Friends and Rivals:

Why Allies Disagree on Major Security Issues

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CHAPTER ONE

Exploring Alliance Cohesion and Discord

The shared history of Britain, France, and Germany since the end of World War II is one of convergence and divergence. Because these countries have been able to overcome destructive national rivalries and sublimate historical animosities, Europe today enjoys a degree of peace and prosperity unprecedented in its history. At the same time, rivalry, competition, and national ambition have not left the European continent entirely. Though Britain, France, and Germany no longer compete militarily, either seeking to acquire or to prevent hegemony in Europe, they continue to pursue independent and at times contradictory security strategies. This raises an interesting theoretical question: Why do states that are enduring and dependable allies nevertheless have serious disagreements over basic questions of foreign and security policy? Why are alliance relations at times marked by cohesion and at other times by discord?

For many this constitutes a theoretical and empirical puzzle. On the one hand, diplomatic friction and political disagreement are normal and regular occurrences in international politics, even between close allies. States often have disagreements over external threat perceptions, the probable success of one course of action as opposed to another, and the salience or importance of certain issues and challenges and how they should be addressed. On the other hand, we might expect states that not only have deep and sustained political, economic, historical, and institutional ties—as well as sharing other important attributes such as relative capabilities, geographic location, and domestic political system—to largely agree on the most fundamental and important questions of
foreign and security policy. At minimum, disagreements might be expected to be procedural rather than over substantive goals or aspirations. Instead, we often see allies divided over appropriate objectives and strategies to pursue. In times of political and diplomatic crisis, close allies often adopt independent and even unilateral strategies rather than putting multilateral cooperation first. How to explain this phenomenon?

The importance of this question is manifest. Allied disagreement is a persistent feature of international politics. Friendship and partnership between states is not necessarily permanent, and disagreements between close allies can be both strategically and psychologically painful. If interests start to diverge too sharply, a serious rupture in the partnership may occur. France and Israel cultivated a close relationship beginning in the early 1950s, reaching its zenith during the ill-fated invasion of Suez (along with Britain) in 1956. French president Charles de Gaulle effectively ended the alliance during the June 1967 war, however, and the relationship has yet to fully recover.¹ The Sino-Soviet alliance disintegrated in the face of mounting and ultimately insurmountable political tension.² Disagreement has been a regular feature of the trans-Atlantic alliance

¹ Sylvia Kowitt Crosbie, _A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974). See also Gary J. Bass, "When Israel and France Broke Up," _New York Times_, March 31, 2010. Not only has the relationship not fully recovered, France has since cultivated special relationships with a number of Arab states, some of which are strategic rivals of Israel. Additionally, there have been major changes to alliance partnerships when the domestic political structure of one state undergoes a profound transformation. The United States and Iran enjoyed a close relationship before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The United States also enjoyed close relations with Cuba before the 1959 revolution in that country. There are many other examples of regime changes affecting a state’s alliance commitments. See Stephen M. Walt, _Revolution and War_ (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), chapters 3-6.

since its inception, on issues ranging from the decision to rearm West Germany, to the Suez debacle, Vietnam, stationing nuclear weapons in Europe, and the 2003 Iraq war.\(^3\)

This question has important contemporary relevance for the United States. Though Britain, France, and Germany are close U.S. allies, they continue to struggle with the transition to a unipolar world. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, no threat has emerged to provide the kind of structural glue to hold the alliance together. In just the first half of 2010, for example, the United States experienced several instances in which its interests and those of a key ally diverged on an important policy issue: with Germany on the appropriate response to the economic and financial crisis of 2008; with Israel on its settlement policy in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; and with Japan on the future of the U.S. military base on Okinawa.\(^4\) Since some of the United States’ key allies no longer depend on the U.S. security guarantee to the extent they did during the Cold War—especially Japan and U.S. allies in Europe—instances of allied disagreement are likely to increase in the coming years and decades.

This dissertation takes up the question of alliance cohesion and discord by examining strategies pursued by Britain, France, and Germany in response to three key security issues in the post-Cold War period. Cooperation in the foreign policy and security realms represents a paradox for these European states. On the one hand, member

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states of the European Union (EU) have been able to achieve deep and durable patterns of cooperation, institutionalization, and even integration in a number of policy areas—administrative, bureaucratic, economic, legislative, and judicial, among others—yet at the same time they have been divided on several of the most important security issues of the post-Cold War period, from the proper manner to end ethnic conflict and genocide in Bosnia in the 1990s, to the necessity and legitimacy of the American decision in March 2003 to invade Iraq, to relations with Russia, especially on energy matters. This is even more surprising because there has been successful and effective cooperation on a range of foreign policy and security issues, from the collective commitment to halt the spread of nuclear weapons; the promotion of the rule of law and good governance, as well as democratic and human rights norms and practices, both within Europe and in other regions; crisis management and peacekeeping operations, both within and outside Europe; and the imposition of punitive diplomatic measures such as sanctions and economic embargoes.5

In other areas still, such as trade policy and setting monetary policy within the eurozone, Europe speaks with a single voice.6 The Schengen Agreement has made the

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borders of the 25 European states that participate essentially meaningless, at least in
terms of internal travel. The Lisbon Treaty, which was finally implemented in December
2009, modified and made more coherent the institutional framework of the EU, as well as
introduced a permanent EU president and foreign affairs representative. In the most
important security challenge Europe faced in the wake of the dissolution of the Warsaw
Pact and the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself—bringing political, economic, and
social stability to the states of central and eastern Europe that emerged after decades of
communism and political domination by the Soviet Union—Europe succeeded
tremendously. More ambitiously, a more prominent political and strategic profile for
Europe has wide support, both among Europe’s political elite and the general public.
Institutions have emerged that promote common foreign and security policies and a
common defense policy among EU member states.

On the other hand, it is clear that European countries continue to hold divergent
and at times incompatible interests in security affairs, and these differences are as striking
today as at any point in the entire post-World War II period. One need only recall the
disunity and disagreement between European governments in late 2002 and early 2003
over whether to support the American-led invasion of Iraq. Contrary to some of the
popular interpretations of this diplomatic crisis, policy differences between European

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7 See Jean-Claude Piris, The Lisbon Treaty: A Legal and Political Analysis (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2010), especially chapter 7.

8 In December 2003 Europe released its first ever security strategy in a report titled “A Secure Europe in a
Better World.” The report can be accessed at
governments were as strong if not stronger than the broader trans-Atlantic dispute with
the United States. Following the Iraq crisis, many doubted whether security and defense
integration in Europe would ever be an achievable goal. Such disagreement reemerged
recently in other policy and issue areas, notably the response to the 2010 Greek sovereign
debt crisis. At times it seems that political consensus in Europe is fragile, illusory, or
the product of the lowest common denominator—hardly a recipe to expand Europe’s
geopolitical profile. With expansion to 27 member states, and possibly more in the years
ahead, the differences in Europe often threaten to overwhelm the similarities.

Such outcomes—governments pursuing self-help policies rather than collective
action—are nothing new for European states. During the early phases of European
integration, such as the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in
1951, political disagreement was constantly just below the surface. At the same time that
six Western European governments decided to integrate their coal and steel industries—
the central war-making industries of the time—under a single supranational High
Authority, they were divided over the decision to rearm and reconstitute West Germany
and bring it into the Atlantic Alliance. This dispute lasted five years and was resolved
only after intense and sustained political pressure from the United States. Other examples
of European disunity come to mind immediately: French president Charles de Gaulle

9 Note Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe, and the Crisis over Iraq*


11 The original “Six” were France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.
Britain was offered membership but declined. On the debate over German rearmament, see Saki Dockrill,
*Britain's Policy for West German Rearmament, 1950-1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2010); David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel
Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); James McAllister, *No Exit: America and the German
twice vetoing British accession to the European Economic Community (EEC); Bonn’s policy of Ostpolitik in the 1970s, which unnerved its partners in Paris and London; the pace of German unification following the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the unease this created for Germany’s neighbors. As Europe became closer, more institutionalized, and a more integrated economic and administrative entity, political disagreements continued rather than abated.12

While it is unmistakable that European states today are cooperating on a range of issues and with an intensity and commitment never before seen, when it seems to really matter—that is, on questions of high political, strategic, or military importance—the national divisions of European states and of Britain, France, and Germany in particular come strongly to the surface. What accounts for this disjuncture? What has caused European states either to hang together or to fall apart on the most important foreign and security policy issues of the post-Cold War period? It is this question that this dissertation seeks to understand and to explain.

**Research Question**

This dissertation examines alliance cohesion and discord amid three main security issues since the end of the Cold War: the 2003 invasion of Iraq; Iran’s uranium enrichment and suspected nuclear weapons program; and Europe’s increasing dependence on Russian natural gas. Rather than designing and implementing a common

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strategy toward each security crisis or challenge, Britain, France, and Germany pursued independent and at times contradictory approaches. Not only did their strategies at times diverge widely among themselves, they also at times conflicted with the desires and interests of the United States.

These three cases span much of the post-Cold War period and the onset of American unipolarity. Efforts to pursue a common strategy produced a mixed record of success. In two of the cases, these countries were divided in the strategies they pursued. In only one case—negotiations with Iran—was there substantive and procedural agreement, though, as Chapter 5 shows, minor policy disagreements were still present. The goal of this dissertation is to test the explanatory power of competing hypotheses to understand these three case studies more fully and also to use these case studies to advance a theoretical contribution to the study of alliances. Because of their variation, these three issues constitute an empirically rich context to test competing hypotheses on the main determinants of alliance cohesion and discord.

*Why Europe? Why Britain, France, and Germany?*

Europe is a propitious area in which to examine alliance cohesion and discord. Europe has reached a degree of institutional development and political and economic integration unparalleled in the history of world politics. In addition to the EU, most European countries belong to a number of overlapping and mutually reinforcing regional and international institutions: NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe (CE), to name some of the more prominent ones.
In many ways, alliance cohesion and political cooperation in Europe is overdetermined. Europe today faces no serious external threat to its territorial integrity or political survival, and great power war within Europe is no longer a serious possibility; within Europe there is a rough equilibrium of power, though Germany has reemerged since unification as Europe’s most important economic and geopolitical power; Europe is deeply institutionalized, power is decentralized, and relations between states are increasingly governed by a thick set of norms and international law. Alliance cohesion thus represents a most-likely case for Europe.

Examining alliance cohesion and discord also challenges the expectations of three dominant International Relations (IR) paradigms: neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism. Neorealism can explain cooperation or rivalry in Europe, but it has difficulty explaining variation among the two. Since there is a rough equilibrium of power in Europe, divergent national interests and security strategies cannot be explained by relative capabilities alone. This would seem to contradict a structural realist explanation, which argues that a state’s security strategy is a product of its relative capabilities. Despite some pessimistic predictions by prominent neorealists following the end of the Cold War, except on its periphery, Europe has not succumbed to destructive national ambitions that were the source of so much instability for much of its history. Germany, the continent’s biggest power, continues to shun a geopolitical profile commensurate with its material resources.13 While the American military presence in Europe today is negligible compared to the Cold War, the United States continues to play a major role in European security.

Europe’s thick institutional environment has mitigated but has not entirely eliminated political disagreements. The different national responses with respect to the three cases under investigation in this dissertation tell us that the state in Europe is still more obstinate than obsolete.\textsuperscript{14} Rather than witnessing the erosion of the power and authority of the nation-state in Europe, we see the reaffirmation of state power, influence, and importance in foreign and security policy. Rather than greater pooling of sovereignty in these areas, states continue to assert a near-exclusive prerogative, especially when it comes to the threat or use of military force. At times these national interests and ambitions inevitably clash. While Europe’s increasing institutionalization can explain why political cooperation is more likely to occur, it fails to account for periods of breakdown and the many instances of wide policy divergence.

Not only is Europe increasingly governed by EU-wide laws and regulations, it is also ostensibly increasingly rule-governed. There has emerged a strong norm of consultation with other European states and of reaching policy consensus. These norms are routinely violated, however, especially on issues European governments view as critical to their vital interests. While the increasing scope and density of norms governing relations between European states may account for patterns of cooperation, it fails to explain instances of disagreement and divergence. Contrary to Wendt’s neat typology of interstate relationships defined either by enmity, rivalry, or friendship, this dissertation shows how states can be both friends and rivals simultaneously.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Stanley Hoffmann, “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe,” \textit{Daedalus} 95, no. 3 (1966).

Among European states, there are sound reasons to focus on Britain, France, and Germany. They continue to be the most important actors—economically as well as geopolitically—within Europe. They are also the United States’ most important European allies. These three countries have done the most to shape the form, content, pace, and durability of European integration, especially as it pertains to European cooperation in foreign policy, security, and defense. As the three most important states in Europe, they have developed close political relationships. Bilateral summits are a constant feature, especially between France and Germany. At times they act separately from the rest of Europe, as in their negotiations with Iran.

Coherence and unity between Britain, France, and Germany are indispensable for broader consensus and unity in Europe. While consensus between the three may not constitute a sufficient condition for broader European cooperation, it constitutes a necessary one. When Britain, France, and Germany can reach consensus on some issue, the rest of Europe is more likely to follow. When they are divided, Europe is unable to act. That reason alone makes it important to understand the dynamics between these countries.

Another reason I focus on Britain, France, and Germany is a practical consideration. The NATO alliance now has 28 members. The EU has 27 member states, spanning virtually the entire geographical breadth of Europe. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine each ally’s security strategy across this study’s temporal focus. Moreover, many current NATO and EU members are either former Soviet republics, such as the three Baltic countries, or were under the political domination of...

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Moscow for over four decades. These states therefore had nothing approaching an independent foreign policy throughout the Cold War period, and at times struggled to establish their foreign policy identity and interests during the first few years following the political revolutions of 1989-91 and their own independence. Britain, France, and (West) Germany, however, have been central to the process of European integration and the NATO alliance since the very beginning. Each had a prominent role in the three case studies under consideration. The same cannot be said about any other European state.

The aim of this dissertation is not to offer a diplomatic history of the three cases listed above, but rather to put to test alternative theoretical explanations for these outcomes and to advance my own propositions and claims for the patterns of behavior that emerged. I combine historical narrative and analysis with social scientific concepts, tools, and techniques.

**The Argument in Brief**

I advance three main arguments in this dissertation. First, Britain, France, and Germany have pursued at times divergent security strategies because they respond differently to what Glenn Snyder called “the alliance security dilemma.” There is at times wide variation in their perceptions of the risks and costs of abandonment and entrapment, mainly vis-à-vis the United States but also with respect to each other. Other scholars have advanced a number of hypotheses, derived from both systemic and domestic approaches, that purport to explain patterns of intra-alliance cohesion or discord. These have focused on external threat perceptions, concerns over burden sharing,

and domestic politics and institutions. I test these hypotheses in the three empirical chapters and show that how states interpret the alliance security dilemma is the most important determinant of alliance cohesion and discord. Asymmetrical interpretations of the alliance security dilemma lead to policy divergence, while symmetrical interpretations lead to policy convergence.

Second, if alliance cohesion or discord rises and falls with how states interpret the alliance security dilemma, it is important to understand why states have different perceptions of the risks and costs of abandonment and entrapment. While other scholars have noted the existence of the security dilemma not just between adversaries but between allies as well, we continue to have a poor understanding of why states similarly situated fear abandonment or entrapment differently. And whereas neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism have little trouble explaining cooperation between Britain, France, and Germany, each perspective has more trouble explaining instances of discord and disagreement. I develop a neoclassical realist model that incorporates systemic and domestic factors that explains alliance cohesion and discord. I argue that a state’s level of dependence on a dominant power such as the United States or on its other allies is the most important determinant in how states interpret the alliance security dilemma.

Even among America’s closest NATO allies, their level of dependence on the United States varies widely. Britain has long cultivated an extraordinarily close political relationship with the United States. Its primary fear is American abandonment. France, on the other hand, has long sought a more independent course in world politics, and has long supported a shift to a multipolar world in which power is distributed more evenly.
France thus fears entrapment in conflicts in which its vital interests are not at stake more than it fears American abandonment. Germany, while heavily dependent on the United States during the Cold War, has traditionally sought a position between Washington and Paris.

The alliance security dilemma also operates between Britain, France, and Germany. At times this is stronger than their struggle to cope with American power. Britain has long resisted becoming too deeply entangled in permanent European security institutions or alliances. France has viewed a united Europe as a means to magnify its influence and prestige globally. France is more fearful of German abandonment, especially if it leads to a closer relationship between Berlin and Moscow, than it is of a gradual dissociation between the United States and Europe. Britain fears becoming entrapped in European schemes or strategies that could in turn lead to a decoupling between the United States and Europe.

Third, I introduce and examine two strategies medium powers such as Britain, France, and Germany may adopt to mitigate the risks and costs of abandonment or entrapment. I call these strategies *preemption* and *stalling*. Despite America’s preponderant power and resources, these strategies are often surprisingly effective. Preemption is primarily a strategy to forestall entrapment. When states fear being dragged into a conflict in which they have few direct interests at stake, they will attempt to take steps that prevent the stronger power taking measures they fear. As I show in Chapter 5, Britain, France, and Germany implemented a successful policy of preemption when they started direct negotiations with the Iranian leadership in 2003. They acted to
preempt a U.S. military response to Iran’s clandestine nuclear program, a situation
Britain, France, and Germany each sought to avoid.

Stalling is a policy of strategic noncompliance. States do just enough of what the
stronger ally prescribes in order to avoid what they view as unattractive or detrimental
policy decisions. This strategy could be employed in response to fears either of
abandonment or entrapment. The United States has long pressed its European allies to
reduce their dependence on Russian energy. To this end, the United States has been a
strong supporter of the Nabucco pipeline project, which would bring natural gas from the
Caspian and Middle East to European markets, avoiding Russian entirely. European
governments, while voicing their support for the project, have resisted taking serious
steps to make the pipeline a reality. Languishing since 2002, the project is facing
complete failure.

Methodology and Research Design

There has been increased interest in recent years on how to do qualitative research
in a methodologically rigorous manner, especially research designs that focus on case
studies.18 Case studies are important in a project like this because they are well suited to
establishing scope conditions and causal mechanisms.19 Following George and Bennett, I

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19 On case studies, see George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*; John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press,
frame my case studies as structured, focused comparisons so that the results can be “compared, cumulated, and systematically analyzed.” The same set of theoretical and analytical questions are examined in each of the empirical chapters so that cross-case comparisons became viable. This method also allows us to draw some general conclusions about the main determinants of alliance cohesion and discord and to extend the analysis beyond this dissertation’s three case studies.

I take a number of steps to increase the internal validity of this study. To guard against confirmation bias, I analyze three alternative explanations for alliance cohesion or discord: external threat perceptions, collective action concerns, and domestic politics. It is not sufficient simply to demonstrate that one’s own causal explanation is plausible, persuasive, or compelling. Instead, one’s causal explanation should be superior to—in explaining state behavior and interstate interactions—other, competing explanations.

Additionally, I show how my own neoclassical realist model of the alliance security dilemma can explain variation between alliance cohesion and discord whereas neorealist, institutionalist, and constructivist approaches have trouble explaining the variation in these outcomes.

Case Selection

I chose my cases according to three criteria. The first was substantive political, strategic, and military importance. The case had to be important for regional or

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international order and stability. While there are certainly other cases I could have examined that were decisive in terms of peace and security either within Europe or in other regions, and for which the United States, Britain, France, and Germany were major actors, the cases analyzed in this dissertation are three of the most consequential security challenges the United States and European countries have faced in the post-Cold War period.

Second, interaction between the United States, Britain, France, and Germany was a core feature of each case. Since this study is interested in explaining why allies interpret the alliance security dilemma differently, each country had to play a key role. Interaction also produces opportunities and incentives to cooperate and to overcome political and strategic differences. Since this happened in one case but not in the other two, these cases are even more important and interesting to examine.

Third, I sought variance both within and across cases. Since the dependent variable is the strategy pursued by Britain, France, and Germany, I sought cases that captured variation on this outcome. That way I can compare what was distinctive about the one case in which European states were able to achieve relatively robust agreement—in their negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program—with the two instances of disagreement and disunity. Cases in which a state adapts or modifies its strategy at some point in the process also prove to be of more substantive interest.

While there would no doubt be reasonable disagreement concerning whether a particular case would be "decisive," the three cases I have selected are commonly considered, among diplomatic historians, EU specialists, and international relations theorists to embody substantive geopolitical importance.
Rather than selecting my cases through a process of random selection, therefore, I chose the cases on the basis of political importance, interaction between the main states under examination, and variation on the dependent variable.

Some scholars assert that small-n studies may be vulnerable to selection bias. In particular, quantitatively oriented scholars criticize selection on the dependent variable as a research design that leads to “wrong answers.” While the problems that emerge from small-n studies are potentially serious—from the credibility of the causal explanations to the ability to generalize to other cases and actors—they are not insurmountable. Process tracing becomes especially important to uncover the direction and stages of causation. Process tracing and establishing scope conditions increases the credibility of one’s causal explanation, even when selecting cases based on their outcome. Process tracing, establishing scope conditions, and elucidating causal mechanisms are thus important features of this dissertation.

