience a decisive military victory, except in the Middle East where its aims were already extensive.
4. War aims should expand if a state revises downward its cost estimate for prolonging the war.	True in three cases. The Austrian case is ambiguous. Bismarck thought annexing A-L would be easy. Truman was told that N.K. could be conquered quickly and cheaply. Britain first expected to fight Germany with money and ships.
5. States expand aims in regions of power vacuums.	True in one case. Britain in the Middle East meets with this description. The others did not have such an opportunity.

could take measure of the Inchon operation. MacArthur's stunning reversal of the war mesmerized Washington into forging ahead, oblivious of systemic risks. Conversely, the Chinese counteroffensive in November contributed to Washington's decision contract aims back to the status quo. The opportunity for a cheap, quick victory had completely vanished. Unification in Korea could still be had, but not at a price the administration was willing to pay.

Opportunity appears to figure in the major expansions of British war aims in World War I but it is admittedly a peculiar case. Cabinet ministers entered the war thinking that Britain's contribution would be primarily financial and naval. They did not at first even

contemplate sending the British Expeditionary Force to France. Even when it was sent in early August, the Cabinet did not envision building the kind of army and fighting the kind of land war that the Somme eventually represented. Furthermore, the decision to "destroy Prussian militarism" did not seem to change the Cabinet's perceptions of the expected war costs. I classified this decision, in part, as opportunistic expansion because the Cabinet simply believed that in the coming war its costs would be relatively low while its expected benefits high. For enforcing the blockade of Germany and backing the Entente financially, Britain thought it would gain the "permanent security" (from Germany) that "destroying Prussian militarism" implied. In addition, when the land war bogged down in Europe, Cabinet ministers expanded their war aims in order to enlarge the Empire in part because the Middle East was the only geographical area and Turkey the only opponent against which Britain thought it could win substantial gains relatively easily and cheaply.

The Systemic Constraints Hypothesis

In chapter two, I argued that states are unlikely to expand their war aims if that expansion causes other states in the international system to intervene against them. Where a decision to expand war aims would cause an *unfavorable* change in the balance of power, states are unlikely to do so. This hypothesis seeks to capture the dynamics of the international system and how they influence on war aims. It emerged from these cases with more explanatory power, perhaps, than any other hypothesis. (See Table 7.6)

Prussian war aims in the Austro-Prussian War was the strongest case for the systemic constraints hypothesis. After Prussia's victory at Königgrätz, Moltke and Wilhelm both wanted to continue the war and conquer parts of Austrian Bohemia. At this point, however, Napoleon III threatened to intervene on Austria's side if Prussia continued fighting and further

Table 7.6 Results of the Cross-Case Predictions of the Systemic Constraints Hypothesis

Prediction	Result and Explanation
1. Where they can, states will act to preserve the balance of power.	True in all cases. In 1866 France threatened intervention to prevent Prussia from going too far against Austria. In 1870, no power was in a position to prevent Prussia's acquisition of A-L. China warned the U.S. not to expand aims and then intervened. In 1914, Britain's intervened to preserve the balance of power.
2. Threats of outside intervention should prevent a state from expanding its war aims.	True in two cases; not true in one. In 1866 France threatened intervention; war aims did not expand. In 1870, Bismarck expanded aims a little, but feared the Great Powers would impose mediation if Prussia went further. In 1950, however, China's warnings were disregarded. The British case is not relevant.
3. Total wars between two individual antagonists should be rare.	Unclear. This is too small a sample to make a judgment, though the results are suggestive. Prussia's binary wars were fought for limited aims, whereas World War I was not.
4. Policy elites should express concern that other states will intervene if they expand war aims.	True in three cases. Bismarck expressed such concerns in 1866 and 1870. In 1950, elites cared very much if China or Russia intervened. The ultimate assumption that China would not intervene was a critical mistake. The British case is not relevant.

unhinged the balance of power. Bismarck's fear of French intervention and the perceived need to preserve Austria as a future ally overrode Wilhelm's and Moltke's preferences.