Process Tracing and Causal Mechanisms

It is not enough to state that asymmetric interpretations of the alliance security dilemma are a critical determinant of alliance discord. We want to know how and why this is the case. To do this it is important to identify causal mechanisms. Mechanisms, to use Jeffrey Checkel’s phrase, are “theoretically predicted intermediate steps” between beginning (independent variables) and end (dependent variable). Or as Jon Elster says,

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mechanisms are “intermediate between laws and descriptions.” The case studies help to uncover these causal mechanisms within actual strategic environments.

To study causal mechanisms one must employ a method of process tracing. Process tracing can be defined as:

The process tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process—the causal chain and causal mechanisms—between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable...Process tracing forces the investigator to take equifinality into account, that is, to consider the alternative paths through which the outcome could have occurred, and it offers the possibility of mapping out one or more potential causal paths that are consistent with the outcome and the process-tracing evidence in a single case.

Others have stated that process tracing methodologies are “intended to investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes.” Checkel says that process tracing “directs one to trace the process in a very specific way. Between the beginning (independent variable[s]) and end (outcome or dependent variable), the research looks for a series of theoretically predicted intermediate steps.” Process tracing allows the researcher to identify the steps involved in the causal chain. One looks to the historical record not just for examples of behavior, but for evidence of actors’ antecedent motivations, beliefs, and desires.

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23 George and Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, 206-207.

Standards of Evidence and the “Hermeneutic Dilemma”

For evidence, I combine primary source material and secondary literature, including books, journal articles, and newspaper accounts, to construct a narrative of the decisions and events under consideration. Whenever possible I rely on primary source material and avoid making sweeping generalizations based purely on secondary sources, especially regarding actors’ beliefs and motivations. Primary source material improves the credibility of one’s analysis and causal arguments for several reasons. Foreign policy and crisis decision-making can be fraught with controversial and ideological forces. Some of the extant records of the cases under examination, because they happen to be both prominent and controversial, have elicited partisan and ideological analyses. This was especially true when the events were unfolding, but also as some distance has emerged between these events and our contemporary interpretation of them.

One of the hardest things for scholars to do is to impute or establish actors’ beliefs, desires, motivations, and the quality and completeness of the information they were operating with at a particular point in time. If we claim that behavior must be explained in terms of antecedent beliefs and desires, how do we establish what these beliefs and desires actually were? On pain of circularity, we cannot simply use behavior as evidence. Knowing precisely the actual beliefs or desires of statesmen often remain elusive to the outside observer. Access to the kind of material where analysis and judgment of such issues may be settled—internal reports, memoranda, personal


correspondence, minutes to policy meetings, and the like—are often under tight control for years, sometimes decades, and many of the most sensitive documents never become available for public or scholarly scrutiny. This limitation is compounded when one is analyzing relatively contemporary foreign policy challenges and crises, as I do in this dissertation. Most documentary and archival evidence has yet to be released concerning the three security issues I analyze.

To complicate matters further, much of the historical record may be filled with ex post justifications, anonymous sources (who may have an incentive to misrepresent certain events), and otherwise un-attributed information. What a statesman or key decision-maker says in public—or in his memoirs—is of little evidence of what he said in private. And of course some political figures have incentives to misrepresent or to give an incomplete picture of the course of events and their own actions. Speculation, incomplete or biased analyses, or outright falsehoods are prevalent in the historical record. Moreover, relying purely on secondary sources—the work of journalists and scholars alike—will often lead to an incomplete or biased picture of what actually transpired. The conventional wisdom tends to become enshrined and it can be both difficult and costly to reexamine or even challenge this evidence many years later. As one scholar noted, historians do not produce “an unproblematic background narrative from which theoretically neutral data can be elicited for the framing of problems and the testing of theories.”

The problem of self-serving bias in statements about the beliefs, intentions, or motivations of actors is serious but not insurmountable. One technique is to scrutinize the link between observable behavior and public statements with deductive theorizing about what the actor’s objective interests would be. A second technique is to rely on statements that are less likely to be motivated by misrepresentation. I therefore rely on private conversations with policy advisers—reproduced in personal memoirs, letters, diaries, and other sources—whenever possible. Policymakers have less incentive to misrepresent their true beliefs and motivations in discussions with close advisers than they do when speaking on the record or to much larger audiences. Of course, we must assume that the writer is characterizing these private conversations faithfully.

The best a researcher can do under these conditions is to rely on a number of different sources and to attempt to reconstruct, through process tracing, actors’ beliefs and motivations, how they interpreted the security environment in which they were operating, and how these factors influence policymakers and ultimately state behavior. Comparing secondary source material to primary documents therefore represents something of a methodological compromise. It also minimizes the likelihood that one’s research will be skewed by systematic error by relying on only one form of the historical record. All inferences of actors’ beliefs are therefore supported by theory, behavior, and statements about desires and motivations.

While the methods I employ no doubt have their limitations—as does any method—they represent a methodological compromise. Like any method, the increasing

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sophistication of qualitative methods should result in research and analysis that is more rigorous, credible, and therefore valuable in explaining complex social and political phenomena.

**Plan of the Dissertation**

Chapters 2 and 3 develop the theoretical and conceptual argument of the dissertation. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present a series of empirical tests. The concluding chapter evaluates the theoretical and political implications of the dissertation’s main findings.

Chapter 2 is the main theoretical chapter. In it I examine the alliance security dilemma under unipolarity, which operates according to a different logic compared to the alliance security dilemma under multipolarity or bipolarity. I argue that cohesion or discord between Britain, France, and Germany is not due to shared external threat perceptions, concerns over burden sharing, or domestic politics. Instead, I argue that it is largely a function of symmetric or asymmetric fears of abandonment or entrapment. When these countries interpret these fears symmetrically, cooperation is easier to achieve. When they have asymmetric fear of abandonment or entrapment, discord is more likely to prevail.

Chapter 3 explains why America’s European allies have a predominant fear of either abandonment or entrapment. While fears of abandonment and entrapment are also determined by situational factors specific to a certain event, such as political calculation, threat perceptions, and domestic politics, they are also based on more long-term historical, strategic, ideological, and political factors. In this chapter I show how Britain
primarily has feared American abandonment, France has feared American entrapment, and Germany falls somewhere in between. The alliance security dilemma also operates between Britain, France, and Germany. I show how Britain predominantly fears entrapment by its European allies, France fears abandonment (especially German abandonment), and Germany fears entrapment.

The empirical tests of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 comprise historical case studies. Chapter 4 examines the political disagreements surrounding the decision in March 2003 to invade Iraq. This constituted one of the single most serious crises in the history of the Atlantic Alliance. It also served to tear apart European governments. The George W. Bush administration argued that Saddam Hussein posed an immediate and unacceptable threat to regional security and the security and interests of the United States. Intelligence that suggested Iraq was developing arsenals of chemical and biological weapons—and was actively attempting to reconstitute its nuclear program—ultimately proved baseless. After initial success, including the toppling of the regime in Baghdad and the capture of Saddam Hussein himself, bloody sectarian fighting paralyzed Iraq for years. Thousands of Iraqi civilians and coalitions soldiers were killed or maimed, millions of Iraqi civilians were displaced, and Iraq experienced a degree of daily violence unimaginable for most societies. The chapter focuses on the most consequential months of late 2002 and early 2003, when the United States and Britain were making the case for war and France and Germany came out in opposition. Why London chose to side with Washington, while Paris and Berlin remained opposed to the invasion, is the focus of the chapter.

Chapter 5 examines a case in which Britain, France, and Germany were largely able to reach substantive and procedural agreement. Upon the disclosure in the summer
of 2002 that Iran had been working on an undocumented nuclear weapons program for nearly two decades, Britain, France, and Germany—with the later addition of Javier Solana, at the time the EU foreign policy chief—led negotiations with the regime in Tehran. Despite differences over the importance of their commercial relationships with Iran, the E3, as they came to be called, were able to cooperate with a unity of purpose that served to reduce the tensions and animosities that flared during the prelude to the Iraq invasion. Despite the close working relationship, however, tangible results were minimal and proved illusory. The E3 were unable to convince the Iranian leadership to permanently end its uranium enrichment program. I argue that Britain, France, and Germany were able to implement a cohesive position because they each feared entrapment in another American-led war in the Middle East. To preempt a possible U.S. military strike against Iranian nuclear installations, the E3 took the lead in negotiating with the regime in Tehran. This successfully forestalled a U.S. military campaign against Iran.

Chapter 6 explores British, French, and German relations with Russia, specifically on energy matters. Russia has increasingly used its export of natural gas as a political instrument, thus exercising considerable political power on states heavily dependent on its natural gas exports. Britain, France, and Germany have individually and collectively resisted appeals to establish a more coherent EU energy policy, especially on supply security. Instead Britain, France, and Germany have pursued largely unilateral and self-help policies toward the Kremlin, often to the consternation and exasperation of other European countries. Germany has established the closest relationship with Russia of all European governments, including a bilateral natural gas pipeline project that runs
underneath the Baltic Sea, establishing a direct transshipment route between Russia and Germany. Britain, France, and Germany have so far largely resisted American appeals to reduce their energy dependence on Russia. Unwilling or unable to adopt the measures backed by the United States, they have instead pursued a stalling strategy in which they do just enough to appease the United States and avoid more coercive and costly repercussions.

The conclusion assesses the implications of this dissertation’s key findings for our understanding of alliances, the explanatory power of competing hypotheses that purport to explain alliance cohesion and discord, and how this dissertation’s case studies inform theoretical studies of alliances. It also assesses the implications for the nature and durability of alliances under unipolarity, and the consequences for America’s alliance relationships in the twenty-first century.
CHAPTER TWO

Explaining Alliance Cohesion and Discord

Considering their central importance to international affairs, alliances have long suffered from a surprising degree of theoretical neglect. Compared to phenomena such as war and peace, crises, or the balance of power, theories of alliances are comparatively underdeveloped.¹ This is especially true of alliance dynamics in unipolar international systems.² Perhaps this is not surprising, considering that unipolarity is historically uncommon and that students of international relations are still trying to understand its unique features.³ Nevertheless, we have long known that alliance dynamics are different in multipolar international systems than they are in bipolar systems, so it is important to study the effects of the shift to unipolarity on state behavior and interstate interaction in alliances.⁴ Initial studies show that alliance dynamics under unipolarity have their own unique characteristics that make a unipolar international system different from the


international environments that preceded it. This dissertation is an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of intra-alliance dynamics under unipolarity.

Two main theoretical questions have long driven research on alliances. The first question focuses on alliance formation. Under what conditions will alliances form? Who allies with whom? What factors determine who allies with whom? The second question concerns alliance management and cohesion. Once an alliance has been formed, what determines the degree of cohesion or discord within it? This dissertation examines this second question. Namely, why medium and small powers in an asymmetric alliance at times have sharp and protracted disagreements on major security issues, both among themselves and with the dominant alliance partner.

Scholars have advanced a number of hypotheses to explain intra-alliance cohesion or discord, focusing on perceptions of external threat, burden sharing between the allies, and the incentives and constraints produced by domestic politics. I argue that asymmetric fears of abandonment or entrapment are a crucial determinant of alliance discord. Likewise, when medium and small powers share perceptions of abandonment or entrapment, they are more likely to cooperate. When fears of abandonment or entrapment are symmetrical, states can take measures to mitigate these risks. These measures are often surprisingly effective, despite the overwhelming power asymmetry vis-à-vis the dominant alliance partner.

While fears of abandonment and entrapment always exist among allies, they have taken on unique features since the transition to unipolarity over two decades ago. The United States today faces few systemic constraints to its foreign policy. The United States

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5 Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World."
today defines its interests in truly global terms. The temptation to pursue a more independent and unilateral foreign policy, one that is increasingly decoupled from those of its traditional allies in Europe, looms large. And since the United States has in many ways adopted a foreign policy that is more independent and even unilateral than during the Cold War, this question holds great interest, both theoretically and politically.6

That allies compete as well as cooperate with each other has long been acknowledged and studied, though the reasons for such variation continue to be poorly understood. Paul Schroeder noted how “allies often clash with each other more often than they unite in a common cause.”7 In a seminal article published nearly three decades ago, Glenn Snyder demonstrated how a security dilemma exists with one’s allies as well as with one’s adversaries.8 Not only do states have to contend with threats and challenges posed by adversaries (real or potential), they also have to be vigilant against risks and dangers produced by their own allies. Snyder labeled the twin fear of abandonment and entrapment the “alliance security dilemma” because they tend to be inversely related. Measures taken to reduce the risk of one tend to increase the risk of the other. A state may decide to cultivate a close partnership with a stronger ally to minimize the risk of abandonment. While this may be an effective strategy in that regard, it may also increase the risk that the smaller power is dragged into a conflict in which it has marginal interests at stake. Likewise, if a state dissociates itself from an ally it may reduce the risk of

6 On America’s adoption of a more unilateralist foreign policy in recent years, see Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy (New York: Wiley, 2005); Stanley Hoffmann, Gulliver Unbound: America’s Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).


8 Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics."
becoming entrapped in a conflict that it has little stake in. But the ally could interpret such dissociation as a prelude to abandonment and decide to preemptively abandon the ally.

Snyder analyzed and compared the alliance security dilemma solely within multipolar and bipolar settings, historically the two most common types of international system. This dissertation extends and builds on Snyder’s pioneering work in four ways. First, I extend the analysis of the alliance security dilemma to unipolar systems, which Snyder did not examine, and which continues to be under-studied. Since the alliance security dilemma operates differently in bipolar systems compared to multipolar ones, we should expect the alliance security dilemma to operate according to unique dynamics in unipolar systems as well. Since the international system will be defined by American preponderance for at least the next decade—and perhaps much longer—this question’s theoretical and political importance is manifest.9

Second, we know that some states may fear abandonment while others fear entrapment. But we do not know why states will feel one impulse more strongly and for what reasons. Scholars have treated this question as theoretically indeterminate: these risks manifest themselves in an ad hoc, contingent manner that is not susceptible to theoretical specification. The international system alone does not dictate whether states fear abandonment or entrapment more acutely or more regularly. We can reduce some of this ambiguity by incorporating unit-level variables into Snyder’s spare structural approach. A neoclassical realist model of the alliance security dilemma that incorporates

domestic-level factors with Snyder’s structural systemic approach can help us understand why states face the alliance security dilemma differently, despite being similarly situated in the international system. Specifically, variation in perceptions of dependence—military, political, economic, ideological—explains variation in how the alliance security dilemma is interpreted.

To take one example that is examined in greater depth in Chapter 4, Britain and France faced largely equivalent objective threats from Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in 2003. Both the British and the French publics were opposed to the war, though there was slightly greater antiwar sentiment in France. Both knew that the United States was both willing and capable of bearing the burdens of fighting the war alone, so concerns about burden sharing were not an issue. Nevertheless, Britain feared U.S. abandonment and provided both rhetorical and material support for the United States almost immediately. France feared entrapment in a conflict in which it perceived to have few interests at stake and worked assiduously to forestall a military conflict in that country. This variation is a product of higher British dependence on the United States.\(^{10}\)

Third, there have been only a handful of empirical studies examining the alliance security dilemma, particularly full in-depth case studies.\(^{11}\) Snyder draws from European diplomatic history between 1879 and 1914 to explore the dynamics of the alliance security dilemma. Knowing how states behaved in an earlier, very different historical period may provide insights for state behavior in general, but there is also a clear need to

\(^{10}\) Why America’s allies have different degrees of dependence on it is examined in Chapter 3.

focus on the contemporary period, especially if we aim to have any policy relevance. The three case studies in this dissertation apply the alliance security dilemma to three major security issues since the end of the Cold War and the onset of unipolarity.

Fourth, Snyder was vague about the strategies states could adopt to mitigate or reduce the risk of abandonment or entrapment. Scholars are just starting to pay attention to the strategies or techniques smaller states may adopt vis-à-vis a preponderant state such as the United States.\textsuperscript{12} I introduce and examine two strategies smaller states may adopt to avoid the risk of either abandonment or entrapment. I call these strategies \textit{preemption} and \textit{stalling}.

Applying the alliance security dilemma is the best way to understand the at times sharp, deep, and protracted disagreements between Britain, France, and Germany on a number of core security issues since the end of the Cold War. This framework provides a better account of intra-alliance cohesion and discord than several competing hypotheses, including those that focus on external threat perceptions, concerns over burden sharing, and domestic politics and institutions. Each of these hypotheses is tested systematically in the empirical chapters. Intra-alliance discord also challenges the expectations of three broad International Relations (IR) paradigms—neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism. While each paradigm has little trouble explaining alliance cohesion, they each have difficulty explaining alliance discord. This is especially true for an alliance such as NATO, which is highly asymmetric (the United States is by far the dominant power in the alliance), deeply institutionalized, and ostensibly governed by a

number of norms that encourage consultation between allies, policy consensus, and policy co-determination. A neoclassical realist model that incorporates both structural and domestic-level factors is better able to account for variation in alliance cohesion and discord.

Though I focus on the effects of the structure of the international system (more specifically unipolarity) on alliance dynamics, this is a dissertation about foreign policy. Compared to theories of international politics, which seek to explain general patterns of state behavior and state interaction—such as the causes of war and peace, balancing versus bandwagoning, or properties of the international system itself, such as the relative stability of different types of polarity—a theory of foreign policy explains why a particular state pursued a certain strategy at a specific point in time. The dependent variable of this study therefore is the strategy pursued by a state in a specific situation. Did it side with the United States or did it distance itself from it?

Bringing in unit-level variables adds theoretical rigor and empirical precision. It is often impossible to understand complex causal dynamics in world politics by looking at one level in isolation. One gains greater empirical precision, without losing much theoretical parsimony, by analyzing the strategic interplay at multiple levels. Thus, I include a state’s level of dependence (an intervening variable) on the dominant alliance partner to explain variation in fears of abandonment or entrapment. A highly dependent state will more likely fear abandonment. A less dependent state will more likely fear entrapment. Britain has feared abandonment more acutely than has France or Germany. France has feared entrapment more severely than has Britain or Germany. Chapter 3 explains why and how this is the case.
In security challenges or crises, statesmen simultaneously operate on three overlapping but analytically distinct levels: the adversary level, the alliance level, and the domestic politics level. At times the pressures and incentives emanating from the different levels are contradictory. When deciding what strategy to pursue—close partnership with one’s allies, complete dissociation, or somewhere in between—each level comes into play. Statesmen are thus playing complex “three-level” games when they decide whether, and how deeply, to cooperate with an ally in a security crisis; what form cooperation or dissociation should take; how to signal commitment or resolve to an adversary; and how to justify the strategy, whatever it is, to one’s domestic audience, namely the public and the legislature.\textsuperscript{13}

In multi-level game situations, statesmen must therefore create and implement strategies in response to adversaries, allies, and domestic politics. Strategies that appear to be suboptimal at one level may make sense when one considers the totality of the different levels that statesmen are operating at simultaneously.\textsuperscript{14} Tony Blair’s support for the Iraq war faced widespread opposition in Britain, and even imperiled his premiership. Britain’s strategy during this crisis makes little sense in the absence of its fear of strategic abandonment by the United States. Because he was taking obvious political risks with his support for the United States, his commitment and resolve—both for Washington and for


\textsuperscript{14} Rational choice scholars refer to this phenomenon as “nested games.” See George Tsebelis, \textit{Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
Saddam—increased. Which level will be most important in guiding strategy—the adversary level, the alliance level, or domestic politics—is theoretically indeterminate. It is impossible to understand state behavior in these situations without taking each level into account and understanding their strategic interplay.

In addition to analyzing the security dilemma under unipolarity and the different levels that affect the alliance security dilemma, this chapter advances a number of hypotheses regarding intra-alliance cooperation or discord that are tested in the empirical chapters that follow. These hypotheses pertain to two separate questions. The first question asks what causes alliance cohesion or discord? The alliance security dilemma is tested alongside three competing hypotheses: perceptions of external threat, burden sharing, and domestic politics. The second question asks why states within the same alliance fear abandonment or entrapment differently. I argue that this is due to asymmetric levels of dependence on the ally.

Several methodological challenges accompany an analysis of the alliance security dilemma under unipolarity. One must specify in concrete terms what is meant by “unipolarity”—unipolarity as a general phenomenon and applicable to any state in the position of the unipole; the United States as the unipole (as opposed to China or Russia, for example); or the United States as the unipole in this particular historical period, which includes the existence of NATO, the absence of great power war in general, and the privileged position of liberalism, democracy, and free market capitalism in world politics. My analysis is limited to this third meaning of unipolarity. But while I focus on

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the United States and its European allies in the current historical period, a number of these insights could apply to different manifestations of unipolarity.