Prior to the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck isolated France through adroit diplomacy. Thus when Prussia's armies defeated the French and Bismarck decided to keep Alsace-Lorraine, Bismarck did not fear the Europe's other Great Powers would intervene and stop him. Nevertheless, as the war continued for much longer than he expected, he grew increasingly concerned that Britain and Russia would impose mediation on the belligerents, thereby risking his acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine. This fear did not cause him to contract aims, however. (After all, if a European congress deprived him of Alsace and Lorraine, then contracting aims to secure peace was not an improvement.) Bismarck advocated a quick

bombardment of Paris to bring the war to a quick end and later resisted Moltke's efforts to continue the war after the fall of the French capital.

U.S. war aims in the Korean War present a bit of a problem for the systemic constraints hypothesis. On the one hand, the hypothesis can be clearly seen as "working." The internal administration debate on war aims during the summer of 1950 centered on the issue of whether China or the Soviet Union would intervene if the U.S. invaded North Korea. The final policy document on war aims, N.S.C.-81/1, explicitly stated that if Chinese or Soviet intervention were expected, then the costs and risks of unifying Korea were too great to adopt such a war aims. The issue of outside intervention clearly mattered. The decision to expand war aims, however, waited until after the Inchon operation. At that time, the administration correctly concluded that the Soviet Union would not intervene in Korea. However, for reasons that appear rooted in various psychological blinders, the administration also concluded China would not intervene, a critical mistake. More than that, warnings that they would intervene if the U.S. advanced beyond the 38th parallel were regarded as bluffs. Thus Truman perceived a systemic opportunity; the reality was a tightening systemic constraint.

China's intervention drove home to the administration the reality of existing systemic constraints. War aims contracted in part because the military opportunity had vanished. Still, the administration was most concerned with perceived systemic constraints. Truman believed that a general war with the Soviet Union was possible, or even likely, if war aims were maintained or expanded further to include a preventive war against China. He had no desire to fight a general war against the Soviet Union at that time or in that place. Asia was not his primary concern; Europe was.

Finally, the systemic constraints hypothesis had little to say about British war aims

in the First World War. The fact that it was a general European war all-but eliminated systemic constraints on British war aims.

The results of the cases strongly suggest that while the absence of systemic constraints is unlikely to cause a state to expand its war aims, it is necessary condition to do so. In each case, the *perceived* absence of systemic constraints was a prerequisite for the adoption of new war aims. The actual catalyst will be something else, such an intensified perception of threat (World War I) or a newly created battlefield opportunity (Korea) or heightened security concerns (Prussia, 1870).

Preventive Expansion, Quid Pro Quo Expansion, and Alliance Management Hypotheses

The remaining three hypotheses often serve as explanations for enlargement of intermediate objectives in war. Overall, there was not much of this going on the four cases examined in this study. The cumulative resources and preventive expansion hypothesis had no explanatory power in any case. None of its cross-case predictions came true. This does not necessarily invalidate the hypothesis, however. It merely suggests that intermediate objectives do not expand in every war. With respect to the collective action problems and quid pro quo expansion, its predictions came true only in the British case. This also is not that surprising. World War I is by far the largest war in this comparison. One is most likely to see promises made to existing and prospective allies in this case. Thus, most of its general predictions came true in the British case, but not in the others. Finally, the collective action problems and alliance management hypothesis played only a small role in the British case.

Table 7.7 Summary the Seven Decisions and Their Causes

Decision	Primary Hypothesis	Contributing Hyps.	Weak Hypotheses
A. Restraint of war aims in 1866.	Systemic Constraint	Absence of Threat (Low) Blood Price	Opportunity Clean Problem
B. Annexation of Alsace and Lorraine	Threats to Security	Opportunity Absence of Constraint	Social Mobilization Blood Price
C. Unify Korea	Opportunity	Clean Problem Threats to Security "Absence" of Constraint	-
D. Abandon aim of unifying Korea	Opportunity Systemic Constraint	-	Threats to Security Blood Price
E. Destroy Prussian militarism	Threats to Security	Opportunity Social Mobilization (?)	Blood Price
F. Enlarging the Empire	Threats to Security	Preventive Expansion Clean Problem Blood Price	-
G. Abandon aim of Destroying Prussian militarism	Opportunity	-	Threats to Security Blood Price Social Mobilization

7.2 METHOD OF DIFFERENCE AND METHOD OF AGREEMENT TESTS

In chapter one, I explained that this thesis would conduct two different kinds of cross-case comparisons based on John Stuart Mill's Method of Agreement and Method of Difference. The Method of Difference procedure compares cases in which the dependent variable varies across the cases. For example, war aims expand in one case, but remain constant or contract in the other. In comparing the explanatory power of the competing hypotheses, the researcher looks for an independent variable which varies with the dependent variable. Those hypotheses which do not vary with the dependent variable (or vary against it) emerge weaker than those which vary with it. Conversely, in the Method of Agreement comparison, the dependent variable remains constant across the cases (war aims expand).

The independent variables which also remained constant emerge stronger than those which vary. By conducting both kinds of tests, the researcher guards against spurious correlation.

In this study, I conducted three Method of Difference tests: 1. Prussian war aims in 1866 versus 1870; 2. U.S. war aims in Korea in September 1950 versus December 1950; and 3. British war aims in 1914 versus 1918. I also conducted a Method of Agreement test, comparing Prussian war aims in 1870, U.S. war aims in September 1950, British war aims in Europe in 1914, and British war aims in the Middle East after 1915. For a summary of the independent variables of the six major hypotheses, see Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Summary of the Hypotheses and their Independent Variables

Hypothesis	Independent Variable
Blood Price	Increasing casualty rates and the concern this causes in the high councils of a state.
Social Mobilization	The need to mobilize a society for war and the degree to which it is war resistant.
Cleon Problem	The influence and prestige of the military and its preference for war aims wider than those of civilian elites.
Threats to Security	The perception of an enemy threat.
Opportunistic Expansion	A perceived favorable change in the balance of power.
Systemic Constraints	The likelihood of outside intervention in a conflict.

Tables (7.9 & 7.10) summarize the results of these tests for the six principal hypotheses. For organization purposes, the first three and last three are grouped together. The blood price, social mobilization, and Cleon problem hypotheses all seek to explain expansions in war aims by the difference pressures and constraints that arise from the internal dynamics of state. They belong to the domestic politics school of international relations,

broadly defined. The threats to security, opportunistic expansion, and systemic constraints hypotheses seek to explain the expansion of war aims by the incentives and constraints imposed on states by the international system. They belong in the "realist" tradition of international relations.

The Four tests:

- A. Method of Difference #1: Prussia, 1866 versus Prussia, 1870
- B. Method of Difference #2: Korea, September 1950 versus Korea, December 1950
- C. Method of Difference #3: Britain, 1914 versus Britain, 1918
- D. Method of Agreement: Prussia, 1870 vs Korea, September 1950 vs Britain, 1914 vs. Britain, 1915+

Table 7.9 Summary of Results for the "Domestic Politics" Hypotheses

Test	Behavior of the Independent Variable		
	Blood Price	Social Mobilization	Cleon Problem
A	Varied	Not vary	Not vary
B	Varied against the dependent variable	Not vary	Not vary
C	Varied against	Varied against	Not vary
D	Varied	Varied against	Varied

Explanation of Coding

Blood Price: A. The concern over casualties was greater in Prussia in 1870 than in 1866, and war aims expanded. B. Casualties and concern increased during the Korean War, but war aims first expanded and then shrank. C. Casualties and concern were much greater by 1918, yet war aims shrank. D. There was no concern over casualties in 1914.

Social Mobilization: A. The need to mobilize society was not greater in 1870, than 1866. B. The same is true in the Korean War. C. Britain had more need for societal mobilization in 1918 than 1914, when the war was extremely popular. D. Bismarck, Truman, and the Cabinet all try to mobilize their societies to some degree at the outbreak of war, but not by expanding their war aims.

Cleon Problem: A. Moltke favored wider aims in both wars. B. MacArthur favored wider aims at both decision points. C. British generals made little reference to war aims either in 1914 or 1918, so long as the military defeat of Germany remained an objective. D. Britain's generals did not favor wider war aims than the Cabinet in 1914, whereas Moltke's and MacArthur's war aims were always higher than Bismarck's and Truman's.