The Literature on Intra-Alliance Relations

The literature on alliances is divided into three main bodies of research. The first, generally coming from a realist or institutionalist perspective, examines the origins of alliances, who allies with whom, and the persistence of alliances. Stephen Walt, for example, argues that states form alliances in response to threats, which are a function of aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. States thus aggregate their capabilities in an alliance to deter a potential adversary or for purposes of mutual defense in a future conflict. Jeremy Pressman has shown that states form alliances not just to aggregate capabilities against a mutual threat, but also to restrain an ally. The second body of literature (to be explored more fully below) focuses

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on the dynamics within alliances, including alliance cohesion and discord, burden sharing, alliance leadership, and intra-alliance bargaining.\textsuperscript{19} What factors promote or impede alliance cohesion? How are the costs of responding to threats distributed among members of the alliance? A third body of literature explores the effectiveness of alliances. That is, do alliances actually correlate with the avoidance of war?\textsuperscript{20} Do alliances successfully deter threats? Few scholars have attempted a comprehensive theory of alliances that combines each of these features.\textsuperscript{21}

This dissertation explores one aspect of intra-alliance dynamics. Specifically, it explores alliance dynamics between the United States and three of its closest European allies since the onset of unipolarity. Studies on intra-alliance relations have mainly focused on four main issues: burden sharing; cohesion and leadership; the role of norms and institutions on alliance dynamics; and fears of abandonment and entrapment.\textsuperscript{22} In this


\textsuperscript{21} Glenn Snyder is an exception. In \textit{Alliance Politics}, he offered a comprehensive theory of alliances that encompassed all three aspects. For an earlier attempt at offering a comprehensive theory of alliances, see Liska, \textit{Nations in Alliance}.

\textsuperscript{22} This list is taken from Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 89-90.
section I briefly examine the first three issues. A subsequent section more fully examines fears of abandonment and entrapment—the alliance security dilemma.

_Burden Distribution_  
In a classic article, Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser showed how security within an alliance tends to approximate a collective good.\(^2\)\(^3\) A collective or public good is non-rival and non-exclusive.\(^2\)\(^4\) The benefits of the collective good cannot be excluded from certain actors, and the consumption of a collective good by one actor does not diminish its value for other actors. Especially within an asymmetric alliance, the dominant power ends up providing security for the other alliance members. The result is disproportionate burden sharing and suboptimal military spending across the alliance. Smaller states have a strong incentive to ride free because the alliance’s aggregate military power comes mainly from the contributions of the larger members. In a highly asymmetric alliance like NATO, the United States has a strong incentive to provide security for all alliance members, even in the absence of contributions from other states. This was particularly true during the Cold War, when attracting and maintaining allies was a source of prestige and legitimacy. Olson and Zeckhauser’s article spawned a large literature on burden sharing in alliances, which provided both theoretical modifications and refinements and empirical tests for their main insight.


The literature on alliance burden sharing has overwhelmingly focused on NATO. Studies have shown how NATO members use a variety of strategies and techniques to obtain the benefits of collective defense at the least cost to themselves. Politically, disputes over burden sharing were and continue to be a regular feature in NATO, with the United States pressing its allies to devote more resources toward collective defense. Disputes over burden sharing have not been limited to NATO, however. Studies of alliances in earlier historical periods also reveal the absence of equal burden sharing.

In this dissertation, collective or public goods can be operationalized to include regime change in Iraq (if this were believed to be necessary for regional stability and international security); containing Iran militarily and politically, negotiating with its political leaders, and leading the diplomatic process against it at the United Nations; and reducing dependence on Russian energy through developing strategies to diversify supply sources and routes for European countries.

Cohesion and Leadership

The second issue focuses on the stability of alliances. The distribution of capabilities within an alliance has a direct influence on its cohesion and stability. As Walt

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notes, “In general, the more asymmetric the distribution of capabilities within an alliance, the more durable it is likely to be and the greater the ability of the alliance leader to dictate alliance policy.” Asymmetric alliances have also been shown to last longer than alliances in which power is distributed more evenly. Great powers have a number of policy instruments at their disposal to dispense benefits and incentives as well as impose more coercive measures to maintain alliance cohesion.

This dissertation examines instances in which an asymmetric distribution of power did not lead to the dominant state’s preferred outcomes. Even under conditions of unipolarity, in which the United States is by far the strongest power in the international system, let alone NATO, the United States does not get its way all the time. On the contrary, there have been a number of instances in recent years in which some of America’s closest strategic allies pursued independent and even contradictory policies to those endorsed or pursued by the United States. This feature, paradoxically, may actually be enhanced within unipolar systems for reasons described below. Great power helps states to realize their preferences, but not all the time. While great power can be the basis for leadership, it also has the capacity to instill fear, anxiety, and apprehension, even among one’s closest allies.

There is a small but growing literature on the instruments and strategies small states can employ to realize their preferences. Smaller powers can use alliances to bind

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larger powers. Indeed, scholars have long noted and studied how alliances can serve as pacts of restraint.\textsuperscript{32} NATO does have some constraining effects on the United States, at least in terms of the need to gain legitimacy for its policy choices. While America’s allies cannot prevent the United States from doing something it is determined to do, they can raise the costs for the United States in doing so.

*Role of Norms and Institutions*

A number of scholars have examined the role of norms and institutions on alliance dynamics, from both an institutionalist and a constructivist perspective. Theoretical development has focused on questions of alliance cohesion and alliance longevity. Alliances that are deeply institutionalized are more likely to endure, even after the threat that led to their creation vanishes.\textsuperscript{33}

Alliances may serve to reduce intra-alliance tensions and disputes through the development of norms, especially norms of policy consultation and co-determination.\textsuperscript{34} Through a process of socialization, NATO has projected a set of liberal and democratic norms via its expansion to Central and Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{35} Alliances, which are a particular type of institution, may also increase alliance cohesion


and longevity through reciprocity, issue linkages, side-payments, monitoring, reduction of transaction and verification costs, offering dispute resolution mechanisms, and providing more accurate information regarding allies’ interests and intentions.

This literature points to three central findings on alliance longevity. Alliances are more stable and long-lived when they are highly institutionalized, the member states are liberal regimes, and when explicit norms regulate alliance decision-making.\textsuperscript{36} NATO’s longevity has posed a puzzle to the expectations of some neorealist scholars, especially NATO’s continued existence (and even expansion) since the end of the Cold War. By examining how institutions can adapt to new circumstances, as well as bureaucratic and institutional inertia, NATO’s longevity after the Cold War is less puzzling.\textsuperscript{37}

These studies have produced a vigorous debate and attracted much criticism, especially from neorealists. Critics argue that alliance norms and institutions are epiphenomenal. The distribution of capabilities or shared perceptions of threat are more important determinants of alliance cohesion and longevity.\textsuperscript{38} When national interests conflict, no amount of consultation or policy codetermination will mitigate these disputes. In such situations states will pursue their strategic interests and national ambitions. Alliance cohesion becomes a secondary concern.

This dissertation largely bears these realist criticisms out. Despite operating in a highly institutionalized environment in which there is thought to be a strong norm for

\textsuperscript{36} Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 90.


consulting one’s allies and seeking consensus on security issues, real consultation between Britain, France, and Germany in the three cases I examine was often modest, and at times entirely absent. In the Iraq case, for example, the allies “consulted” with each other after they arrived at their own separate decisions. European countries have preferred to pursue bilateral relationships with Russia, especially on energy issues, rather than pursuing deeper integration with each other in this domain.

Even in cases of agreement between Britain, France, and Germany, a norm of consultation was a weak determinant of cooperative behavior. In the one case in which there was substantial agreement between the three countries—negotiations with Iran on its nuclear program—these countries were operating with a different strategy in mind—one of preemption—because of a common fear of entrapment. They took the lead in negotiating with Tehran to avoid the possibility of having to decide, just a few months after their acrimonious split over the Iraq war, whether to ally with the United States in another war against a Middle Eastern country.

**Alliance Cohesion and Discord and Three-Level Games**

The two-level game approach shows how it can be advantageous for a statesman in a bargaining situation to show he has his hands tied domestically. This reduces the size of his “win-set,” or the number of agreements that could be ratified domestically—by the electorate, legislature, or powerful interest groups. There is thus an incentive for statesmen to reduce the size of their win-set in bargaining situations, or at least convince the other participants that one’s win-set is smaller than it actually is. Since much of intra-
alliance relations are about bargaining, the multi-level games approach is a useful analytic concept to use.

In examining alliance cohesion and discord, it is analytically useful to separate the adversary, alliance, and domestic politics games, despite their interplay in reality. Whereas previous studies have focused on only the adversary and alliance games, incorporating the domestic politics game into patterns of alliance cohesion and discord adds explanatory leverage and more closely approximates political reality. When creating and implementing strategy, statesmen face an optimizing balance that cuts across all three levels. Strategies employed at one level will have side effects in one or both of the other levels. These effects may be either counterproductive or supportive of the strategy pursued at individual levels.

Domestic politics are important for two main reasons: it shapes how statesmen interpret the adversary and alliance games, and it shapes strategies in response to those games. Threat perceptions are in part determined by domestic factors. Threats and incentives—and the national interest more broadly—are rarely unambiguous. Statesmen operating in very different domestic political and institutional contexts interpret systemic factors. These differences explain variation in perceptions of the risk and cost of abandonment or entrapment, especially when states face the same threat.39

Domestic politics may be used strategically or instrumentally—to signal resolve to an adversary or commitment to an ally. Threats issued by a government that has widespread domestic support tend to be more credible. So do appeals of alliance solidarity. Domestic politics may also be used to justify an accommodationist approach to

39 This point is elaborated in Chapter 3.
an adversary or dissociation from an ally. Statesmen often blame domestic political constraints for being unable to take an action an ally desires but it secretly wishes to avoid. The constraints imposed by domestic politics thus offer a convenient excuse for inaction.

Statesmen play different games at each level. At the adversary level, they may want to demonstrate resolve or accommodation. A united stand against an adversary may make deterrence successful, or compel the adversary to change its behavior. A strong stand with an ally may also burnish one’s credibility and reputation for resolve. An accommodative stance may be used when an ally perceives a threat but one does not perceive one’s own interests directly threatened. While this may serve to de-escalate tensions (depending on the degree to which an ally relies on one’s support), it may also put one’s alliance commitment in doubt.

Statesmen pursue strategies not just with an eye to their adversaries and allies, but to domestic politics as well. A skilled policymaker will use domestic politics to optimize his bargaining leverage in both the adversary and alliance security dilemmas. He may use domestic politics to signal his resolve (or accommodation) in the adversary game. He may use domestic politics to signal his commitment to an ally (or excuse or justify lack of commitment) because of domestic politics.

The Alliance Security Dilemma

Fears of abandonment and entrapment always exist in alliances.40 But as Snyder points out, since it is impossible to eliminate both risks completely, balancing between

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40 The distinction between abandonment and entrapment was first made by Michael Mandelbaum. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics before and after Hiroshima*
the fear of abandonment and the fear of entrapment is more of a trade-off than a dilemma. The challenge is for statesmen to optimize between these two fears.

Abandonment

Abandonment is the fear that, in time of crisis, one will be left in the lurch by an ally. Abandonment constitutes a kind of defection, and can take a number of forms: the ally may leave the alliance altogether (either de-align and act independently or realign with a mutual adversary), fail to carry out its alliance commitments, or fail to provide support in contingencies where support is not prescribed but may still be expected.\footnote{Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia," 265; Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," 467.}

The cost of abandonment (as opposed to the risk) varies with how much a state depends on the alliance for its security.\footnote{The distinction between the risk of abandonment and the cost of abandonment has not been thoroughly examined either theoretically or empirically.} A number of factors combine to determine a state’s level of dependence on an ally: the ability to defend its interests and its security itself; the degree of conflict it has with potential adversaries and the likelihood that its interests or security may be threatened in the future; or broader historical, political, or ideological reasons. Britain views its alliance with the United States as important not because it needs America’s protection against potential adversaries, but as a means to expand Britain’s own influence in the world. This is especially true in the post-Cold War period. France, on the other hand, while perhaps as “dependent” on the United States as is Britain in objective material terms, is less dependent on the United States politically and

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 151-152. Snyder has offered the most comprehensive analysis of these dynamics in multipolar and bipolar systems.
ideologically. Rather than seeking to maintain an extraordinarily close relationship with
the United States—and in the process increasing Britain’s level of influence in
Washington—historically France has taken a number of steps to reduce its dependence on
the United States.

Outright abandonment of allies is rare in international politics. Even less common
is dealignment or realignment with a one-time adversary.43 Nevertheless, statesmen
continue to fear abandonment despite its historical rareness. This is because statesmen
often operate according to worst-case scenarios in an anarchic security environment.
Other states’ intentions are never known with perfect accuracy, even those of close allies.
Much more common than outright abandonment have been instances in which an ally
fails to carry out expected actions in certain situations. Not only did the United States fail
to give diplomatic or material support for the Anglo-French invasion of Suez,
Washington actually took measures to compel its European allies to halt mid-invasion
and retreat in disgrace.

America’s European allies face different forms of abandonment in the post-Cold
War world. The United States may begin to view permanent alliances such as NATO as
increasingly cumbersome and of decreasing effectiveness. The United States may decide
that “coalitions of the willing” are more expedient, both logistically and for purposes of
legitimacy. The United States could also turn inward. Especially with the difficulties it
faces in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as domestic political battles over budget deficits
and rapidly ballooning national debt, there could be a period of neo-isolationism.44 The

43 What Stephen Walt refers to as “bandwagoning.”
44 On the oscillation between periods of interventionism and isolationism in American foreign policy, see
Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt, 1955), chapter 11. For a recent
United States could also shift its focus to other regions of the world, especially Asia and the Middle East. America could seek to improve relations with countries such as China, India, and Russia, which may come at the expense of America’s traditional trans-Atlantic ties.

**Entrapment**

Entrapment refers to involvement in unwanted conflict situations. It occurs when a state’s alliance commitments become detrimental to its own security. A state becomes entangled in an ally’s dispute with a third party in which it does not have core interests at stake itself, and perhaps not even peripheral interests.\(^4^5\) The strategic interests of even close allies often are not identical due to geography, threat perceptions, ordering of priorities, definition and scope of interests, capabilities, and lingering historical animosities with other states. Even when allies do share interests, there may still be differences over intensity of these preferences, priorities, or appropriate strategies to pursue or protect these interests.

The cost of entrapment (again, distinct from risk) varies according to the extent to which interests are shared with the ally and the degree of dependence on the ally. The cost is highest when adversaries are not shared, when interests toward a common adversary are not shared, or when there is disagreement over what kind of strategy to take toward the adversary. Likewise, the cost is highest when one cannot effectively dissociate

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oneself from the ally. There are likely to be more cases of potential entrapment for America’s allies in the post-Cold War world. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States and its European allies are likely to diverge more frequently on threat perceptions. As the United States has aggressively pursued its strategic interests in the Middle East, the Caspian basin, Central Asia, and South Asia in the past two decades, the opportunities for entrapment for its European allies has increased.

The risk of entrapment can be especially acute under unipolarity. There are few measures medium or smaller states can do to prevent a dominant ally from taking an action it is determined to take. Smaller states may impose some costs, such as withholding support, but these will not always affect the dominant state’s behavior. Great power invites using that power injudiciously or capriciously at times. There are likely to be more instances of potential entrapment under unipolarity. There is no counterbalance to check the sole superpower, the superpower defines its interests in expansive terms, and the costs of policy failures (in geopolitical terms) are lower.

Summary

Risks of abandonment and entrapment always exist for states in an alliance. What determines the cost (rather than the risk) of either abandonment or entrapment is a state’s dependence on an ally for its own security. This can vary widely, even among states in the same alliance. Thus we should expect states even in NATO to perceive the costs of abandonment or entrapment in asymmetrical terms. This explains much of the variation in strategies allies pursue to the same security crisis or challenge.
Polarity and the Alliance Security Dilemma

Scholars have shown, both theoretically and empirically, that the alliance security dilemma operates differently in multipolar and bipolar systems. These insights are largely based on the pathbreaking analysis of Glenn Snyder. The unipolar structure of the international system affects the risks and costs of abandonment and entrapment in important and unique ways. Unipolarity also affects the degree of dependence U.S. allies feel toward it, which in turn affects their perceptions of abandonment or entrapment.

Before examining the effect of unipolarity on the alliance security dilemma, it is useful to briefly examine the alliance security dilemma under multipolarity and bipolarity to compare the three types of system structure on the risk and cost of abandonment and entrapment. In the subsequent section I explore the alliance security dilemma within unipolar systems, which Snyder did not consider, and which continues to be underexamined—even after two decades of unipolarity.

The Alliance Security Dilemma under Multipolarity

The alliance security dilemma is most severe in multipolar systems. There tends to be a high degree of mutual dependence between allies in such systems, and the defection of an ally could pose a serious threat to a state’s security and even its continued political independence.

The threat of abandonment predominates under multipolarity. Alliances tend to be more fluid and flexible under multipolarity, and with several states of roughly equal power, there exist a number of plausible realignment options. A state may decide that its

\footnote{On the differences in alliance dynamics in multipolar systems and bipolar systems, see especially Snyder and Diesing, \textit{Conflict among Nations}, 419-429.}
commitment to another state is not worth jeopardizing relations with a potential adversary. Maintaining the balance of power may necessitate defection to another alliance. Especially for smaller states that depend on others for their protection, the risk of abandonment is ever-present in multipolar international systems, and the cost could be severe.

The alliance and adversary games are roughly coequal in multipolar systems.47 Both adversaries and allies tend to be less permanent under multipolarity, especially compared to bipolar systems. While states must of course be vigilant against potential adversaries, they must also ensure their allies will be a net benefit to their own security. The importance of maintaining alliance relationships acts as a constraint on how states approach the adversary dilemma. If a state seek to conciliate an adversary, for example, an ally may interpret this move as a prelude to dissociation from the alliance, perhaps even realignment. The ally may itself realign preemptively, leaving the other state in the lurch. As Snyder points out, multipolar alignments are determined by choice among several options rather than the structure of the international system.48

The Alliance Security Dilemma under Bipolarity

There has been only one instance of bipolarity in modern international politics: the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Not only was this a geopolitical struggle between two superpowers armed with nuclear arsenals large enough to destroy the other side many times over, there was an ideological element

48 Ibid., 485.
to the struggle as well. The capitalist and democratic West faced the communist and authoritarian East.

The adversary dilemma dominates in a bipolar system. Unlike multipolar systems in which there are several potential adversaries, there is one main adversary in a bipolar system. Alliances thus tend to be more stable. There were two main political-military alliances during the Cold War: NATO, dominated by the United States, and the Warsaw Pact, dominated by the Soviet Union. There were no cases of realignment from one alliance to the other, though there were several cases of dealignment, all of which on the communist side: Yugoslavia, Albania, and China.

Fears of entrapment predominate in a bipolar system. Because allies are so precious, there is little risk of abandonment. The allies of the two superpowers never had to seriously fear complete abandonment by their superpower patrons. Their own security was seen as indivisible with the security of the superpower itself. Instead, there was a greater fear of being dragged into a conflict unwillingly—either a superpower conflict in the heart of Europe or a proxy conflict in a peripheral region. There was an intense competition between the United States and the Soviet Union over allies during the Cold War, if only for reasons of prestige and reputation. This was one of the few areas in which the superpowers could actually compete directly. Conflict between the superpowers would have likely escalated into a nuclear confrontation, and the sheer impossibility of conquering the other side also made conflict less likely.

49 At least among NATO states, this was captured most dramatically by Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, the mutual defense clause.

Contrary to multipolar alliances, therefore, there is a tenuous relationship between the degree of alliance solidarity and the stability of the alliance in a bipolar system. The dominant ally determines the persistence of the alliance in a bipolar system. NATO, for example, was essentially a unilateral guarantee by the United States of its allies’ security. The contributions of the smaller states had little effect on alliance longevity. The United States expected a degree of leadership within the alliance befitting its global stature and because alliance defense and credibility largely rested on American capabilities. In reality the United States often oscillated between demanding total control over alliance strategy and planning, but also fearful of providing too strong a commitment. This vacillation often exasperated Washington’s European allies.

Another reason fears of abandonment are lower under bipolarity is because there are fewer plausible realignment options. During the Cold War, the United States’ West European allies had no motive either to de-align or to realign. The Soviet Union posed a much more severe threat to their political and territorial integrity. They relied on the American security guarantee, and especially on American strategic nuclear weapons, for their security. Even de Gaulle’s occasional flirtations with the Soviet Union, while vexing to American policymakers, never constituted a credible threat of French realignment—either toward the Soviet Union or as a neutral “broker” between the Western and Eastern camps. Instead, it was de Gaulle’s intention to create uncertainty over France’s position to increase his bargaining leverage on both sides.
The Alliance Security Dilemma under Unipolarity

Contemporary world politics is marked by American unipolarity.\(^{51}\) The United States possesses an advantage over every other country in each dimension of material power—military, economic, and technological.\(^{52}\) While unipolarity’s effects on state behavior and interstate interaction are still being studied, it is clear that unipolar systems operate differently compared to multipolar or bipolar systems.\(^{53}\) The advent of unipolarity has had important effects on virtually every dimension of world politics, including the nature of alliances and alliance politics.\(^{54}\)

Despite its vast power and the absence of any threat on the scale of the Soviet Union, the United States remains in a number of alliances, formal and informal, that are a legacy of the Cold War. Even more than in bipolar systems, alliances under unipolarity represent a unilateral guarantee by the unipole for the protection of smaller states. While alliances that were born during the Cold War persist, they do so with very different strategic doctrines, missions, and membership. Despite these differences, NATO

\(^{51}\) The term “unipolarity” was coined by Charles Krauthammer, though he did not anticipate American unipolarity lasting as long as it has. See Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990/91).