Table 7.10 Summary of Results for the "Realist" Hypotheses

Behavior of the Independent Variable

Test	Threats to Security	Opportunistic Expansion	Systemic Constraints
A	Varied	Not Vary	Varied
B	Varied Against the Dependent Variable	Varied	Perception: Varied Reality: Not Vary
C	Not Vary	Varied	Not Vary
D	Not Vary (?)	Not Vary	Perception: Not Vary Reality: Varied

Explanation of Coding

Threats to Security: A. Bismarck's perception of Austria and France as future threats varied considerably. B. Truman's perception of the Communist threat in Asia was even greater after China's intervention. C. The British perception of the German threat had not lessened by 1918. (One could even say the independent variable varied against the dependent variable.) D. In each case, the perception of threat (or at least the concern for security) intensified prior to the decision to expand aims.

Opportunistic Expansion: A. The battlefield opportunity for Prussia in 1866 was similar to the one it enjoyed in 1870. B. The battlefield opportunity had changed radically between Inchon and the Chinese intervention. C. The opportunity to defeat Germany appeared to have greatly diminished by 1918. D. Bismarck, Truman, and the Cabinet all enjoyed an opportunity to expand aims.

Systemic Constraints: A. Bismarck feared external intervention in 1866, but not in 1870 when he decided to annex Alsace-Lorraine. B. The perception of systemic constraints changed radically for Truman in 1950, though in reality it was same in September as in December. C. Britain faced no systemic constraints on its war aims in 1914 or 1918. D. Bismarck, Truman, and the Cabinet all thought they enjoyed a systemic opportunity. In reality, only Bismarck did.

The results of these tests suggest that while no single hypothesis can account for all the variance across all the cases, the "realist" hypotheses as a group seem better able to explain most--if not all--the variance than the "domestic politics" hypotheses. A mixture of a higher threat perception and greater opportunity combined with the perceived absence of systemic constraints will usually cause a state to expand its war aims. The results of the Method of Agreement test make this plainly evident. Unfortunately, this selection of cases

provides few clues as to which of the "realist" hypotheses is the most powerful. In the 1866 case, systemic constraints hypothesis overrode the opportunistic expansion hypothesis. Conversely, in the Korean comparison, opportunity seemed to override the systemic constraints. The strongest result for the opportunity hypothesis was the third Method of Difference test. Britain's opportunity diminished greatly by 1918, forcing the abandonment of Britain's major war aim, the destruction of Prussian militarism, even though its perception of the German threat had not diminished.

7.3 THE DIFFICULTY OF CONTRACTING WAR AIMS

In each case of expanding war aims there was at least one instance in which it seemed to be in the best of interests of the state to contract its war aims. In the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck doubted the wisdom of retaining the Metz fortress. Russia, his ally, preferred that he give it up. More importantly, he did not think the strategic advantages of keeping the fort outweighed the disadvantage of incorporating a substantial, recalcitrant French-speaking population into the newly united German reich. Nevertheless, Metz was annexed. In the Korean War, after the decision was made to cross the 38th parallel, there was substantial evidence (well before the People's Liberation Army counteroffensive) that China had intervened in the war. Numerous high-level official documents, including N.S.C.-81/1 which covered war aims policy in Korea, specifically stated that at the first sign of Chinese (or Soviet) intervention, MacArthur was to abandon to drive to unify Korea and pull back to the 38th parallel to stand on the defensive. By late October, Washington had conclusive evidence that the Chinese were conducting a major intervention in the Korean War. Yet, war aims did not contract; the U.N. offensive not halted. In the First World War, after Britain had suffered nearly a million casualties at Gallipoli and in the Somme, Lord Lansdowne, a

Conservative minister in the Cabinet, suggested that Britain may want to try to reach a negotiated peace with Germany. This idea was quickly denounced. Later, in 1917 and 1918, some domestic political groups called for a reevaluation of war aims and moves toward a compromise peace. The government rejected them as well.

These failures to contract aims are best explained by the insights of the blood price and Cleon problem hypotheses. In the Franco-Prussian War, Metz had cost too much in Prussian blood for Wilhelm and the military to give it up. Moreover, the military argued that Metz was necessary for the future security of the reich. Moltke claimed it was worth the equivalent of an army of 120,000 troops. Consequently, Bismarck felt he could not oppose retaining the Metz fortress. Similarly, in the Korean War, MacArthur's success at Inchon had endowed him with such prestige and authority that no one in Washington, including the Joint Chiefs, were willing to question his tactical, strategic, or even political judgments. Thus for a period of two months MacArthur hijacked U.S. war aims. This professional failure on the part of the J.C.S. and the civilians, had enormous political and military consequences. Finally, in the First World War, Britain's generals, especially Robertson, would not hear of a compromise peace with Germany. He denounced supporters of such ideas as cowards, traitors, or worse. Of course, the kind of compromise peace which Britain could have extracted from Germany was highly undesirable on security grounds as well. What is important is that Robertson cut off the issue without much serious debate. In 1918 Britain did abandon the war aim of destroying Prussian militarism. But Lloyd George refused to budge on any other objective in part because the "enormous sacrifices" which the British people had made. The British case also revealed that alliances are not always an unalloyed good for state during war. The territorial promises made to Russia and Italy effectively prohibited London from pursuing a separate peace with Austria or Turkey in

1917, a time when both powers seemed to be interested in such a compromise. When by 1918 Britain no longer felt obligated by these agreements, Austria and Turkey gambled on victory with Germany.⁵

Thus, my research suggests that forces rooted in a state's internal politics and dynamics sometimes give war aims a "ratchet" effect. That is, war aims expand with ease but contract with difficulty. This is not necessarily a permanent condition, however. Other factors may eventually overcome this effect. An explicit and unfavorable change in the balance of power overcame Truman's and Lloyd George's resistance to contracting war aims. In contrast, Bismarck faced no such explicit change in the balance of power during the Franco-Prussian War. In addition, when the costs and strains of war become too great, domestic politics will usually force a contraction in war aims. The longer a state resists contracting their war aims in the face of adversity, the more the political power and position of the elites become dependent on victory. Costs and expectations of gain mount. Either the elites win the war and vindicate themselves or they lose and fall from grace. This helps to explain why governments often fall after lost wars. Decision-makers know this. Consequently, wars go on longer and are more difficult to end. The longer the war continues, the lower the chances of reaching a negotiated settlement. A compromise peace becomes more elusive.

⁵ Robertson, it should be noted, did not oppose a compromise peace with Austria or Turkey.

7.4 ESCALATING MEANS VERSUS CONTRACTING AIMS

When states find that they are unable to achieve a defined set of objectives with a specified amount of means, they can do one of two things: contract aims or escalate means. As I noted at the outset of this chapter and this dissertation, this raises two interesting side questions: When do states escalate means rather than contract aims? When do states contract aims rather than escalate means? These two questions are not readily answered still. We have two cases where policy elites chose to expand means rather contract aims, the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War. Bismarck marched on Paris and advocated an artillery bombardment rather than give up the war aim of keeping Alsace and Lorraine. Moreover, even as his fear of outside intervention grew in the fall of 1870, he persisted in this objective rather than yield to end the war. Similarly, Britain gradually realized that its original expectations of pursuing only a naval and financial war were unrealistic. It reluctantly concluded that it must train and deploy a million-man army to the continent in order to take part in the *fighting* against Germany. But this realization did not disturb British war aims. In addition, we have one case where policy elites preferred to contract aims rather than expand means--the Korean War. After the Chinese counteroffensive, Truman decided to give the objective of unifying Korea rather than escalate the war by attacking China or even by reinforcing the U.S. army on the Korean Peninsula.