\(^{53}\) Ikenberry, Mastanduno, and Wohlforth, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Consequences of Unipolarity*.

\(^{54}\) The fullest treatment so far of the effects of unipolarity on contemporary alliances is Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World."
continues to serve a number of important functions. The alliance would not be maintained if the costs of doing so exceed the benefits.55

A number of scholars predicted NATO’s imminent demise in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.56 Rather than disintegrating along with the Warsaw Pact, NATO remained in existence as a hedge against war with Russia or war within the West itself, however unlikely those events were.57 In the first two decades of the post-Cold War era, the United States led a process of NATO expansion, which increased the alliance’s membership from 16 at the end of the Cold War to 28 today.58 NATO’s last round of enlargement, on April 1, 2009, brought Albania and Croatia into the alliance. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has taken on tasks and responsibilities very different from the ones for which it was founded. These include counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, and, in Afghanistan, counter-insurgency operations.59

The unipole does not face a risk of either abandonment or entrapment. Since it does not depend on smaller allies for its protection, allied defection causes less

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apprehension and carries with it fewer costs. The unipole has a greater ability to
dissociate itself from the policies or strategies of its allies that it views as misguided or
not central to its own interests. The analysis in this section therefore concerns only
medium and small powers in an alliance, and the risks and costs of abandonment or
entrapment they face.

The alliance security dilemma under unipolarity is less severe than in a multipolar
system but more intense than under bipolarity. The two features that make the alliance
security dilemma so threatening under multipolarity—a high degree of mutual
dependence and plausible realignment options—are decoupled under unipolarity. There
are few plausible realignment options for America’s European allies. In fact, Europe’s
continued alliance with the United States seems to contradict balance-of-power theory.\(^60\)
European states have not sought to join a counterbalancing coalition.


The Risks and Costs of Abandonment and Entrapment under Unipolarity

The structure of the international system produces limited constraints on the
unipole. By definition, its power is not matched by any other state or perhaps even a
group of states aggregating their power together. Just as the structure of the system under
bipolarity encouraged unilateralism and policy divergence, so do the structural incentives
under unipolarity, but to an even greater degree. There are three main reasons why the
alliance security dilemma will be intensified under unipolarity compared to bipolarity.

First, the unipole’s position leads it to define its interests in increasingly
expansive terms. Virtually every region of the world—from the Western Hemisphere, to

\(^{60}\) Waltz, *Theory of International Politics.*
Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia—are of strategic interest for the United States. While some of these regions may be peripheral for America’s European allies, events that transpire in these regions are of direct relevance for the United States. Especially with the threat posed by transnational terrorist groups, regions and countries that were once peripheral to U.S. interests—Afghanistan, Yemen—are now central.

Second, allied threat perceptions are more likely to diverge under unipolarity. Threat perceptions are less likely to be shaped as much by structural systemic factors. The Soviet threat and the static nature of alliances constituted a common threat for NATO members during the Cold War. But as America’s strategic interests in the post-Cold War period have expanded in some regions—Central Asia and Pakistan, for example—they have decreased in other areas. While stability in the Balkans may have been a strategic interest for the United States during the Cold War, it is no longer a vital interest. Stability in the Balkans is, however, a vital interest for European countries. This divergence was seen most clearly during the Bosnian war.

Rather than pursue purely strategic interests, a unipole is more likely to pursue ideological goals as well. As Press-Barnathan notes, “Where there is no single, overwhelming threat, both domestic pressures and ideological differences can play a greater role in shaping alliance dynamics, which in turn can contribute to divergence in threat perceptions. This is especially true in the case of the hegemonic power, which, in light of its strategic position, is more likely to shape its foreign policy according to its own worldview or in response to domestic pressures.” As Stephen Krasner points out,

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62 Ibid., 276-277.
states that have great power and that no longer have to worry about their security can make ideological goals the most important element of their foreign policy.\textsuperscript{63} 

Third, the unipole has a strong incentive toward unilateralism.\textsuperscript{64} Two logics make unilateralism a more tempting strategy for the unipole. The first is that its capabilities are so great, and its power so dominant, that it can simply get away with acting in a unilateral manner. It need not rely on permanent allies, or the resources and capabilities of other states. Rather, it may prefer “coalitions of the willing,” fluid and flexible coalitions of states that cooperate on distinct issues. The second reason unilateralism may become more common under unipolarity is because there is a strong tendency for the unipole to seek to maintain the conditions necessary to preserve its dominant place in the system. Under the George W. Bush administration, for example, the United States was actually a \textit{revisionist} power.\textsuperscript{65}

Unipolarity thus produces a number of new challenges for America’s allies. Negative side effects of American preponderance loom large, and allies have even less bargaining leverage than they did under bipolarity. Compared to a bipolar system, smaller states face a more credible threat of both abandonment and entrapment under unipolarity.

Since a unipolar alliance is not a product of the structure of the international system, we should expect unipolar alliances to be less durable than alliances in either multipolar or bipolar systems. Indeed, it is somewhat counterintuitive for the unipole to


\textsuperscript{64} The unipole’s behavior is actually structurally indeterminate; it is consistent with multiple strategies, including a general strategy of isolationism. See Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective."

be a member of a permanent alliance. Since the alliance is not structurally produced, disagreements are more threatening to alliance stability and to the continued existence of the alliance. There is a smaller need—for political, military, or perceptual reasons—for the superpower to maintain a large alliance. Without a single other state that poses a threat to its vital interests, the superpower is less exposed to the costs of allied defection. The risk of abandonment is higher under unipolarity compared to bipolarity because alliances are less necessary for the unipole to maintain in the absence of an overarching threat. There is also a smaller need to maintain alliances for reasons of prestige or reputation. We should thus expect a gradual, though steady, decline in the cohesion of alliances, especially alliances that are a legacy from an earlier, very different period of international politics. At the same time, the dominant power is unlikely to sever all security ties with its former allies. If its allies do face serious security threats, the dominant state may still be likely to guarantee their security. Its allies’ interests are likely to continue to parallel closely its own interests, so helping its allies may also be consistent with protecting its own strategic interests.

The end of the Cold War and the demise of bipolarity increased the general concern among America’s European allies that the United States would gradually lose interest in European affairs. The United States quickly reduced its troop presence in Europe and increasingly defined the Middle East and East Asia as strategic priorities.

There was a lively debate in the 1990s between realist and neoliberal scholars on NATO’s longevity after the Cold War. Realist scholars largely predicted NATO’s demise whereas neoliberal scholars cited institutional characteristics that would lead to its persistence. For the neoliberal view, see Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste A. Wallander, Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space (New York: Clarendon Press, 1999); Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War."; Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse."
There was in Europe a clear increase in the perceived likelihood of American abandonment, both in a physical and a political sense.

Medium and small powers have less bargaining leverage than they do under bipolarity. The security of medium and small powers and the interests of the superpower are to a degree decoupled in unipolar systems. America’s European and Asian allies could be confident that the United States would guarantee their security because it was manifestly in America’s interest to do so, especially if it were to prevent Soviet gains. America’s allies cannot be as confident that the United States will continue to guarantee their security out of its own self-interest. With no superpower to compete with, the United States may seek to rein in its alliance commitments. As Walt says, “Under unipolarity…weaker states are less able to influence the dominant power’s conduct by threatening to realign or by warning that they may be defeated or overthrown if not given sufficient support by their patron. Not only do weaker states lack an alternative partner, but the unipole needs them less and thus will worry less about possible defection or defeat.”67 Thus, there may be a slightly increased compulsion to support the superpower in its endeavors, or at least to not protest too loudly or too often.

The costs of abandonment under unipolarity are less severe compared to these costs under bipolarity or multipolarity. While it may increase some exposure to risk, abandonment is unlikely to put one’s political or territorial integrity in serious, immediate peril. The most powerful state in the system is an ally, so it is unlikely that an adversarial relationship would emerge. There is also likely to be residual alliance effects, so allies are

likely to continue to define their interests with a high, though diminished, degree of coherence.

The overwhelming power disparities are likely to create regular fears of entrapment.\textsuperscript{68} The degree to which the superpower’s allies must fear entrapment depends on how the superpower uses its vast power. If it uses its power in a unilateral, capricious, or indiscriminate manner, its allies will be exposed to greater risks. The Iraq war demonstrates how smaller states are vulnerable to both abandonment and entrapment by the superpower. On the one hand, the unipole may seek to minimize even the pretense of multilateralism, instead pursuing its own interests unilaterally or with small, ad hoc coalitions. America’s European allies—including Britain—had a small role in shaping U.S. military strategy. On the other hand, if the superpower’s judgment is faulty or its mission unwise, smaller states face the risk of paying costs they had not anticipated and which they wish to avoid.\textsuperscript{69} Though France and Germany stayed out of the Iraq conflict, their interests were damaged by the protracted, public, and at times bitter disagreements with the United States, as well as Iraq’s swift descent into lawlessness and chaos.

**Hypotheses**

This section now outlines two sets of hypotheses related to the two separate questions examined in this chapter and in the empirical chapters that follow. The first set of hypotheses concerns intra-alliance cohesion and discord. They specify conditions in which alliance cohesion or discord will be more likely. The second set of hypotheses

\textsuperscript{68} Press-Barnathan, "Managing the Hegemon," 282.

\textsuperscript{69} Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 99.
concerns the origins of abandonment or entrapment fears, and in particular variation in the degree to which allies perceive these fears.

Different perceptions about the risks and costs of abandonment or entrapment are what drive European states either to cooperate or diverge on key security issues. This hypothesis is tested alongside several other hypotheses that purport to explain alliance cohesion and discord. These include perceptions of external threats, collective action, and domestic politics. The alliance security dilemma has been explored at length already, so this section provides a brief description of the other three propositions.

**External Threat**

This hypothesis states that perceptions of external threat are the key determinants of alliance cohesion or discord. States aggregate their power to redress a deteriorating security situation or to check the power of a threatening state. As shared threat perceptions rise, allied cooperation will increase. In the absence of an external threat, alliance cohesion should weaken.

**Collective Action**

This hypothesis is based on the “buck passing” or “free riding” rationales from collective goods theory. Collective action dynamics and bargaining constantly operate in alliances. States, especially medium and small powers, will try to reduce the amount they

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71 See, for example, Ibid., 324; Liska, *Nations in Alliance*, 97-100; Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), 207.
contribute to collective defense while maintaining all of its benefits. While collective action dynamics are especially severe in multipolar alliances, they are perhaps even more acute under unipolarity. Each state will have a strong incentive to stand aside in the hopes that one of its allies will take on the burdens of deterring or stopping the adversary. When collective action concerns are low, there should be greater alliance cohesion.

Domestic Politics

According to the domestic politics approach, foreign policy reflects the preferences of the dominant groups or coalitions within society. This approach is most closely associated with scholars working within domestic liberalism or the bureaucratic politics approach in IR.

There are multiple forms a domestic-level approach may take. One type is to hold a non-unitary (or “pluralist”) view of the state. The state is an arena for competition to take place among sub-state actors, and this competition is fluid and variable, reflecting changes in these actors’ preferences as well as the composition of domestic coalitions and alliances. This pluralist, society-centered approach has been used extensively in

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72 Christensen and Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks."


explaining such things as states’ foreign economic policies and in particular trade policy. The domestic-level approach has also been used to explain the influence of domestic interest groups on foreign policy. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt argue, for example, that certain domestic interest groups have had an outsized role on shaping U.S. foreign policy toward other states, most notably Israel but also India and Armenia.

There has long been disagreement on the role of public opinion on foreign policy. For many years scholars believed that public opinion played a relatively small role in shaping states’ foreign policy behavior, but this conventional wisdom has come under increasing scrutiny. As one analyst put it, “In sum, leaders follow masses.” Mass public opinion becomes especially important when it is highly activated. We should expect mass public opinion to play a larger role in the decision to invade Iraq, which was hotly debated and featured mass demonstrations, as opposed to negotiations with Iran, for example, which held less salience with the broader public. While it is not entirely clear when and under what conditions political leaders follow public opinion in the creation and implementation of foreign policy, political leaders in democratic systems are

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77 Much of the theoretical and empirical work done on the role of foreign policy has examined its role only in the United States, so it is difficult to reach conclusions on the role of public opinion on foreign policy in other countries.

accountable to the public for the choices they make. Rarely do political leaders pursue a strategy that holds widespread domestic opposition.  

*Hypotheses on Alliance Cohesion and Discord*

We can now put forward four hypotheses that purport to explain alliance cohesion and four that purport to explain alliance discord.

**Explaining Cooperation**

1. Allies’ concerns about growing security threats posed by Iraq, Iran, and Russia, respectively, were the main determinants that led to cooperation. When Britain, France, and Germany shared threat perceptions, they cooperated.

2. Britain, France, and Germany cooperated because they interpreted the alliance security dilemma equivalently. They each feared abandonment or entrapment and cooperated to mitigate these risks.

3. Cooperation was a result of the United States or one of the European allies providing the public good.

79 However, it is not clear what is causing what here. Political leadership could be shaping public opinion, public opinion may be shaping the views of the political elite, or the views of both may be caused by something else, such as political culture or ideology.
4. Cooperation emerged because of domestic political pressures; legislative bodies, the mass public, or powerful domestic groups preferred compromise and consensus with allies.

**Explaining Non-Cooperation**

1. European governments failed to cooperate because they did not perceive an external threat sufficiently serious to warrant closer cooperation.

2. The Europeans were unable to cooperate because they interpreted the alliance security dilemma differently. They had asymmetric fears of abandonment or entrapment.

3. European governments failed to cooperate because they were free riding on the United States or other European governments to assume the costs and risks of leadership.

4. European governments failed to cooperate due to political or economic incentives or constraints at the domestic level.

**Hypotheses on Fears of Abandonment or Entrapment**

Even close allies can vary widely in their threat perceptions, prioritization of security issues, and their interpretations of the alliance security dilemma. This variation is structurally indeterminate. Rather than a product of the international system, variation stems from each state’s unique circumstances, calculations, and constraints.
Systemic constraints and opportunities are important determinants of state strategy, especially as it related to the alliance security dilemma. But what is often more important as the principal causal determinants of state strategy are the unit-level perceptions of such conditions rather than the conditions themselves. Unit-level perceptions of not just external threat but also fears either of abandonment or entrapment by the dominant ally shape alliance dynamics. Asymmetric fears of abandonment or entrapment by allies can be explained by the degree of dependence a medium or small power has regarding its relationship to the dominant ally. Dependence comes in many different forms: military, political, economic, and diplomatic. Dependence can vary widely, even within an alliance. As dependence on an ally increases, fears of abandonment increase. For cultural, historical, and political reasons, Britain is more dependent on the United States than is France. In general, we should therefore expect Britain to fear abandonment and France to fear entrapment.

These are general trends rather than immutable laws. In some situations, a country with a high degree of dependence on an ally is likely to fear entrapment more than abandonment. This varies with how states interpret the costs and risks of the alliance game and the domestic politics game. In the summer of 2003, for example, Britain feared entrapment more than abandonment, even though Britain has a high degree of dependence on the United States. This was because Blair had expended much of his

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80 Neoclassical realist approaches privilege unit-level perceptions of external conditions rather than the conditions themselves as the principal causal determinants of state strategy. See Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," World Politics 51, no. 1 (1998), 152-161; Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model," in Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy, ed. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
political capital joining the Bush administration in the Iraq war, genuine fear of the fallout of an attack on Iran, and the British military was heavily engaged in Iraq.

_Hypothesis on Abandonment_

1. A state that has a higher degree of dependence on an ally will fear abandonment.

_Hypothesis on Entrapment_

1. A state that has a lower degree of dependence on an ally will fear entrapment.

**Responses to Fears of Abandonment or Entrapment**

Since the onset of unipolarity, all states, including America’s closest allies, have had to think about how to best cope with American preponderance. In particular, America’s allies must develop strategies to reduce the risk of abandonment or entrapment. These strategies possess elements of accommodation but also subtle forms of opposition to American power.

Medium and small powers may refuse to support the superpower’s actions or even seek to hinder, delay, or obstruct the superpower’s prerogatives. This is the basic idea behind “soft” balancing.\(^\text{81}\) While it is impossible that smaller powers will be able to compel or deter the superpower, they can still raise the costs of superpower action.

Because of structural pressures, threats of de-alignment or realignment under unipolarity generally are not credible, at least compared to multipolar settings. In multipolar systems, where power is more evenly distributed among the great powers, a state has a number of options: (1) it could build up its own capabilities to provide more security for itself; (2) it could seek new alliance partners that it thinks would be less likely to abandon it; (3) it could seek to revitalize or bolster existing alliance commitments; (4) it could seek to appease the adversary; or (5) it could bluff abandonment itself to get a stronger commitment from its allies.82

The responses states pursue are structurally indeterminate. Different states will adopt different policy responses to the same risk, and not all of these strategies would be equally effective. Some of these strategies are not viable for the United States’ NATO allies. Some options—such as seeking out new alliances—will be unlikely due to ideological reasons or lack of viable options. Though the United States’ NATO allies may at times chafe at American power, there are no plausible realignment options, and in general the alliance advances their own security interests. Balancing is not a viable strategy either. American preponderance is so vast that it makes counterbalancing implausible.

Medium and smaller powers do possess certain options, however. There are two strategies that states can take that prove surprisingly effective. These are preemption and stalling.

*Preemption*

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82 Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia," 266.
Preemption is a strategy a state may take when it fears entrapment. Rather than passively following the stronger ally into a situation in which it perceives to have minimal interests at stake, states may seek to act decisively before the stronger state is able to act. Preemption is thus a strategy adopted when the stronger ally is perceived to be reckless or undisciplined.

It is unlikely a single state would have the material, political, or diplomatic wherewithal to pursue a strategy of preemption individually. Strategies of preemption are more effective when several states act collectively. Not only are they able to aggregate their capabilities in such situations, making them stronger collectively than they are individually, but by taking the initiative they also increase the political costs of unilateral action by the dominant ally. The unipole may not need the material support of smaller allies, but it often desires that its policies are perceived to be legitimate. The objective for the smaller states, therefore, is to raise the cost of the dominant power acting unilaterally to a degree it finds excessive.

When using a strategy of preemption, states must achieve concrete results to continue to forestall entrapment. Ideally, the allies will reach a solution that the unipole and themselves find acceptable. Britain, France, and Germany adopted a policy of preemption when they began negotiations with Iran in 2003 on its nuclear program. There was a real, credible fear that the United States, fresh off a stunningly successful completion of major combat operations in Iraq, would set its sights on Tehran. Tens of thousands of American troops surrounded Iran, from both the west (Iraq) and the east (Afghanistan). Many Bush administration officials hinted that Iran would be next.
Britain, France, and Germany took measures to preempt an American military campaign against Iran. In that regard preemption constituted a success.

**Stalling**

A second strategy medium or small states may take is one of stalling. A state stalls when it drags its feet pursuing or implementing a strategy endorsed by the dominant alliance partner. Stalling is a deliberate strategy of delay and strategic noncompliance; a state avoids taking some action the dominant alliance partner wants it to do but which it does not think to be in its interest, or a state cooperates just enough to avoid the wrath of the dominant alliance partner. Like preemption, stalling can often be effective. One reason it can be successful is because, while a strategy of resistance, it is passive. It does not involve open defiance of the United States. A state acts as if it will carry out the actions the United States wants it to, but then delays the actual implementation.

States stall for a number of reasons. In some cases, there is a genuine conflict of interests. What might be in the U.S. interest is not in its allies’ interest. There may be domestic political pressure to resist cooperation with the United States. Stalling could also be used to raise the cost the United States must pay for compliance. By stalling a state may increase the incentives and concessions the United States is willing to provide.

Stalling can take several different forms. The most basic form of stalling is simply refusing to do what the United States requests in the hope that it lacks the attention, will, or resources to compel obedience. A second form is to agree to do something, but to do the absolute minimum necessary, and as slowly as possible, without invoking the ire of

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83 What I refer to as “stalling” is similar to what Walt calls “balking.” See Walt, *Taming American Power*, 141-143.
the United States. The state acts as if it wants and intends to comply. A third form of stalling is free riding. A state may support U.S. policy but does not want to contribute to the cost of implementing the policy.

Stalling is a strategy primarily used to mitigate the risk of abandonment, but it can also be effective in reducing the risk of entrapment. There may be political costs by stalling, but the dominant state is unlikely to implement sanctions for noncompliance.

European states have pursued a strategy of stalling when it comes to reducing their dependence on Russian energy resources, especially natural gas. Planning, financing, and building energy infrastructure that would bring non-Russian energy supplies to Europe, while circumventing Russia itself, is a kind of public good. Most European states would like to increase the diversity of pipeline routes and sources, but at the same time would like someone else to foot the bill—and to assume the political risks and costs.