The influence of leading generals cannot explain this difference. In all three cases they advocated an expansion in means. In the Franco-Prussian War, Moltke wanted to march on and lay siege to Paris. In the Korean War, after China's counteroffensive, MacArthur wanted a vigorous and immediate expansion in military means to attack China. Initially, even members of the Joint Chiefs advocated bombing Chinese military positions in Manchuria to stem the advance of the People's Liberation Army down the Korean peninsula. In the First

World War, Britain's generals advocated an early deployment of the British Expeditionary Force to France. And while Kitchener did not raise his New Armies with the expectation of using them right away, Britain's other military men saw the need for their commitment to the continental war as soon as they were ready.

Domestic politics cannot explain why war aims contracted in one case and means escalated in the other two. In Prussia, Britain, and Korea, domestic political pressures, if anything, favored an even greater escalation in means. In Prussia, thanks in part to Bismarck's manipulation of the media, public opinion thirsted to bombard Paris and crush France. In the United States, public opinion supported the idea of bombing China in retaliation for its intervention in Korea. It was particularly sympathetic to MacArthur's frequent complaints that Truman restrained him from using the necessary means to win the war. When Truman fired MacArthur, the general came home to almost universal acclaim and popularity. Truman, by contrast, was the villain, the sinister or incompetent man who prevented an heroic general from achieving victory. In Britain, the public strongly backed the government. Even when conscription was introduced in early 1916, support for the land campaign and the war effort continued. When by 1917 and 1918 there was more domestic dissent on the conduct of the war, as I noted, war aims did not contract.

To explain this variance in the cases between escalating means and contracting aims, one must look to the systemic level. Both Prussia and Britain were fighting Great Power wars against their primary and geographically proximate adversaries. With respect to the Franco-Prussian War, France had been the dominant power in Europe for the two preceding centuries. Germany had often been an object of Paris' attention and influence, if not outright conquest. Prussian and German nationalism had developed and emerged as a powerful force in the wake of Prussia's defeat at Jena and the conquest of Germany during the Napoleonic

Wars. By 1870 it was quite clear that Paris was the obstacle to Berlin's further expansion. Prior to the First World War, the rise of German naval power in the twenty years before Sarajevo solidified Berlin as London's primary adversary in Europe and the world. In contrast, the United States, on the other hand, was fighting a secondary adversary on the periphery of what the Truman administration considered Washington's vital interests. With respect to prestige, security, and survival, therefore, the stakes were higher for Britain and Prussia than they were for the United States. And the higher the stakes, the harder states will fight before yielding on war aims.

However, one can think of two examples which seem to contradict this conclusion: The Vietnam War and the Boer War. In both of these cases, the major global power of time was involved in a long, drawn-out war against a secondary adversary in the periphery. For years, rather than contract war aims, the United States and Great Britain escalated means. Ultimately, the U.S. withdrew anyway and Britain squeaked out a hard-fought, costly victory.

The British case is easier to explain. At the time of the Boer War (1899-1902), Britain held itself aloof from Europe in its period of "splendid isolation." The entente with France was five years away. London considered the preservation and security of the Empire to be their most vital national interest. Hence, the decision to use ever-increasing levels of violence against the Boers was logical in that they were trying to detach from Britain a part of its Empire. In a sense, therefore, the British Empire *was* fighting its primary adversary; it was engaging the main threat to its interests.

The U.S. in Vietnam is both more difficult to explain in some ways and more consistent with my overall conclusion in others. On the one hand, Washington drastically escalated means to fulfill its war aim of an independent Vietnam, even more than did the British in the Boer War. On the other hand, it also eventually contracted aims by

withdrawing from Vietnam rather than escalate means further in the fight against North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. There are two reasons why the U.S. first escalated in Vietnam and then withdrew. The first explanation is based on domestic politics and expected costs and benefits. First, as the war went on and on costs rose relative to expected benefits (though war aims did not expand). Eventually they became so great that even victory did seem to be able to compensate for the men and resources lost in the war.⁶ Domestically, this was intolerable.