The United States has long championed energy infrastructure projects that would bring oil and natural gas to Europe from the Caspian and the Middle East. The United States was successful in building an oil pipeline in the 1990s that would ship Caspian oil to Turkey. The United States has been less successful in pressing its European allies to diversify their natural gas sources of supply and import routes. Long a champion of the Nabucco pipeline project that has languished since 2002, it now faces a critical period for its viability and even survival.
Alternative Approaches

This chapter has sketched a model to explain alliance cohesion or discord under unipolarity that is based on perceptions of abandonment or entrapment. The neoclassical realist model developed in this chapter can be compared to three broad analytical paradigms within IR: neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and social constructivism. In different ways, structural realist, institutionalist, and constructivist expectations of intra-alliance dynamics do not fully explain the cases examined in this dissertation. This is of particular interest because intra-alliance cooperation and cohesion in NATO represents a “most likely” case for each theoretical perspective.

Neorealism

That states, even close allies, pursue independent and at times contradictory security strategies would come as no surprise to structural realists. In a world composed of self-interested states operating in an anarchic international system—the real world, that is—states ruthlessly pursue their own interests, even if it comes at the expense of alliance cohesion or even the interests of close allies.

According to structural realism, strength matters in international politics, and the strong tend to prevail. The ability to realize one’s interests is closely tied to one’s relative capabilities. This core proposition is as true for relations between allies as it is for states that view one another as rivals or as adversaries. In situations of profound power asymmetries—as found in unipolar systems—the superpower should be able to force its allies into line, through forms of coercion if necessary. This is not the case, however. In two of the three cases examined in this dissertation—the decision to invade Iraq and the
attempt to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian energy supplies—the United States was unable to convince all of its allies to share its interests and pursue its policies.

Another irregularity emerges regarding another structural realist expectations: Why do states with approximately equal material capabilities pursue very different security strategies? Despite relatively equal material capabilities, there was wide variation in how Britain, France, and Germany defined their interests and in the strategies they pursued in two of the cases examined in this dissertation. Structural incentives or constraints alone are not able to explain why Britain was an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq whereas France came out strongly against it.

Cases that would pose a problem for a structural realist explanation of alliance cohesion include those in which medium and smaller powers within the alliance are able to successfully dissociate themselves from the superpower or to defy it in other ways. Also, states occupying the same structural position yet pursuing different strategies in response to the same external threats would also pose a challenge to neorealism.

Institutionalism

Europe is a densely institutionalized environment. Britain, France, Germany and America’s other European allies belong to a number of overlapping and mutually reinforcing regional and trans-Atlantic institutions. These principally include NATO, the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe, among many others.

Alliances are a particular type of institution. They provide a number of mechanisms to establish and sustain deeper interaction and cooperation between their
members, namely facilitating the exchange of information, closer monitoring and supervision, the creation of issue linkages and side payments, and reciprocity between members.\textsuperscript{84} In general, information flowing within an alliance is quicker and more accurate than information between adversaries. If it is true that many disagreements in world politics are due to a lack of reliable information, this problem should be reduced substantially in an alliance, especially one that is as deeply institutionalized and as long-lived as NATO.

Cases that would challenge an institutionalist explanation of alliance cohesion would include instances in which states that are embedded within a dense institutional environment still experience deep, protracted, and regular disagreement. It would be fairly easy to draw a causal inference between a deeply institutionalized alliance and cooperation between its members. It is more difficult to explain the converse.

\textit{Constructivism}

According to many constructivists, the NATO alliance, and trans-Atlantic relations more broadly, is governed by a normative culture of consultation and policy codetermination.\textsuperscript{85} No one state is supposed to dominate alliance decision-making, even


\textsuperscript{85} Risse-Kappen, \textit{Cooperation among Democracies}, p. 80.
the most powerful state in the alliance on whom the security of the rest of the members depends.

The norm of consultation within NATO, and especially between European states, should be well entrenched. The trans-Atlantic alliance is said to constitute a “security community” in which peace between the member states is indivisible and war between its members is inconceivable. Rather than existing as atomized nation states, a “we feeling” has developed between its members.\footnote{Karl W. Deutsch, et al., Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). See also Ole Waever, “Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community,” in Security Communities, ed. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).} Thomas Risse argues that many European citizens have a “European” identity in addition to their national one.\footnote{Thomas Risse, A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Sphere (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). On the politicization of a European identity, see Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein, eds., European Identity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).} Karl Deutsch argued that the “tighter an alliance becomes, or the more closely a political community is knit, the more constraints it imposes on each of its members in their right to decide upon peace or war in the light of their own national consideration.”\footnote{Karl W. Deutsch, Arms Control and the Atlantic Alliance (New York: John Wiley, 1967), p. 77.}

While consultation is one important element of coordination, it is only one element, and consultation is not the same as policy coordination. As this dissertation shows, the norm of consultation is not nearly as strong as many constructivists attest. And even when there is consultation, it is hardly a panacea to overcoming key differences.

Cases that would pose a problem for a constructivist explanation of alliance cohesion include those in which consultation between allies is absent, allies seek to
deceive or mislead their allies, or instances in which deep and sustained consultation does not lead to consensus and cooperative behavior.

**Summary**

Students of international relations have studied and compared the dynamics of the alliance security dilemma in multipolar and bipolar systems. This chapter has examined the alliance security dilemma under unipolarity: the risks and costs it generates for America’s allies, its severity, and measures medium and small powers can take to mitigate its risks. It also argues that how allies interpret the alliance security dilemma are the main determinants of alliance cohesion and discord.

The alliance security dilemma is less severe under bipolarity than in multipolar systems but more severe than under bipolarity. Medium and smaller powers face a greater risk of both abandonment and entrapment under unipolarity compared to bipolarity. There is a greater risk of superpower defection because there are weak structural pressures holding the alliance together. As a result, there is a tendency toward policy divergence under unipolarity. Since there is little structural pressure holding the alliance together, unilateralism, especially for the superpower, becomes a more common strategy.

This chapter has also sketched a framework to explain why allies fear abandonment and entrapment differently. This variation depends on the level of dependence a state feels toward the United States or one of its other allies. Why and how Britain, France, and Germany interpret the alliance security dilemma differently, despite facing similar structural opportunities and constraints, is examined in the next chapter. How this operates in practice is examined in the three case studies.
CHAPTER THREE

*British, French, and German Strategic Dependence in Comparative Perspective*

This chapter examines and evaluates British, French, and German strategic dependence on the United States and on each other. As the previous chapter illustrated, a country’s degree of strategic dependence on an ally is a major determinant of how it interprets the alliance security dilemma, especially whether and how strongly it fears abandonment and entrapment. High dependence on an ally correlates with a stronger fear of abandonment; lower dependence on an ally correlates with a higher fear of entrapment.

Formative historical and political experiences as well as geopolitical interests shape the degree of a state’s strategic dependence on an ally. In objective terms, Britain, France, and Germany have a largely equivalent degree of strategic dependence on the United States for their security. Through NATO, the United States provides a unilateral security guarantee to all three. Despite this, they hold different fears of American abandonment and entrapment, however.

This chapter shows that Britain’s level of strategic dependence is high toward the United States but low toward its European allies. France has a low degree of strategic dependence toward the United States and a higher level toward its European allies, especially Germany. Germany has a medium degree of strategic dependence both on the United States and on its European allies.
British Strategic Dependence

Three features shape Britain’s level of strategic dependence on the United States and its European allies: ambivalence and even outright opposition toward permanent continental alliances and other security arrangements; the importance of cultivating and maintaining the “special relationship” with the United States. Maintaining the special relationship makes Britain fear U.S. abandonment more strongly, whereas Britain’s attempt to avoid becoming too enmeshed in continental security partnerships leads it to fear entrapment by its European allies. Britain’s role and self-identity as a “bridge” between Europe and the United States, thus making itself indispensable to both, can complicate the alliance security dilemma for British policymakers.

These three features have a long history in British political life, and are distinct from the basic principles, interests, and values that determine French and German strategic dependence. As the illustrative examples in this chapter show, these principles have had an important influence on the form and content of British foreign and security policy since at least the end of the Second World War, and in some respects for much longer. Understanding how strategic dependence shapes the decision-making environment for policymakers allows one to place contemporary decisions into an appropriate historical and analytical perspective.

Ambivalence toward Permanent Continental Security Arrangements

For centuries Britain acted as an offshore balancer to the European continent. During this time, Britain showed an ambivalence, if not outright hostility, at becoming too deeply enmeshed in continental security institutions or permanent military alliances.
From its position as an island off the European continent, Britain was able to maintain its freedom of movement and preserve a degree of flexibility unavailable to the continental great powers, where the threat of outside attack and loss of territory was virtually a permanent feature of political life. Palmerston’s dictum that Britain had no permanent friends, only permanent interests, guided British foreign and security policy for centuries.

While Britain entered into concerts, ententes, collective security partnerships, and formal military alliances with other European powers when it deemed it absolutely necessary, its overriding interest was always to prevent a single power from dominating or establishing hegemony over the European continent. Britain’s role as an offshore balancer to the vicissitudes of continental great power politics became one of Britain’s enduring national myths, but it was not entirely a myth. As usual, Winston Churchill captured this sentiment the best:

For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominating Power on the continent, and … on all occasions England took the more difficult course. Faced by Philip II of Spain, against Louis XIV under William III and Marlborough, against Napoleon, against William II of Germany, it would have been easy and must have been very tempting to join with the stronger and share the fruits of his conquest. However, we always took the harder course, joined with the less strong Powers, made a combination among them, and thus defeated and frustrated the Continental military tyrant whoever he was, whatever nation he led … Here is the wonderful unconscious tradition of British foreign policy … I venture to put this very general proposition before you because it seems to me that if it is accepted, everything else becomes much more simple.¹

As Henry Kissinger pointed out, Britain has never been able to shape or control the continent precisely as it wanted, but it has also been unable to completely escape from it.\(^2\) Britain has always been forced to exhibit either accommodation or resistance to shifts in Europe’s balance of power. When the balance of power swung too severely in favor of one state, Britain joined with other powers to prevent that state from establishing hegemony in Europe. Munich—the single greatest deviation from this policy in over 150 years—proved to be a disaster for Britain and the rest of Europe.

On a number of occasions throughout its history, British monarchs or prime ministers sent British soldiers across the English Channel to frustrate the hegemonic ambitions of another European power and to preserve Europe’s equilibrium. Unlike other European states, Britain remained at war against the French empire for the duration of the Napoleonic wars. The Seventh Coalition, comprised of Britain, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and a number of smaller European powers, finally defeated Napoleon’s army at Waterloo in June 1815. The French National Assembly forced Napoleon to abdicate a week after this defeat. He surrendered himself to the British the following month, who then exiled the former emperor to St. Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic. Upon the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, Britain, and in particular its Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh, was instrumental in organizing the Congress of Vienna, which established a concert among the five main European powers at the time—Britain, France, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. This Concert of Europe succeeded in preventing great power war in Europe for 99 years. Despite having just vanquished the massive French army, Britain insisted on including France fully in the Congress. It knew that for

an effective and durable balance of power in Europe to function, France would have to play a central role.

Britain’s role in European great power politics has been exclusively defensive. “Splendid isolation” came to characterize British foreign and security policy toward the continent in the nineteenth century under the premierships of Disraeli and then Salisbury, an arch-conservative who dominated British foreign policy for the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This sentiment was memorably captured in the famous headline from a British newspaper, “Fog in channel; continent cut off.” Apart from maintaining its colonial empire—especially free trade with its colonial possessions, on which the empire depended—British security policy in the nineteenth century sought to maintain the balance of power in Europe rather than expand its territorial holdings on the continent or otherwise intensify its political control over other European powers. Britain explicitly avoided entering into treaties or making security commitments that would compel or make automatic its participation in a European war.

In the first years of the twentieth century, Britain gradually began to abandon its isolationist foreign policy, giving way to a number of “understandings,” but not quite formal alliances, with two former enemies—France and Russia—and with Japan, a relative newcomer to the international scene. Britain grew increasingly concerned by the challenge implicit in Germany’s Naval Program of 1900, and decided to improve relations with France, a longtime rival. Britain concluded the Entente Cordiale with France in 1904 and the Anglo-Russian Entente in 1907. The proximate cause of these treaties was the massive German industrial and military buildup, especially the
substantial growth in the German naval fleet, which Britain found especially alarming and a direct threat to its unquestioned naval primacy.³

Britain twice intervened in a European conflict in the first half of the twentieth century to maintain the balance of power on the continent. In 1914 Britain reluctantly went to war against imperial Germany and the other Axis powers. Principally along with France, but also with troops from the Commonwealth and eventually the United States, Britain denied Germany’s advance on the Western front. The first two years of the war were disastrous for Britain, however, filled with military and diplomatic failures. This was both a symbol and a consequence of Britain’s weakened standing in European great power politics.

Following the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Britain declared war on Nazi Germany. Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement toward Hitler turned into a political and moral disaster. From the fall of France in June 1940 to the United States’ entry into the war in December 1941, Britain faced Germany virtually alone on the Western front. While Britain had largely retreated from creating a structure that would ensure order and stability in Europe following the First World War, instead conceding to France’s desire to impose harsh reparations on Germany, Britain joined in the institutional creation of Europe and the North Atlantic following the end of World War II, though somewhat half-heartedly and belatedly in the case of European integration.

Following the Second World War, while Britain was eager to see the United States remain in Europe, and therefore encouraged the cultivation of the Atlantic Alliance, Britain was reluctant to follow France, West Germany, and other Western

European countries in pursuing industrial, economic, and defense integration. London decided not to participate in the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), concluded in 1951 by France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries, and was not a party to the Treaties of Rome in 1957. As German rearmament was hotly debated in the early 1950s, Britain strongly preferred a security arrangement that included—and thus led by—the United States rather than one that was exclusively European. Despite the fundamental differences in the political situation in Western Europe at the time—at least compared to the balance of power system that characterized nineteenth century Europe—Britain maintained its skepticism toward exclusively European political and especially security institutions, and offering explicit security guarantees (unless the United States was also involved). Winston Churchill called in a speech in Zurich in 1946 for “a kind of United States of Europe,” but immediately made clear that Britain had no intention of becoming part of such an arrangement. This marks a remarkable continuity in a state’s foreign and security policy behavior despite very different political and material environments.

Indeed, Britain has a long tradition of viewing a unified Europe as a threat to British interests and security. Britain went along grudgingly with European integration, long after France, West Germany, and other European countries enthusiastically embraced it. Britain claimed to support pragmatic technical or economic arrangements with its partners in Western Europe, but was wary of any arrangement that would threaten British independence or Britain’s special relationship with the United States. This aloofness at times exasperated Britain’s European partners, and took on almost comic proportions at times. In November 1955, for example, at the Messina conference
that would lay the foundations for the EEC and what is now the EU, the British representative, Russel Bretherton, a pipe-smoking civil servant who was once an Oxford don, made the following comment: “The future treaty which you are discussing has no chance of being agreed; if it was agreed, it would have no chance of being applied. And if it was applied, it would be totally unacceptable to Britain … Monsieur le president, messieurs, au revoir et bonne chance.”

Such opposition toward becoming too enmeshed in Europe has hardly diminished in Britain, particularly among Conservative politicians and voters and with the conservative media. Margaret Thatcher’s 1988 speech in Bruges captured the sentiment of many Britons toward European integration. Playing up the nationalist card, she said that Britain wanted to be a good European, so long as Europe remained a continent of nation states. Only in 1998, under Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair, did Britain announce that it would support the EU’s nascent Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), though he stipulated that NATO would remain the preeminent security institution in Europe. While France, Germany, and a number of other countries adopted the euro, Britain steadfastly refused. The idea of giving up its beloved sterling—and delegating its monetary policy to the European Central Bank (which is based in Germany, no less)—is anathema to Britons across the political spectrum, and both among the general public and the political elite.

Even today, long after the days of Disraeli, Palmerston, and Salisbury, Britain’s relationship with Europe is a complicated one. An article that appeared in the Economist many years ago summed up this tension nicely: “Britain’s ‘problem’ is that it has been a stable democracy for several centuries; has not been invaded for almost a thousand years; admits to losing no war in popular memory; and has never been subject to totalitarian
rule. Since that makes Britain quite unlike fellow EU members, present or future, it is perhaps not surprising that Britain has so often been Europe’s odd-man out.4

Maintain the “Special Relationship” with the United States

The cultivation and maintenance of a “special relationship” with the United States has been perhaps the most recognizable feature of postwar British foreign and security policy.5 Successive prime ministers and foreign ministers have described the partnership with the United States as Britain’s most important bilateral relationship. Indeed, the special relationship signifies an unparalleled degree of closeness between major powers, and is generally spoken of in reverential terms by British policymakers. Margaret Thatcher said, for example, that, “The Anglo-American relationship has done more for the defense and future of freedom than any other alliance in the world.” The special relationship was strengthened by particularly close personal relationships between British and American leaders, most notably John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and Tony Blair with both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Britain assiduously cultivated its relationship with the United States after World War II, which included creating the idea that a special relationship between the two


countries did in fact exist. This put relations between London and Washington on a much closer, more intimate basis, more than London’s or Washington’s relationship with Paris or Bonn/Berlin. Despite strong cultural, historical, and linguistic ties, the maintenance of the special relationship in the postwar era was ultimately a result of Britain’s dependence on the United States. That Britain’s cultivation of a special relationship with the United States coincided with Britain’s own geopolitical decline was no coincidence. Instead, the notion of a special relationship existing between the United States and Britain has been a deliberate British creation. Britain could best achieve its objectives in a world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union as being Washington’s junior, but never subservient, partner.

The special relationship with the United States was born of desperation in 1940, when Britain was on the brink of collapse and France was already under occupation. As Kissinger has said:

This “special relationship” was not primarily a sentimental gesture; Britain had survived the centuries as an island outpost off the coast of Europe by never losing sight of its national interest. In pursuit of that interest, it built an independent nuclear force a decade before France did, a clear implication that there were limits to British reliance on the special relationship.6

Churchill in 1945 was the first to use the phrase “special relationship” to characterize Britain’s relationship with the United States. He used the phrase again the following year during his address in Fulton, Missouri, when he said:

Neither the sure prevention of war, not the continuous rise of world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples … a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States. Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of government, but the continuance of the intimate relationship between our military advisers, leading to common study of potential dangers, the similarity of weapons and manuals of instructions, and to the interchange of officers and cadets at technical colleges …

Wartime partnership between Britain and the United States included Lend-Lease, the Destroyers for Bases Agreement, and collaboration on the top-secret Manhattan Project. During the war the Americans and the British integrated their military planning and combat operations, including the creation of a single joint command, to a degree unprecedented among major powers.\(^7\)

Intimations of the special relationship emerged much earlier than World War II, however. As illustrated above, Britain was forced to abandon its historical posture of “splendid isolation” in the first decade of the twentieth century in the face of the increasing rivalry with Wilhelmine Germany. The decision to go to war in 1914, as well as the dramatic military failures of the first two years of the war, were signs of Britain’s diminished standing and status in the new century. The special relationship grew more important for Britain as its retreat from global preeminence grew more pronounced in the wake of World War II. Britain was unable to afford to maintain its force levels or its vast overseas commitments after the war. This included giving up its empire. India, the crown jewel of the British empire, became independent in 1947.

The special relationship extended into intelligence, nuclear weapons development and policy, and diplomatic consultation, among other policy areas. The tradition of intelligence sharing extends back to World War II with the effort at Bletchley Park to break the German code. Intelligence sharing continued throughout the Cold War and exists to the present day. British and American intelligence officials meet on an almost daily basis to share intelligence on issues of mutual threat. During the Cold War, the threat from the Soviet Union provided the major impetus for greater intelligence sharing, which led to the creation of SIGNIT, which established collaboration among the intelligence agencies of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The United States provided Britain with nuclear plans, technology, and even nuclear weapons. Roosevelt kept Churchill intimately informed regarding progress on the development of an atomic weapon, and British scientists assisted in the Manhattan Project. The Quebec Agreement of 1943 provided for collaboration between the United States and Britain on the production of nuclear weapons. Under the 1958 U.S.-UK Mutual Defense Agreement, the two countries agreed to share nuclear material, nuclear designs, and delivery systems for nuclear weapons. The United States provided Britain with Polaris and then Trident missile systems, which Britain uses to this day. Even in

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areas as secret and as sensitive as nuclear technology, cooperation and sharing between Britain and the United States has been historically unparalleled between great powers.

The emergence of the special relationship, which has always been invoked more consistently and loudly in London than in Washington, was a function of Britain’s relative decline. “The notion of an Anglo-American special relationship has been a device used by a declining power for tying to harness a rising power to serve its own ends. Avoid public confrontation; seek private influence. Propitiate openly; manipulate secretly.”11 Rather than recede after the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II, the bond was strengthened during the Cold War. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan even talked of Britain playing Greece to America’s Rome—“civilizing and guiding the young giant”—and Macmillan in fact did attempt this strategy with Kennedy. There was a mutual strategic need to maintain the alliance during the Cold War, even if Britain depended on it more than the United States. For the United States, Britain’s utility was not necessarily due to its intrinsic power—the United States was capable of matching the Soviet threat with its own conventional and nuclear forces—but rather Britain’s role as the “linch-pin within NATO.”12

This is not to say that the Anglo-American relationship did not experience certain friction and tension at times.13 But these episodes were often short-lived and in the long-run served to strengthen rather than weaken the relationship. The Suez crisis of 1956, for example, was instrumental in convincing London that it had no hope of projecting its

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11 Reynolds, "A ‘Special Relationship’?,” 2.
12 Ibid.
power as it once had, particularly when doing so was contrary to American interests. The American response to the British-French-Israeli invasion of Suez was swift and devastating. Eisenhower immediately called for a ceasefire, and threatened more coercive measures on the European allies if they did not adhere to this demand. The British found themselves in a wholly untenable position. They had no hope of prolonging the invasion against American wishes, particularly after the United States threatened to start selling off its reserves of sterling, which would have led to a devastating devaluation of the pound and made Britain’s fragile economic position even more precarious. Britain’s clearly subordinate role in the Anglo-American partnership was made painfully obvious.

The British and the French took two very different lessons from Suez. For the British, never again would they act in a manner that was contrary to the basic interests or prerogatives of the United States. For the French, they viewed the Suez debacle as a humiliating reminder of their subordinate status vis-à-vis the United States. Since Suez, the French have been much more interested in creating and maintaining an ability to act apart from Washington, which constitutes a core feature of French security policy that will be examined below.

The special relationship enjoyed remarkable continuity between both Labor and Conservative governments. No postwar British prime minister seriously questioned the need to maintain Britain’s special relationship with the United States. Instead, they went out of their way to show their fidelity to this basic principle. Among great powers there is perhaps an unparalleled sense of shared history and culture, not to mention a great sense of solidarity between the English-speaking peoples. The special relationship is not simply
a political relationship, but reflects the national moods, aspirations, and basic political outlook between the two societies.

Though the special relationship emerged out of necessity for Britain, and coincided with its retreat from global preeminence, it has been maintained on a much firmer footing. There is no denying that the Anglo-American partnership is uniquely close. Other states have “special” relationships with each other and both the United States and Britain have special relationships with other countries: the United States with Israel, for example, and Britain with Germany. Several elements help explain the durability of the Anglo-American relationship: similar geopolitical interests, such as maintaining the independence of Western Europe from first fascist and then communist threats; similar political ideology and democratic institutions; a network of close personal contacts and friendships, facilitated by a shared language; and perhaps an unprecedented sharing of popular culture between two countries, in music, television, and film.

Some commentators have claimed that the special relationship is dead.¹⁴ Britain does not and likely never had the influence over decision-making in Washington that it has long believed, they assert. The United States does essentially what it wants to do irrespective of British wishes or advice. If Britain agrees with American policy, it joins with the United States as junior partner. If Britain disagrees, it must remain silent—at least publicly—for fear that any disagreement would threaten the very fabric of the special relationship. In effect, runs the argument, London is under the illusion that it has influence that it does not actually possess. Not only does it not produce the benefits that Britain has expected, but it has real costs. Pursuing the special relationship comes at the

expense of cultivating multilateral coalitions and partnerships in Europe, where, such commentators suggest, Britain’s true means of global influence lie.

Whether British policymakers do indeed exercise the kind of influence over American policymaking they would like, they clearly believe that it is a vital and necessary component of British foreign and security policy. The importance of the special relationship has been rhapsodized by every British prime minister since Churchill. Indeed, its special relationship with the United States underpins Britain’s claim to international leadership that far exceeds Britain’s military and economic resources. There is little denying the fact that by maintaining such a close relationship with the United States, Britain has accentuated its role and visibility. Whether the costs of being so closely aligned with the United States have exceeded the benefits has increasingly come under question.

While it is difficult to assess the precise influence British policymakers have had on American decision-making, being perceived to be so close and so involved in the decision-making process has made it such that American policymakers would be embarrassed if they were to contravene basic British preferences. One can see such influence in the negotiations and diplomatic maneuvering during the Iraq crisis of late 2002 and 2003, which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 4.

_A “Bridge” between Europe and the United States_

Despite the importance given to its relationship with the United States, Britain has attempted to maintain two political relationships simultaneously, one with its European partners and one with the United States. Rather than pursue these relationships separately,
Britain has sought to become the indispensable link between both sides of the Atlantic, positioning itself where these two concentric circles overlap, making Britain indispensable to both. This has been particularly true in the post-Cold War period, when the security threat from the Soviet Union, which necessitated a substantial degree of closeness between NATO countries, has evaporated. Now that the Soviet Union no longer exists and the Cold War is over, NATO countries are no longer tied by a common security threat on the scale of the former Soviet Union. That NATO countries would no longer see their security as indivisible was inevitable, which was why several post-Cold War crises—from Bosnia to Iraq—served not to unite these countries but to divide them. It was inevitable that there would be a certain amount of drift.

Britain serving as a bridge between Europe and the United States is consistent with Churchill’s description of British foreign policy existing within three “concentric circles”: Britain’s relationship with the United States; the residual ties to its former colonies and with the Commonwealth; and its partnership with the countries of Western Europe (or today the entire EU). To quote Churchill once more:

We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are interested and associated but not absorbed … Great Britain may claim, with equal justification, to play three roles simultaneously, that of a European nation, that of the focus of the British empire, and that of a partner in the English speaking world.15

This sentiment essentially guides British foreign policy to this day. Britain’s role as a bridge linking the two sides of the Atlantic ensures its own place and role in international politics and minimizes the chance that Britain will ever have to choose between Europe

15 Saturday Evening Post, February 15, 1930.
or America (though this does of course happen on occasion). Instead, Britain’s foreign policy has been centered on Europe as well as America. Because of its unique history, Britain sees itself as the natural country to play the bridge role between the two sides of the Atlantic.

Blair in particular sought to maintain this dual role upon becoming prime minister in 1997. He revitalized the old Labor party from an anti-American and anti-European faction of British politics into “New Labor,” which sought to find middle ground between free market capitalism and social democracy (the “third way”), but also between traditional British Atlanticism and a commitment to Europe.¹⁶

Britain’s overriding interest is not a world in which there is trans-Atlantic drift, or a decoupling between the United States and Europe, but one in which Europe and America continue to have a close relationship. Because Britain often serves as the link between the United States and Europe, during periods of transatlantic crisis the decision to side with one rather than the other can be agonizing. With the end of the Cold War, the United States and Europe no longer instinctively define their interests with the same congruence they did when faced by the Soviet threat. Instead, the transatlantic partnership had to be cultivated and maintained in a manner that structural forces during the Cold War made instinctual.

A leadership role for Britain in Europe is natural. Britain possesses Europe’s most sophisticated and powerful military forces. It has a network of well-trained diplomats throughout the world. Its economy remains one of the five largest in the world, and

London serves as the financial center of Europe. Any significant measure of security or defense integration in Europe therefore depends heavily on British participation and leadership. The joint Anglo-French declaration at St. Malo in 1998 signaled that Britain would be willing to make progress on European defense integration. At the same time, however, Blair—along with many other Britons inside the government and the military—insisted that the centerpiece of Atlantic security cooperation would continue to be NATO. No European defense capability could move forward, they argued, if it would exist separately from NATO, even in theory.

At the same time, more than any single country, perhaps, Britain has avoided the kind of integration that other European states have enthusiastically embraced. Britain has not adopted the euro, nor is it a party to the Schengen Agreement, which provides for the free movement of people between participating states. Britain has long been reluctant to cede too much sovereignty to Brussels, which on occasion has created tension with other European states that have sought deeper European integration. Britain’s role in Europe also comes with additional caveats. No British prime minister will ever side with Europe against the United States on a major issue of foreign policy or security. This led to the diplomatic fallout between Britain on the one hand and France and Germany on the other over the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Britain had established a unique role within North Atlantic and European security institutions in the post-Cold War era. On the one hand, Britain insisted that NATO remain the pre-eminent security institution in Europe for the foreseeable future. While Blair did not exhibit the ambivalence or even veiled hostility toward continental security

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arrangements that some of his predecessors displayed, he argued that any European security or defense project must be motivated by the desire to strengthen rather than weaken NATO. Increased European cooperation in security and defense that came at the expense of NATO would not merely constitute a major strategic mistake, it would also imperil the sentimental partnership Britain and the United States had shared for decades.

On the other hand, Blair signaled his willingness to strengthen—at least in theory—Europe’s own security and defense capabilities.\textsuperscript{18} He reoriented British foreign and defense policy to support an increased European capability and role in these areas, and viewed this as a complement to NATO’s strength, viability, and effectiveness in the twenty-first century. The inability of European countries to intervene in the wars in the Balkans had been a strong motivation for Blair to seek an autonomous European security and defense capability. Particularly in the post-Cold War era, Blair understood that Europeans could not count on the United States to come to Europe’s aid every time there was a crisis that affected Europe’s security. Europe would have to be able to develop the capability manage such responsibilities itself. Thus at the Franco-British Summit at St. Malo in December 1998, Blair pledged, with Chirac, greater cooperation in European security and defense realms, saying that the EU “must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military force.”\textsuperscript{19} Collective European security and defense capabilities have remained modest, however, and the factors that inhibit deeper cooperation are not simply technical and strategic but also political.\textsuperscript{20}


Like the United States and France, which also see their values and traditions as universal, Britain sees itself playing a special role in international politics. Also like the United States and France, Britain has attempted to export these values and traditions to other parts of the world at various points in its history. Through these core features, Britain sees its role and place in the world, as well as its duties and responsibilities, far exceeding its military or economic capabilities.

Britain’s colonial past still resonates both in British society and with political elites. It is one of the main sources for Britain’s aspiration to play a leading role in world politics. Britain’s colonial legacy lives on via the global distribution of the English language, British common law, parliamentary traditions, democracy, free market capitalism, and other political and economic features that can be found in Ottawa, Sydney, New Delhi, Johannesburg, and other former colonial outposts, including the United States.

There are many reasons for Britain to feel confident and proud of its place in the world. The City of London is the equal to Wall Street in terms of a global financial capital; Oxford and Cambridge remain among the world’s truly leading universities; Britain is the oldest parliamentary democracy in the world; its role as one of the four occupying powers in Germany gave it a major role in postwar Europe despite its geopolitical decline;\(^2\) it is one of the two leading powers in the NATO alliance and holds a disproportionate share of NATO military commands; it has the most capable and

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advanced military forces in Europe; it maintains an independent nuclear force; and it maintains a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Another core element of British exceptionalism is Britain’s perceived historical role as a free country confronting a despotic and authoritarian European continent. As Kissinger has said, philosophically Britain remains essentially Hobbesian in its outlook: expecting the worst and rarely being disappointed.22 Unlike the United States, which believes that certain problems and challenges can be transcended, the British tend to believe that no permanent solutions are possible. Britain has navigated this treacherous landscape with great skill for the past several centuries, from *Pax Britannica*, to resisting the subjugation of Europe by would-be hegemons, to the East-West challenge during the Cold War.

**French Strategic Dependence**

French foreign and security policy has a number of defining features that serve to distinguish it from that of Britain and Germany. What has come to be known as “Gaullism” has guided and established the basic parameters of French foreign and security policy at least since the General’s assumption of the French presidency and the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958 (though there is little consensus today on what precisely “Gaullism” actually means).23 Gaullism—in the sense of independence and rank—existed long before de Gaulle, however. Rather than representing a break with the

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23 For perhaps the best representation of what is known as Gaullism, see the 1972 *Livre Blanc sur la Défense*. Only two *Livres blancs*, or white papers, have been published during the Fifth Republic—in 1972 and in 1994—which demonstrates the stability of French security and defense policy during this period.
past, the “Gaullist years represent a crystallization of traditional French attitudes toward national security into a coherent, well-articulated and largely implemented doctrine.”

Philip Gordon describes Gaullism as “the absolute need for independence in decision making, a refusal to accept subordination to the United States, the search for grandeur and rang, the primacy of the nation state, and the importance of national defense.”

One can find such elements in France as far back as the First World War and during the interwar years.

The basic principles of Gaullism are largely shared across the political spectrum in France. Even during the presidency of Socialist François Mitterand, there was no discernible break with the Gaullist traditions of the past. If anything, Mitterand sought to reassure his European and American partners that a Socialist in the Élysée Palace would not lead to any serious breaks in French foreign and security policy.

Three major features affect the degree of France’s strategic dependence on the United States and on its European allies: independence and “presence” in international politics; its aspiration to lead a united Europe, especially as it relates to the outside world; and maintaining French influence, rank, and grandeur. Each of these features lowers France’s dependence on the United States, decreasing its fears of abandonment. A close Franco-German partnership is essential, in French eyes, to creating a more cohesive European actor. Thus, France is more likely to fear abandonment by its European allies, especially German abandonment.

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25 Ibid., 3.
Independence and Presence Internationally

Maintaining an independent role internationally is arguably the leading feature of French foreign and security policy. For de Gaulle it was almost an obsession that France should belong in the first rank of world powers. France had been a major European and world power since the sixteenth century, and de Gaulle was convinced of France’s “right” and “duty” to continue to be one of the leading powers on the world stage. France had verged on establishing hegemony in Europe on two separate occasions, under Louis XIV and Napoleon. That France should continue to have a major presence in world politics has become axiomatic in France, gaining consensus across the political spectrum. France continues to insist on playing the role of a major international actor and to exercise complete autonomy over its foreign and security policy, at times to the exasperation of its allies. This has included a refusal to accept any kind of subordination to the United States, which periodically has caused friction in Franco-American relations at least since America’s involvement in the Second World War.

The desire to maintain French independence is born of historical experience. No other power, including the United States, could be counted on to preserve French independence and French interests. After all, France had been invaded three times in a span of 70 years (1870-1945) and had seen German troops march down the Champs-Élysée twice during that period. As de Gaulle said to Eisenhower in September 1959:

In the course of the two world wars, America was France’s ally, and France … has not forgotten what she owes to American help. But neither has she forgotten that during the First World War, that help came only after three long years of struggle which nearly

26 Ibid.
proved mortal for her, and that during the Second she had already been crushed before you intervened.  

“Independence” has often been framed—implicitly or explicitly—in response to the large shadow the United States cast over Europe in the postwar era. Maintaining French independence from the U.S. hyperpuissance (even the word “superpower” did not accurately describe U.S. power for many French people) has been a central element of French foreign and security policy since the end of World War II. Rather than articulating how France might fit into the larger structures and institutions of North Atlantic security, French strategy has often focused on creating a degree of separation between itself and the United States. Former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine characterized this complicated relationship with the United States as, “Friends, allies, not aligned.” Friends and allies, certainly, in NATO, the UNSC, the G-8/G-20, and other international organizations, institutions, and forums. But France will not subordinate itself or its interests to the United States, nor will it follow America’s lead uncritically or unhesitatingly.

More than their British or German counterparts, French policymakers have been highly sensitive to American influence and power, especially when it served to leave France in a position of clear subordination and when it limited France’s freedom of movement. French policymakers have not been shy about voicing their concern with the sheer imbalance of power enjoyed by the United States, even if it does not pose a direct threat to French security or vital interests. “Without a counterweight, there is a danger of a unilateralist temptation, a risk of hegemony. So, depending on the situation, we will be

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friends and allies of the United States; but sometimes we will need to say No without acrimony, in the name of our legitimate interests or those of Europe.” French opposition to the United States is not limited to the diplomatic or political realm. France is quick to denounce what it perceives to be American “cultural imperialism.” The effect is at times an almost reflexive anti-Americanism in French political discourse that transcends even traditional left-right political cleavages. On issues ranging from Iraq, the primacy of NATO in Europe, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the United States and France are at once allies but also hold competing visions on proper goals and objectives.

During the Cold War, for example, de Gaulle and subsequent French presidents were anxious about being dragged into a conflict in Europe that they did not have a role in deciding. France would control its own destiny, they asserted, especially on matters of war and peace. Since any war between the United States and the Soviet Union would likely be fought in Europe, French policymakers claimed, they should have a voice in how it would be conducted. U.S. strategic planners could imagine staging a defense in Europe. For Europeans, a war in Europe between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries could possibly mean the end of European civilization.

The French desire for independence and presence internationally—combined with American unilateralism and diplomatic missteps—led to friction in the Franco-American relationship over a number of issues in the postwar era, including Suez in 1956, Vietnam, détente between the United States and Soviet Union, de Gaulle’s visit to Moscow in

28 The Economist, September 6, 1997.

1966, his decision the same year to remove France from NATO’s integrated military command and his request that NATO headquarters be moved from Paris, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Only in 2009, under President Nicolas Sarkozy, did France decide to rejoin NATO’s military command. Indeed, during much of the 1960s France acted as a revisionist power; de Gaulle sought to transform the European security system and reduce Europe’s military dependence on the United States.\(^{30}\) Despite this complicated relationship, in the major crises of the Cold War—the crises in Berlin from 1957 to 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis, deployment of intermediate range nuclear missiles in Germany in 1983, and the first Gulf War—France proved a staunch ally of the United States.

The first years of the post-Cold War era further highlighted the vast gulf between the United States and France. The French role in the Persian Gulf War was marginal, which was surprising considering the size of France’s defense budget and armed forces (conscripted soldiers could not be sent on overseas combat missions, which greatly complicated French strategic planning), the fact that France clearly had global interests (unlike every other European state except Britain), and France’s self-image as among the world’s great powers.\(^{31}\) The wars in Bosnia and Kosovo further demonstrated just how dependent France (and other European countries) was on the United States in security and defense.

It is axiomatic among most French policymakers and French citizens that France has a special role and purpose in the world. This can be traced back to its legacy as a

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major European and world power since the sixteenth century and its desire to maintain its strategic independence vis-à-vis the United States. There is another element, however. Like Britain, France sees itself playing a special role in world politics. The basis of French “exceptionalism” lies in its own mission civilizatrice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it sought to spread French culture, norms, and practices throughout its colonial empire. Embedded in the national consciousness is a belief that French values are universal. This provides France a special role internationally even if its material position no longer puts it in the very first rank of global powers. For the French, the spread of its culture and its language is a proud feature of its history. For some others, however, this has fed the perception of French “arrogance” and the desire to maintain French distinctiveness at all costs.

*Leadership within a United Europe*

Repairing the “damage of Yalta” has been France’s historic task since de Gaulle.32 Yalta was traumatic for the French for two reasons. On the one hand, it produced a divided European continent and a bipolar world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. On the other, it symbolized the humiliation of not being present at the Black Sea resort with Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin when the plan was finalized, thus demonstrating France’s diminished relevance and prestige internationally.33 France’s geopolitical role underwent a profound transformation in only a generation. France emerged as the strongest military power in 1918, but was exhausted


after four years of war. Despite the war reparations and other indemnities imposed on it after the First World War, Germany quickly gained military supremacy in Europe. The Wehrmacht invaded France on May 10, 1940, and by the middle of June had occupied Paris. The French defeat was swift and devastating, and France remained occupied for most of the remainder of the war.

In a geopolitical sense, France was perhaps better off in a divided Europe. Despite the domination of European security affairs by the United States and the Soviet Union, France was able to turn its apparent weakness into strength, and was able to maintain a distinctive voice in Cold War foreign and security policy. With Germany and Europe both divided, France had greater freedom of movement, and French influence was maximized in a Europe in which the sovereignty of Germany, its historical rival, was divided. France was also able to exercise a degree of political influence over Germany by virtue of being among the victorious allies in the Second World War and having its own occupation zone, both in West Germany and in Berlin.

France and West Germany were the undisputed leaders in the creation of postwar Europe. While de Gaulle vigorously pursued reconciliation with Germany, he distrusted Britain’s role in Europe. De Gaulle twice vetoed British membership into the EEC, on the grounds that Britain would serve as a Trojan horse for American interests and priorities. Moreover, de Gaulle never forgot what Churchill said to him on the eve of the Normandy landings: “You may be sure, general, that if we ever have to choose between Europe and the open sea, it is the sea we would choose.”

On European integration, France ended up occupying a middle position between the other two major powers in Europe, Britain and Germany. Germany long favored a
more integrated and federal Europe, whereas Britain favored a more intergovernmental approach, insisting that national governments retain control over the most sensitive issues of state sovereignty such as foreign policy and defense. France sought a synthesis between these two positions. While France is closer to Germany on economic and monetary affairs, it is closer to Britain on security and the proper balance between intergovernmental and supranational institutions. Like Germany, France has been willing to cede certain aspects of its sovereignty to the EU, but it continues to think in terms of the nation-state, and of national interests, in a way unlike most other states in Europe, Britain excluded. France has continued to rely on the old Gaullist formula, particularly its adherence to the nation state, to cope with the exigencies of the post-Cold War security environment in Europe.

Though European integration could not move ahead without the Franco-German partnership, for historical and political reasons West Germany could not take the lead. Britain was unwilling to take the lead. Thus, almost by default, France became the de facto leader of Western Europe during the Cold War. For the next forty years, French diplomacy was marked by a commitment to European integration, pro-Arabism, a general distrust of American power, and seeking to act as an independent arbitrator between Washington and Moscow.