The second reason, I would argue, stresses the two different views, held by the Johnson and Nixon administrations, of the structure of the international system. The Johnson administration viewed the world through a bipolar lens. The world was divided between the United States and its allies and Soviet-back international Communism. A bipolar world, as Waltz has explained, tends to be zero-sum. A loss for one pole is a gain for the other. One pole's loss of credibility accrues to advantage of the other. Thus, when the United States invested its prestige and credibility in Vietnam under Lyndon Johnson, the fear of lost credibility, falling dominoes, and Soviet gains made withdrawal impossible. Escalation was preferred. Conversely, the Nixon administration was not wedded to this bipolar image of the world. Henry Kissinger, chief foreign policy-maker within the new administration, was schooled in the diplomacy of Metternich and Bismarck, both of whom enjoyed (or suffered) multipolar worlds. The fundamental tenet of Nixon's foreign policy was that the world was no longer bipolar, that there were five centers of power--the U.S., the Soviet Union, Western Europe, Japan, and China. In such a multipolar world, the loss of South Vietnam mattered a great deal less. Balancing behavior obtained. If the Soviet Union gained through the incorporation of South Vietnam within its sphere of influence, Beijing would be more likely

⁶ I might add that this stands in distinct contradiction to the blood price hypothesis.

to align with Washington against Moscow. Thus, Nixon could withdraw from Vietnam with equanimity, believing that its loss, while unfortunate, was not catastrophic.⁷

This conclusion about the causes of escalating means and contracting aims has a number of theoretical and policy implications. We should expect that states fighting their primary adversaries will resort to all available means before yielding on war aims. Thus, the literature on escalation and limited war, which prescribed that states should observe limits with respect to weapons or observe "thresholds" of violence, appears almost utopian. States escalate wars because they feel a higher value is at stake than normative desire to refrain from using more and more violence. In addition, scholars (and practitioners) of war termination would be well-advised to take note of this conclusion. If states will not yield on war aims until all available means have been tried, then ending a war between primary adversaries is more difficult than the literature has recognized. This should serve as a sobering warning for what we should expect in any future war between India and Pakistan or North Korea and South Korea or Russia and Ukraine.⁸ Furthermore, in retrospect the actions of the combatants in the Yugoslav war, including the commission of atrocities, do not seem all that surprising. Inasmuch as the Serbians, Croatians, and the Bosnians each regarded the others as their primary adversaries, it was unrealistic to expect restraint absent a serious threat of external intervention. We should not have been shocked that Europeans will slaughter each other.

⁷ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; and Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*.

⁸ Of course, this requires the qualification in that none of the states in my cases were nuclear-armed powers.

7.5 HOW DO WE PREVENT EXPANDING WAR AIMS?

Consequences of Expanding War Aims

The results of this study validate an important assertion made in the introduction. When states expand their war aims, it often leads to longer, more destructive wars which become more difficult to end. Bismarck's decision to keep Alsace-Lorraine energized the French to carry on the fight against Prussia. The Government of National Defense, which had taken power after the fall of Napoleon, was willing to make peace on terms favorable to Prussia--so long as France was not required to surrender sovereign territory. Bismarck's demand for Alsace-Lorraine caused the French to continue the war, raise new armies, and begin a nationalist war against the Prussians. Had Bismarck not sought Alsace-Lorraine, the war would have been over in September 1870. As it was, the conflict dragged on for five more months, in which additional battles, guerrilla and counterinsurgency warfare, and the siege of Paris drove up dramatically the costs of the war to both the French and Prussians. This stands in stark contrast to Prussia's war against Austria in 1866 in which Bismarck did not expand his war aims and the war concluded in seven weeks.

In the Korean War, the decision by the United States to unify the entire Korean Peninsula had severe consequences. Had the United States sought an armistice in October 1950, after the North Korean army had been destroyed and driven back across the 38th parallel, the war probably would not have continued for nearly three more years. Millions of Koreans and Chinese would not have died. Between October 1950 and the armistice in 1953 U.S. casualties tripled. What could have been a war of three months became a war of three years. A relatively minor war on the periphery between the United States and North Korea was transformed into an arena of global confrontation and a Great Power war between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China.

The expansion of British war aims in the First World War eventually committed Britain, for the first time in its history, to fight a major land war in Europe. The decision to destroy Prussian militarism required at a minimum the defeat of the strongest army on earth. This in turn led to Gallipoli, the Somme, and Passchendale. Compromise peace was extraordinarily difficult since the destruction of Prussian militarism meant changing those who governed Germany.⁹

Restraining War Aims

How do we prevent expanding war aims by other states? How do we prevent our own war aims from expanding? The first question is easier to answer than the second. If U.S. policy-makers (or any other state or organization) want to keep third-party wars restrained and limited, they should realize that the most powerful and effective means of doing so is a serious threat of intervention which would alter the distribution of power, against the state contemplating an expansion of its war aims. Anything short of that is unlikely to be effective at controlling the war aims of antagonists, particularly if they are primary adversaries. Opportunity is the most common variable across the cases and, from a third-party perspective at least, it is also the most manipulable. But decisions to intervene in conflicts where war aims are spiralling upward will always have costs, often high costs.

Moreover, a threat of intervention against one side will be interpreted favorably by the other side, perhaps making it more recalcitrant in negotiating a peace. This dynamic was clearly at work from time to time during the Yugoslav civil war. Occasional threats of intervention by the United States seemed to make the Serbs more willing to negotiate (at least

⁹ This is not to make a value judgment on Britain's additional war aims, merely to demonstrate that expanding war aims had serious consequences. Perhaps Prussian militarism should have been destroyed, but doing so was not free of serious implications.

momentarily), but they encouraged the Bosnians to up their demands in peace negotiations, frustrating U.N. mediators.

Developing policy prescriptions for restraining one's own war aims, however, is more difficult. This study demonstrated that the sources of expanding war aims do not lie, for the most part, within the domestic political apparatus of a state. Therefore, changing one's political structures will not reduce the likelihood that war aims will expand in war. Self-awareness of the causes of expanding war aims is, of course, helpful. So is avoiding the war altogether. And self-restraint in the face of systemic and battlefield opportunities is an obvious commandment. Nevertheless, there are few steps a policy-maker contemplating a war can take which will at the outset reduce the pressures for an expansion in war aims when opportunities arise.

For example, as I argued in chapter two, fighting in a coalition is at least a mixed blessing. Coalitions tend to have strong incentives to expand war aims. In the First World War, Britain's promises to existing and prospective allies not only led to expansions in war aims, but actually constrained London's flexibility to contract war aims against Austria or Turkey. On the other hand, it appears likely that America's coalition allies in the recent Gulf War helped to restrain the temptation to expand war aims against Saddam Hussein (by driving to Baghdad and overthrowing his regime). In that case, the coalition imposed a systemic constraint on Washington which overrode the battlefield opportunity and continuing threat posed by Hussein.¹⁰ In addition, the reluctance of Washington's U.N. allies in the Korean War contributed to the decision to contract war aims after the Chinese intervention, although the systemic constraints on Washington emanated much more from Moscow and Beijing than

¹⁰ See *U.S. News and World Report* Staff, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1992), pp. 395-396.

from New York, London, or Paris.

Fighting alone may inhibit expanding war aims or it may not. In the two wars of German unification, Bismarck expanded aims in one case and held them constant in the other. In fact, these two cases also illustrate how a clever statesman, acting alone, can to some degree manipulate the system and, therefore, manipulate the systemic constraints he or she faces. Bismarck's diplomacy prior to and during the Franco-Prussian War all but assured that the neutral Great Powers would not intervene in the war with France, so long as he restricted Prussia's war aims to Alsace and Lorraine. Indeed, the major part of Napoleon's problem in 1870 was that he really had no idea what, or rather who, he was up against.

Perhaps the most that can be said on this issue was already said by Friedrich Wilhelm von Zanthier in 1778:

The art of warfare and policy join hands in order to determine together the plan of war in general. Whosoever takes one or the other alone for his guidance, goes astray....How far, for instance, does a victorious attack lead? Is it permissible to follow it up as far as possible against all enemies? A soldier who is nothing but a soldier, says: Yes; the statesman, however, sees further and knows the limits which policy puts to conquests only too often. The success of arms does not blind him.¹¹

¹¹ Quoted in Trumbull Higgins, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur: A Precis in Limited War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 50.

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