The end of the Cold War and German unification therefore presented France with a new set of challenges, as did EU expansion to the east. These two events upset the equilibrium that had existed in Europe for four decades, and France was forced to find a balance between its own security, its role in Europe, and Atlantic relations. Perhaps more
unnerving for the French, following German unification, France would no longer be the unquestionable dominant partner in the Franco-German partnership.

While Mitterand believed that German unification was both inevitable and right, he was concerned about the pace of unification and the inherent risks associated with it. France, along with other European countries, saw unification as an opportunity that could not be missed, because there was concern that Germany would pursue a more independent and nationalist path following unification. France had to firmly and permanently embed Germany within the structures and institutions of postwar West European and transatlantic politics, especially NATO and the EU. Integrating Germany into Europe—in order to place limits on German sovereignty and German power—had been French policy since the 1950s.

As the momentum toward unification of West and East Germany became unstoppable throughout 1990, Kohl and his foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, understood that unification and European integration were inseparable. Kohl and Genscher therefore launched an initiative to achieve deeper integration within Europe, even moving toward economic and political union, a long-time French ambition, while simultaneously planning for the unification of West and East Germany. At the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in Maastricht, the Netherlands, European governments agreed to move toward adopting a single currency and to create a European central bank based in Frankfurt that would set monetary policy for all countries in what would become the “eurozone.” France thus ended up winning big at Maastricht. It was able to ensure that Germany would continue to integrate itself within Europe, therefore giving France a degree of leverage and control over the changing political environment in Europe.
With EU expansion, Franco-German leadership in Europe has been put into question. France has been more ambivalent than Germany regarding EU expansion, especially if it comes at the expense of “deepening” integration between current members of the union. As noted above, de Gaulle twice vetoed Britain’s application for membership in the EEC, and Britain’s membership was not approved until after de Gaulle left power. There was no consensus among French policymakers over the applications from Portugal, Spain, and Greece. As the EU continues to expand, France is increasingly concerned that its influence will diminish in proportion to the increased number of new member states. Moreover, with the inclusion of more and more countries, each of which possesses its own unique history, political and economic system, and priorities, policymakers in France fear that this will diminish the cohesion among the member states, and that the EU will become little more than a customs union, something the French have accused the British of wanting all along.

France has always been among the most vocal advocates of Europe becoming a coherent and influential external actor. As former president Jacque Chirac stated, “The European Union itself [must] become a major pole of international equilibrium, endowing itself with the instruments of a true power.” Only in a strong, more united Europe can France reclaim its ambition to play a decisive role in the world. A Europe united around French leadership would serve to multiply French influence and stature in the world. One can thus both be a French nationalist and a dedicated European.

It is not clear how a more united Europe would exercise its power, however, or for what purposes. As Dominique Moïsi, a long-time analyst and commentator of French

foreign policy, says, “The French know all too well that their secret dream—to build a Europe that will challenge the United States—is the nightmare of their continental partners.” France’s ambition to create a genuine European security and defense policy has been met with suspicion in Washington, especially if it comes at the expense of NATO. Any European security or defense identity would have to be consistent with NATO’s role as the preeminent security and defense institution in Europe.

Influence, Rank, and Grandeur

Closely related but distinct from France’s ambition to maintain its independence and presence in international politics, and to maintain its leadership position within Europe, French foreign and security policy since de Gaulle has also sought to reassert French influence, rank (rang), and grandeur internationally. Humiliated in the Second World War—defeated and occupied by Nazi Germany within six weeks, the shame of the collaborationist Vichy government, France’s clearly subordinate role relative to the United States and Britain in the Allied war effort—French policymakers, especially in the immediate postwar period, worked assiduously to convince the rest of the world that France continued to belong among the exclusive club of great powers. Through the sheer force of will and influence of de Gaulle—of whom there was no parallel in the United States or Britain in terms of a single individual so thoroughly dominating the debate about foreign policy and security, not even Churchill or Roosevelt—and the bravery many French displayed in the Resistance, France was able to retain some of the trappings of great power status after the war, despite its ignominious war record: its own

occupation zone within occupied Germany; a permanent seat on the newly-created
United Nations Security Council, for which Churchill lobbied Roosevelt; and its status
within NATO. France’s claim to the status of a great power was bolstered by the
development of its independent nuclear capability in 1960, the force de frappe.

The ambition to reassert lost French grandeur, while a core feature of postwar
French foreign and security policy, has a much older provenance. As Pierre Hassner has
said, “From Napoleon III to Mitterand via de Gaulle, French policy can be interpreted as
an attempt to resurrect past grandeur in the absence of the means that had once made it
possible.” Nostalgia over France’s former role as a great power still guides the thinking
of many French when it comes to France’s role in the world and the meaning and purpose
of French power.

Closely related to these principles and values has been French exceptionalism.
That French thinking has served as a civilizing and humanizing force in the world is
axiomatic for many French. French exceptionalism rests on a self-image of the French
being the source of universal values such as liberty. De Gaulle’s certain idée de la
France captures this sentiment, a concept he rhapsodized to begin his war memoirs:

All my life I have thought of France in a certain way. This is inspired by sentiment as
much as reason. The emotional side of me tends to imagine France, like a princess in the
fairy stories or the Madonna in the Frescoes, as dedicated to an exalted and exceptional
destiny. Instinctively I have the feeling that Providence has created her either for
complete success or for exemplary misfortunes. If, in spite of this, mediocrity shows in
her acts and deeds, it strikes me as an absurd anomaly, to be imputed to the faults of

36 Pierre Hassner, "The View from Paris," in Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe, ed.

37 Bastian Giegerich, European Security and Strategic Culture: National Responses to the Eu's Security
and Defense Policy (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006), 78.
Frenchmen, not to the genius of the land. But the positive side of my mind also assures me that France is not really herself unless in the front rank; that only vast enterprises are capable of counterbalancing the ferments of dispersal which are inherent in her people; that our country, as it is, surrounded by others, as they are, must aim high and hold itself straight, on pain of mortal danger. In short, to my mind, France cannot be France without greatness.  

It is this French “national myth” of the need to recapture its lost rank and prestige on the world stage that gives France its almost singular quality, at least within Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. It bordered on an obsession for some French policymakers and strategists, perhaps most especially for de Gaulle and Chirac. France’s incredibly rich and impressive cultural and historical past has provided a legacy or a certain expectation that France will always be included among the world’s great powers, even if its role and influence in the world will never reach the position it attained in the period around the turn of the nineteenth century, when France was unquestionably the strongest military power on the European continent, or even its position at the end of the First World War, exhausted but victorious.

An irony exists in the fact that while France seeks to reclaim its lost prestige and rank, it is not entirely sure of its place or role in the world. France faces a number of challenges—from how to cope with the American superpower; how to prosper in the age of globalization, which seems to benefit the United States much more than France; France’s role and status in an expanding Europe; and France’s own socioeconomic challenges, such as reducing its chronic unemployment, reducing its budget deficits, and

creating a more open, flexible economy while also maintaining the kind of social stability that French voters have come to expect.  

**German Strategic Ideology**

Following unification in October 1990, Germany emerged as the largest and most powerful country in Europe. Since unification, Germany has largely abnegated the traditional role and trappings of a great power, instead binding itself within a number of regional, transatlantic, and international institutions. In addition to its role within these institutions, a number of other factors shape and constrain German foreign policy. These include political and constitutional limitations on Germany’s external behavior, as well as the “collective memory” of Germany’s past that continues to shape public discourse and domestic politics.

Contemporary German foreign and security policy largely is a response to two seminal events in modern German history: the trauma of National Socialism, with the attendant economic, social, and moral collapse produced by the Second World War, and the unification of East and West Germany in 1990. These two events created very different challenges and opportunities for Germany and its neighbors. For Germany they led to the creation of basic principles and constraints on its foreign and security policy that continue to have force today. There has been remarkable consensus around and continuity in German foreign and security policy even as Germany itself has experienced

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39 See Moïsi, "The Trouble with France."

40 This confounded neorealist expectations. See Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*.

deep underlying changes to its geopolitical position over the past two decades and new
generations of political leaders assume office that have little memory of the Cold War
and Germany’s division, let alone the Holocaust.

Three core features define Germany’s strategic dependence on the United States
and its European allies today: Multilateralism; anti-militarism; and, contrary to the British
and French impulses described above, anti-exceptionalism, or the desire to be seen—and
to see itself—as just another normal country, which pursues its interests and preferences
without embarrassment or discomfort. Germany’s legacy of anti-militarism tends to
intensify its fears of being entrapped in conflicts, especially outside of Europe, where it is
forced to decide whether to contribute German forces, or the type of contribution to be
made. At the same time, it shares Britain’s fears that, in the post-Cold War era, the
United States will begin to chart a more independent course, and downgrade the
importance of its relationship with its traditional European allies.

As in Britain and France, changes in political leadership in Germany are marked
by continuity in German foreign and security policy. There is a general consensus
between the political right and political left on the basic foreign policy principles,
interests, and orientation. Very rarely, in fact—one of the rare exceptions was the
Bundestag election of September 2002, an episode I return to in Chapter 4—are foreign
and security policy issues salient electoral themes.

**Multilateralism**

Perhaps the defining feature of contemporary German foreign and security policy
has been Germany’s aversion to unilateralism of any kind and its commitment to
institutions, particularly European and Atlantic institutions. This desire to embed itself within the institutional architecture of Europe can be traced back to its eager participation in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the Treaties of Rome in 1957. Unification in 1990 precipitated—in fact, created the need for—greater European integration. What followed was the most profound chapter of deepening and widening of European integration in Europe’s history. Following Maastricht, European states took steps to achieve greater economic and political integration, including the founding of the European Central Bank, the introduction of the euro, articulating its ambition for a common foreign and security policy (first within the WEU and then CFSP), as well as incorporating a number of countries from central and eastern Europe that were emerging from decades of state socialism.

Germany’s pursuit of a unilateral national course proved disastrous for Europe and for Germany itself in the twentieth century. The costs to Germany were enormous: the political, social, and moral disaster of the Nazi period; the country’s division and effective loss of sovereignty; and that the demarcation line separating East from West during the Cold War ran through the country convinced the leaders of West Germany that pursuit of an independent foreign and security policy was associated with death and destruction on an unimaginable scale. Consequently, Germany has been careful to avoid any real or perceived unilateralism in foreign and security policy. Even the hint of unilateralism, posited German policymakers, would lead to diplomatic isolation and the creation of fear and mistrust among Germany’s neighbors, which in turn would heighten German insecurity.
Bonn in particular took pains to demonstrate its restraint, reliability, and even deference to its partners within the Atlantic Alliance. There would be no Sonderweg, or special path, in German foreign and security policy. Germany was more vulnerable than most European states during the Cold War and thus had more to lose by pursuing a solitary national path. Its pragmatism therefore was partially born of necessity. Germany was divided between east and west, as was Berlin, an island city within communist East Germany. Konrad Adenauer, West Germany’s first chancellor, irrevocably anchored West Germany in Europe and the Atlantic Alliance.\(^4\) One of his campaign slogans was “No Experiments!” Predictability and constancy were the main themes of West German foreign policy in this era. Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, both Social Democratic chancellors, reinforced Germany’s European and Atlantic orientation, though with a greater desire to pursue diplomatic options with the communist states to the east. While there has been a reexamination of this basic approach over the last several years, and more Germans today believe that Germany should behave like any other “normal” country and pursue its interests without embarrassment, these elements of constancy, predictability, and restraint still exist in German strategic thinking.\(^5\)

Following unification in 1990, the “German question” in Europe once again emerged.\(^6\) Would a unified Germany become less deferential and more assertive? Would a unified Germany continue to embed itself within European and trans-Atlantic

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\(^4\) Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy since 1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 9-47.


\(^6\) For the events, social and political, leading up to unification, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). See also Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 275-310; Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*. 

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economic, political, and military institutions, as West Germany had so assiduously done for forty years? Would Germany again become a “normal” country, principally concerned with protecting its interests and expanding its influence where possible? Would it continue to accept a subordinate position in NATO and in Europe? Some predicted a replay of intense security competition that defined Europe for much of its history. Neorealists predicted a return to German autonomy, assertiveness, and unilateralism, even possibly including the development of nuclear weapons. Power competition in Europe was virtually inevitable, especially since it appeared likely the U.S. security commitment to Europe was coming to an end. As John Mearsheimer wrote: “Without the American pacifier, Europe is not guaranteed to remain peaceful. Indeed, intense security competition among the great powers would likely ensue because, upon American withdrawal, Europe would go from benign bipolarity to unbalanced multipolarity, the most dangerous kind of power structure.”

German unification unsettled many European and world leaders, but the unease was not uniform. George H.W. Bush expressed early his support for unification and offered Germany a “partnership in leadership.” Thatcher and Mitterand were much less supportive. Thatcher argued that “a reunified Germany is simply too big and powerful to be just another player within Europe. Moreover, Germany has always looked east as well as west … Germany is thus by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing

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force in Europe.”

In a famous meeting with British and American foreign policy experts at Chequers, the prime minister’s country residence, the minutes of the meeting detailed a concern about the Germans’ “angst, aggressiveness, bullying, egoism, inferiority complex, and sentimentality”—not to mention “their obsession with themselves, a strong inclination to self-pity, and a longing to be liked.”

Rather than relying on the goodwill of German leaders, Thatcher sought to contain German power through the formation of an Anglo-French axis. In addition, she argued that it was important to proceed faster toward a more integrated Europe in order to tie down the German giant. Many in Europe shared this sentiment, including in Germany itself. This echoed the argument of former French president Valéry Giscard d’Estaing of the need to “escape German domination” as a reason to continue integration. German leaders sought to allay the concerns of their neighbors, by reconfirming Germany’s position in European and trans-Atlantic institutions. Kohl was quoted as saying that the security partnership with the United States was of “existential importance to Germany.”

Anxieties about an overbearing German economic and political juggernaut in the middle of Europe never materialized. Berlin remained as committed to European and trans-Atlantic institutions as had Bonn. If anything, Berlin was even more adamant on the need to establish deeper integration within Europe. Never again could Germany be an unmoored, unpredictable presence in the center of Europe. This had led to untold death

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48 Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 798.

and destruction twice during the course of the twentieth century, and could not be allowed to happen again. Policymakers in Germany felt this just as acutely as did leaders in other European capitals.

Germany therefore was faced with a dilemma following unification: What should its role in Europe be? Its economic size, demographic strength, and central location guaranteed that Germany would exert considerable influence over events in Europe. The structural constraints inhibiting Germany during the Cold War—a divided Germany in a divided Europe—were gone.

Kohl and Genscher understood that German unification and deepening of European integration were inextricably tied together. Moving forward on deepening integration was necessary to ease the fears and anxieties of Germany’s neighbors in Europe. The French were concerned that a unified Germany would abandon monetary and political integration and instead adopt a more nationalist and unilateral foreign policy. Kohl and Genscher sought to assuage French and British concerns by repeatedly stating that they wanted a “European Germany” rather than a “German Europe.”

Germany also advocated the expansion of the EU to the east to incorporate the former communist countries of central and eastern Europe, so as to avoid a power vacuum in the middle of Europe. Simultaneously deepening and expanding Europe embodied contradictory impulses, however. Deepening integration among the 15 was one thing, with 12 new states, almost all of which were emerging from decades of communism and Soviet control, with a level of economic and political development much lower than in the west, and with very young political institutions, was another matter altogether.
German leaders agreed to a number of restraints to demonstrate that Germany was a status quo power in Europe uninterested in expanding its sphere of influence. As part of the 2+4 settlement on unification, Germany renounced chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons; reduced its military forces, as part of the Conventional Forces in Europe agreement; and concluded the German-Polish Treaty, which recognized the Oder-Neisse border with Poland.

Europe has provided a path other than national self-reliance for Germany. Since the end of the Cold War and unification, Germany’s role and responsibility in Europe has fundamentally changed. It has gone from a consumer of security to—gradually—becoming a co-producer of it. While it was entirely natural that Germany would put forward its own ideas and priorities for Europe, Berlin has pursued its national interests through multilateralism and its commitment to European integration. Germany continued to pursue European integration and, with France, drove the process of European integration to a new level.

Anti-Militarism

Anti-militarism, one of the defining features of postwar West Germany and of contemporary Germany, is directly related to the memory of National Socialism, the

50 While this strategy has worked incredibly well for anchoring Germany in Europe and for ensuring German postwar prosperity, it is not unanimously praised. The rise of the Neue Recht, or New Right, in Germany has questioned some of these basic tenets. Composed primarily of journalists, novelists, and historians, they express contempt and even disdain for Germany ostensibly surrendering its sovereignty to the United States, and for what they see as self-loathing and self-indulgence of the 1968 protest generation, who have created a narrative of German war guilt that unnecessarily stifles German political discourse and behavior.

51 Jeffrey Anderson, German Unification and the Union of Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
crimes committed by the Third Reich, and their implications for postwar Germany: divided and not fully sovereign and possible Cold War nuclear battlefield. These experiences instilled in many Germans a deep aversion to military “solutions.” Postwar Germany has attempted to reconcile with its neighbors and with its own past. The renunciation of military force has become so deeply engrained in postwar German thinking that there is an increasing volume of scholarship analyzing Germany as a “civilian power.”

There remains a deep reluctance or even outright opposition to projecting Germany military power in combat zones, particularly in areas outside of Europe. The appropriate role for the Bundeswehr, the German armed forces, has become one of the most contentious debates in contemporary Germany. Anti-militarism now has deep roots in Germany, and there continues to be uneasiness with using military force as an instrument of foreign policy. This sentiment is shared among the public and the political leadership within Germany, and across the political spectrum. The far left, namely the Green Party, hold an overtly anti-militarist political platform.

Through much of the Cold War it would have been unthinkable to include (West) German troops in combat operations. The emotions were too raw and memories of the Wehrmacht too vivid. Even during the first Gulf War there never was a real expectation that Germany would commit combat troops to assist the war effort. Following unification in 1990, however, how Germany should project its power abroad—including when,

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54 Markovits and Reich, The German Predicament, 137-149.
whether, and under what conditions Germany should participate in military combat operations—began to be reexamined. Many Germans came to believe that Germany had expiated for its sins from the Second World War and that they—two or even three generations removed—should not have to continue to atone for the crimes of their countrymen six decades earlier, as evil as those crimes were. This debate on what some call the “normalization” of German foreign and security policy continues to this day.

The constraints on the use of the German military in combat operations were not simply due to historical memory but also to constitutional and legal principles. In a landmark decision in July 1994, however, the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe ruled that the Bundeswehr could be used in missions outside the NATO area, but only within a multilateral framework and with the consent of the Bundestag, the German parliament. What many Germans were particularly concerned about was an independent General Staff, a military apparatus that somehow existed beyond the control and authority of the civilian political leadership. The military would continue to be under firm civilian command, however, and the consent of the German parliament would be necessary to commit German troops abroad in combat missions.55 Before this ruling, sending military troops to combat operations outside the NATO area was constitutionally prohibited.

Following the ruling of the Constitutional Court, the first crises German troops were committed were in the Balkans. German troops took part in NATO operations in Bosnia and then in Kosovo. These decisions were met with some apprehension in Germany. Some Germans believed that Germany’s history in the region—particularly the

crimes committed by Nazi Germany in the Balkans during the Second World War—should prevent it from participating in military operations in the region. Joschka Fischer, a member of the traditionally pacifist Green Party, stood this argument on its head, however, and argued that Germany’s history, including its history in the Balkans in the Second World War, made it necessary to intervene to stop atrocities or prevent them from happening. The Bundestag was in favor of committing German troops to the NATO military campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo, though not in a combat role that mirrored that of the United States, Britain, or France. “No more war,” which had been the refrain in Germany for many decades, became “No more genocide.” Historical guilt for crimes committed in the region during the Second World War, a determination for “no more Bosnias,” and an eagerness to demonstrate to its NATO allies that Germany was an important, constructive partner help explain Germany’s actions in this crisis. Germany was so eager to show that it could be counted on in crises such as Kosovo that it agreed to support the NATO campaign even in the absence of an explicit UN mandate.

In addition to its participation in Bosnia and Kosovo, German troops have participated in peacekeeping missions in Macedonia and Congo. German troops are currently part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, though there are a number of restrictions on their location, the times of day they can conduct patrols, and their rules of engagement. The principal reason why Germany did not participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq was not due to lingering anti-militarism, therefore. As Chapter 4 will show more thoroughly, the reasons for Germany’s opposition were more complex. German opposition was largely due to the domestic political pressures felt by Schröder and, just as important, the genuine belief among many
Germans—polite elite and public alike—that Iraq did not constitute an immediate, unacceptable threat to German, European, or allied security.

In coming years it is increasingly likely that Germany will continue to shed its opposition to committing its troops to military operations, particularly to peacekeeping operations. This will create new questions and perhaps even some anxiety both among Germans and Germany’s neighbors in Europe. As Hanns Mauß has written, “the tensions, even contradictions, between [Germany’s] traditional ‘grand strategy’—or foreign policy role concept as a ‘civilian power’—and a Germany, a Europe, a world of international relations so radically different from what they had been before 1990 have become increasingly apparent.” Germany may once again be emerging into an important military power, but its history as a militarist power is in the past. The commitment of German troops will be tightly controlled by the Bundestag, and will only occur within a legalized and multilateral framework. To symbolize this shift, Germany is also moving away from conscription and to a fully professional army.

*Anti-Exceptionalism*

Unlike Britain and France, which both embody elements of national exceptionalism in their foreign policies, the opposite exists for German foreign and security policy. Rather than being exceptional, Germany wants to convince itself and others that it is a normal country, with normal aspirations, normal interests, and that

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57 Following a change in France in the 1990s, Germany was the last European country to have military conscription. Hugh Williamson, "Berlin Moves to Scrap Conscription," *Financial Times*, August 20 2007.
exhibits normal behavior. The desire for “normalcy” predates the 1980s, but during this decade one could see a shift in policy that led Germans to view the power and influence it had acquired with “a mixture of pride and uneasiness.”

Germany has of course experienced its own periods of national exceptionalism, most violently and destructively manifested in National Socialism. Germany has been a remarkably insular country since the end of the Second World War, especially given its size, history, and geographical position within Europe. It has not sought to expand its control, or extend its sphere of influence to other countries. It has attempted to transform its security environment, but it has done this through expanding and consolidating the EU, preserving NATO as the crucial security link between Europe and America, and moving ahead with the challenges associated with unification, which have been much more profound and longer-lasting than initially believed.

Germany has progressively tried to shed its self-imposed constraints. Gerhard Schröder in particular was more assertive in pursuing German national interests than any of his predecessors. Kosovo, discussed above, was part of the effort to “normalize” German foreign policy. The crisis over Iraq further demonstrated that Germany would no longer unhesitatingly follow the lead of the United States. Schröder not only refused to side with the United States, he actively came out against the war, and staked his electoral future on his opposition. This would have been unthinkable for a West German chancellor to do during the Cold War. Schröder even went so far as to speak of “emancipating” Germany and Europe from the United States. There had been previous crises between Germany and the United States, of course. During the 1973 Yom Kippur

War, for example, Germany (along with Britain and France) denied American requests to fly over the country to bring military equipment to Israel. In contrast, Germany was actually quite helpful logistically during the Iraq War, despite its strong opposition, a point I will return to in Chapter 4.

No longer is Germany reflexively multilateralist or Atlanticist, at least as it was in the past, but German foreign and security policy today continues to be based on its unique history and experience in the twentieth century. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the German unification created a new political reality for Germany and for Europe. It also gave the new Germany new responsibilities and duties, but also new opportunities. Rather than abdicating any decisive role internationally, the responsible pursuit of its legitimate national interests is the new leitmotif in Berlin. While most Germans today would recognize that Germany has significant assets and should have a foreign and security policy that protects them, many Germans view the naked pursuit of purely national interests as suspect, retrograde, and even dangerous. Some of the gloomier predictions anticipating major changes in Germany’s foreign and security policy orientation—fed by nationalism and a more aggressive, expansionist foreign policy—after the end of the Cold War and unification have not come to pass.\(^{59}\) Instead, these dissolution of first the Warsaw Pact and then the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself eliminated a great security threat for Germany and reduced Germany’s security dependence on the West.\(^{60}\)


\(^{60}\) Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behavior."
Indeed, not since 1945 has Germany exercised such leadership on such a scale as it does today. While Germany is not necessarily seeking to expand its influence and power, it is facing up to its new responsibilities in a more confident and self-assertive way compared to even the recent past. Rather than pursuing its interests with embarrassment, many Germans today, unshackled by the guilt of their parents and grandparents, are seeking a role and degree of political influence for Germany that is commensurate with its economic and geopolitical importance.

Summary

This chapter has sketched why Britain, France, and Germany interpret the alliance security dilemma differently, both in relation to the United States and to each other. While situational factors still matter—political calculations, threat perceptions, public opinion—there are also general tendencies that can be identified, examined, and compared.

Thus Britain will be more likely to fear the risk of American abandonment. Because of the cultivation of a special relationship with the United States over several decades, which serves to augment Britain’s global power and influence, British policymakers interpret the costs of American abandonment to be high. Conversely, Britain has long resisted becoming too deeply enmeshed in purely European political and security partnerships. British leaders will be more likely to fear entrapment by their European allies, especially if it comes at the expense of Britain’s trans-Atlantic ties.

France will be more likely to fear American entrapment. Generations of French policymakers have cultivated a distinctive foreign policy strategy and identity that prizes
its independence and freedom of movement. France prefers a world in which power is
distributed more evenly—and in particular France seeks a united Europe that can act as a
counterweight to the American superpower. French calculations are different when it
comes to its European allies. France will be more likely to fear German abandonment,
especially if this leads to closer German-Russia relations. Strong Franco-German
leadership is necessary to realize France’s ambition for a more united and thus powerful
Europe.

Germany, because of its postwar legacy of anti-militarism, will tend to fear
entrapment in American-led conflicts around the world. This will not be as strong as
France’s fear of abandonment, however, due to Germany’s dependence on the United
States in the postwar period—the United States rebuilt Germany’s political institutions
after World War II and guaranteed its security throughout the Cold War. Germany will
also tend to fear entrapment by its European allies, especially if it comes at the expense
of Germany’s strategic partnership with Russia, which has become increasingly
important since the end of the Cold War.
CHAPTER FOUR
The Iraq War: Division and Disunity within Europe

The American-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003—Operation Iraqi Freedom—is often analyzed in terms of precipitating a crisis in the Atlantic Alliance and trans-Atlantic relations more broadly.¹ As Henry Kissinger said a month before the actual military campaign began, the dispute over Iraq had “produced the gravest crisis within the Atlantic Alliance since its creation five decades ago.”² The Financial Times concluded on the eve of hostilities that “the prospect of war has divided the United Nations Security Council, riven the most enduring military alliance of modern times, and split the European Union.”³ While there is no denying that the crisis did possess this dimension—American relations with France and Germany deteriorated to perhaps their lowest levels in the entire post-World War II period—it constituted a serious intra-European crisis as well.⁴ While disagreement between European governments over Iraq did not threaten other aspects of European integration, serious doubts were again raised over whether the


⁴ See, for example, Gordon and Shapiro, Allies at War, 128-136.
EU would ever be able to speak with a single voice on “hard” security issues such as the use of military force to disarm a troublesome dictator like Saddam Hussein or to enact “regime change” in a country like Iraq.

There was nothing inevitable about the trans-Atlantic divisions that emerged over the decision to disarm Iraq militarily. Solidarity with and sympathy for the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was immediate and genuine. Mere hours after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in a press conference held at the Chancellery, voiced his “unlimited solidarity” with the United States. French President Jacques Chirac was the first foreign head of state to visit Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan. The French newspaper _Le Monde_ declared, “We are all Americans.” At the insistence of America’s NATO allies, the military alliance invoked Article 5 of the NATO Charter—the mutual defense clause—for the first time in its history. The subsequent military offensive against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan had broad support both among European governments and European public. This solidarity and support soon gave way to feelings of disappointment and even bitterness over perceptions of American unilateralism, oversimplification of a complex issue, and the heavy-handed and at times self-righteous manner with which the Bush administration exercised U.S. power. Also producing consternation in many European capitals was the way the United States treated its closest

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European allies—not as full partners to be consulted and advised but as subordinate and even unnecessary to America’s broader strategic prerogatives.

The assertive tone the Bush administration took on Iraq surprised many of its European allies, especially in Paris and Berlin. One commentator on trans-Atlantic relations believed that the United States and Europe had come to see the world and the exercise of military power in fundamentally different ways. Contrary to those who saw a permanent schism in trans-Atlantic relations, however, personality clashes, genuine skepticism over the rationale for war put forward by Washington and London, and inept diplomacy in the period leading up to the invasion contributed just as much to these divisions as did broad structural shifts at either the international or domestic levels.

Despite different perceptions of the threat posed by Saddam, especially to the West, and the appropriate manner to ensure his disarmament, on November 8, 2002, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, which held Iraq to be in “material breach” of its obligations under previous Security Council resolutions, dating back to Resolution 678 of 1990, which demanded that Iraq end all of its unconventional weapons programs. Resolution 1441 demanded a full declaration of Iraq’s current biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs, as well as complete cooperation with UN weapons inspectors. Rather than quickly moving to forcible disarmament, the Council determined that Saddam should be given a “final opportunity” to cooperate with the


inspectors and to fully disarm. Failure to do so would result in “serious consequences,” diplomatic code for the use of military force.\(^{10}\)

As weapons inspections moved ahead in late 2002 and early 2003, Saddam’s cooperation proved both substantially less than complete but also greater than most Western governments had anticipated. It soon became clear that Resolution 1441’s ambiguities over what would constitute a material breach of Iraq’s obligations—ambiguities that were probably necessary to have the resolution pass unanimously—prevented a consensus emerging over whether Saddam was meeting his obligations and when and under what conditions the United States and its allies could impose the “serious consequences” threatened in the resolution.

After months of saying it did not need any further authorization from the Security Council for the use of force, the United States, with Britain and Spain, proposed a second resolution in March 2003 that would have given Saddam a “final opportunity” to comply with UN demands or face an immediate military response. Chirac, who had the support of Schröder and Russian President Vladimir Putin, rejected the “automaticity” of military force in any Security Council resolution and vowed to use France’s veto on any proposed resolution that contained such a provision. Whether military force could legally be used against Iraq was a separate judgment held solely by the Security Council rather than with any individual government. If military force were to be used, it would have to be explicitly authorized by the Security Council in a separate resolution.

After Chirac’s statement that France would veto the proposed resolution, the measure was never put up to a vote. As it became clear that consensus in the Council

would be impossible, the invasion of Iraq, led by Britain and the United States, began on March 20, 2003. How the countries of the Atlantic Alliance, and particularly Britain, France, and Germany, arrived at this point marks one of the most serious crises in the history of trans-Atlantic relations. How and why did European governments take such dramatically different positions on this issue?

Part of the explanation lies with decisions made in Washington. The Bush administration did not seek to carefully build a multinational coalition of states against Iraq like the first President Bush had done in 1990 to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.¹¹ The leadership in Washington was both ideologically and temperamentally unsuited to the task of carefully building and maintaining a broad coalition of states. Many of the allegations advanced by the administration—such as Saddam’s collusion with al Qaeda and his ongoing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs—rested on unreliable or circumstantial evidence, much of which turned out to be faulty.¹² Moreover, the lessons of the Kosovo war in 1999, such as the diminished military effectiveness of waging a war with multiple countries influencing the war’s strategy, diminished whatever desire there was to build a true multinational coalition.¹³ Instead, in the words of Donald Rumsfeld, “the mission would determine the coalition—not the other way around.”¹⁴

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The fault lines within Europe were of two kinds. On the one hand, despite the ambition of Chirac and his foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, a common European policy on Iraq proved elusive. Disagreement between European governments arose not only over the nature of the threat Saddam Hussein posed to regional stability and international security, but also over the appropriate process with which to confront him. The fault lines were, in retrospect, almost predictable. Britain allied itself early on with the United States rather than join the Franco-German axis, as did the center-right governments of Spain and Italy. The governments of central and eastern Europe, notably Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Baltic states, which continued to view the United States as indispensable to their own security and as most responsible for their independence from Soviet domination fifteen years earlier, were also quick to voice their support for the United States and its approach toward Iraq. France was the most vocal opponent of the need and justification of forcibly disarming Saddam.

The second fault line was between the governments that chose to support the American invasion and the widespread public opposition to the war among much of the European public. Public opposition to the war was nearly as widespread in countries whose government supported the war—such as Britain and Spain—as it was in countries whose government opposed the war. In this sense—public opinion—Europe was nearly united. As former French President Valery Giscard d’Estaing said, “Europe’s people, I

think, do have a common position. Whatever position has been adopted by their leaders, the people seem to want peace.”

Why were European governments unable to arrive at a common position on the justification and necessity of the Iraq war? Why did the decision to confront a tyrant acknowledged had committed despicable crimes against his neighbors and even his own people become one of the most bitter intra-European crises of the postwar era? Despite the consensus that Saddam was a ruthless dictator who had committed terrible crimes and had threatened regional stability in the past, the appropriate response remained highly ambiguous: the perception of the seriousness and immediacy of the threat Saddam Hussein posed differed among European governments, as did the likely consequences of a military invasion. There were important differences over the basic understanding of international order, particularly under what conditions the use of military force could be legitimate.

While these reasons are important, the main reason for the wide divergence in the way European governments responded to the Iraq crisis was due to asymmetric interpretations of the alliance security dilemma. Britain feared abandonment, increasing unilateralism by the United States, and a gradual weakening of the “special relationship” between the two countries. By allying closely with Washington Britain could restrain some of these passions and reduce the risk of a more serious rupture in Anglo-American relations. France and Germany feared entrapment in a conflict in which they had few vital interests at stake. Their biggest fear of American unilateralism was not a weakening on trans-Atlantic ties; they feared becoming entangled in conflicts that were peripheral to their interests, and the fallout of American-led invasions, which could threaten French

and German strategic interests. This chapter examines this variation, focusing on
diplomacy within European capitals and the Security Council from late spring 2002 to the
invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

Britain: Maintain the “Special Relationship” with the United States

Britain proved to be the closest European ally for the United States in all three
phases of the Iraq war: the run-up to major combat operations, including the diplomatic
effort to attain Security Council authorization for an invasion; the execution of major
combat operations to punish Saddam’s non-compliance with various Security Council
resolutions and to force regime change; and postwar reconstruction and the fight against
the separate Sunni and Shiite insurgencies. In addition to providing important material
support for the war, British Prime Minister Tony Blair provided valuable political support
as well, becoming perhaps the most impassioned and articulate advocate of both the need
and the justification of using force against Iraq.

The decision to not just support but to actively participate in the invasion of Iraq
was one of the most controversial British foreign policy decisions in decades. 17 Though
popular opposition in Britain to the war was not quite as strong as it was in France or
Germany, at the beginning of major combat operations on March 20, a majority of
Britons polled opposed the decision to invade Iraq, particularly in the absence of a
Security Council resolution that explicitly authorized the use of military force. 18 At more

17 Christoph Bluth, “The British Road to War: Blair, Bush, and the Decision to Invade Iraq,” International
Affairs 80, no. 5 (2004).

18 The poll was conducted for the Guardian by ICM Research. See
http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdfs/2003_march_guardian_bombing_iraq.pdf. In the first days following
the invasion, when success was greater than what many had anticipated, this figure quickly increased. This
than one moment throughout the crisis the premiership of Tony Blair seemed to be in peril.

Why did Britain decide to align with the United States rather than join the Franco-German position that was deeply skeptical of the claims made by the Bush administration and in the end decided to oppose the forcible disarmament of Iraq? Why did Blair continue to forcefully advocate the use of military force even as public opinion for such a move rapidly deteriorated, especially in the crucial weeks leading up to the invasion?

The reasons are manifold. To be sure, many in the British government, including Blair, perceived a real threat emanating from Iraq. Not necessarily a direct threat to Britain’s own security, but to regional stability and to British interests in the Persian Gulf. Focusing purely on threat perceptions fails to explain the character of British support, however. Many within the British government believed that Saddam could continue to be contained. British leaders were less concerned about the possibility of entrapment in an American military intervention in the Middle East than of American abandonment. British leaders were aware early on of the unilateral instincts of the Bush administration. They knew that the United States was both willing and capable of fighting the war alone. Failing to back the United States in this case could do irreparable damage to the Atlantic Alliance and, in particular, Britain’s special relationship with the United States. Tony Blair thus became one of the earliest and most forceful advocates of America’s position on the need and justification of invading Iraq.

Britain’s Historical Role in Iraq

trend follows a common “rally ‘round the flag” effect, wherein public opinion gives greater support during the initial phase of a military campaign.
Since British leaders were concerned about the unilateral instincts of the Bush administration and sought to restrain them, they maneuvered to become deeply involved in the decision-making process at each stage of the Iraq crisis. In return for its pledge to provide full support for the use of military force against Iraq, Britain would avoid abandonment by the United States and force the Bush administration to take into account Britain’s (and Blair’s own) political interests. The most important goal, for domestic political reasons, was to convince the United States to go to the Security Council to seek authorization and legitimacy for any possible military action.¹⁹

In addition to its desire to avoid abandonment by the United States, Britain had its own security interests in Iraq and in the Middle East more broadly. Through its colonial history and, with the United States, containment of Saddam Hussein since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Britain possessed greater geopolitical interests in Iraq than did France or Germany. In addition to its main objective of avoiding American abandonment, Britain had three broad strategic interests that guided its strategy and basic approach during the Iraq crisis.

Britain had developed important security and strategic interests in the Middle East, including Iraq, over the course of many decades. Following the end of World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations granted a mandate to Britain that included the area of present-day Iraq. Britain established a monarchy with some democratic elements, but most Iraqis perceived that their country had little political independence apart from Britain. In 1930 the Anglo-Iraq Treaty was concluded,

¹⁹ Some commentators in Britain and elsewhere in Europe ridiculed Blair’s assertion that his uncritical support for the United States gave Britain greater access to or influence over decision-making in Washington. See, for example, Warren Hoge, "Blair Seeks to Bridge Gap in U.S. Visit," *New York Times*, September 7, 2002.
establishing formal Iraqi independence. This treaty permitted Britain to maintain a number of military bases in the country, however, and for the next three decades Iraq functioned as little more than a British satellite.\textsuperscript{20}

Following the 1991 Gulf War, Britain joined the United States and France in enforcing the Iraqi northern and southern no-fly zones and in pressuring Saddam Hussein to comply with international mandates to fully disclose and permanently end his illicit weapons programs.\textsuperscript{21} Throughout the 1990s Britain supported the effort made by the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) and then the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify that Saddam Hussein had permanently suspended his biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs.\textsuperscript{22} After Saddam announced that he would kick weapons inspectors out of the country, would no longer comply with the UN-mandated no-fly zones, and would seek to shoot down Allied aircraft patrolling the zones, British and American forces in December 1998 launched “Operation Desert Fox,” four days of air strikes against Iraqi targets, including military installations and sites suspected of manufacturing WMD. Additionally, Britain supported the sanctions regime on Iraq following the Gulf War, including the limited “oil for food” program.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} For an excellent overview, see Charles Tripp, \textit{A History of Iraq} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially chapter 2.


\textsuperscript{22} The inspection mandate was laid out in UNSCR 686, adopted 2 March 1991, and UNSCR 687, adopted 3 April 1991.

\textsuperscript{23} UNSCR 986, adopted 14 April 1995.
By the late 1990s, however, Blair was under the increasing conviction that the coalition policy of containment was becoming ineffective and, due to the severe humanitarian crisis it was creating for Iraqi civilians, morally unacceptable.\textsuperscript{24} Other countries, notably France and Russia, were becoming increasingly opposed to the sanctions and inspections regime and calling for them to be relaxed, if not lifted altogether.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, evidence was accumulating that Saddam was increasingly able to circumvent sanctions to enrich himself, his family, and his closest political and sectarian associates, while the sanctions were having a devastating humanitarian toll on Iraqi civilians.\textsuperscript{26} Saddam’s dissembling and obstructionism, including his expulsion of UN weapons inspectors in 1998, was also making it impossible for the international community to verify that Iraq was no longer working on an illicit weapons program.\textsuperscript{27}

By 2002, therefore, when the impetus for military action against Saddam was heating up, Britain had been involved in the containment of Iraq for more than a decade. With the United States, Britain had been instrumental in drawing up the two principal Security Council resolutions, 661 and 687, calling on Saddam to disarm completely, as well as maintaining the post-Gulf War sanctions regime and the northern and southern no-fly zones. Unlike France, which had abandoned the enforcement of the no-fly zone over differences with its Anglo-American partners in December 1998, and was becoming

\textsuperscript{24} Bluth, "The British Road to War."
\textsuperscript{27} Many analysts and observers in the United States believed inspections had a minimal chance of success. See, for example, Charles Duelfer, "The Inevitable Failure of Inspections in Iraq," \textit{Arms Control Today} 32, no. 7 (2002).
increasingly critical of Iraqi sanctions, Britain had, with the United States, been one of the two major architects of the Iraqi containment policy. To suddenly reverse course in 2002 or early 2003 would have constituted a stunning political (as well as personal, for Blair) policy reversal, and would have given the impression that British efforts of the past decade had been a mistake or even done in vain.

Britain also continues to see a global role for itself. Due to its legacy as an imperial power, its permanent seat on the Security Council, status as a nuclear power, and its virtually uninterrupted history of being a great power for at least the past three centuries, Britain continues to define its interests and role in global terms. Its material position continues to back this up.\textsuperscript{28} With France, it remains the only European country that possesses true force projection capabilities. It continues to have a military budget that ranks in the top five in the world. The decision to invade Iraq became one of the paramount security crises of the post-Cold War era, and it was clear early on that Britain would not take an ambivalent attitude toward the issue. British leaders realized that outright opposition to American aims in Iraq and the Middle East more broadly would shut it out of the policymaking process completely. It would also encourage even greater unilateralism in Washington, which could turn into a more permanent dissociation between the United States and Europe. Even with a British-French-German coalition opposed to the United States, Britain’s role would have been severely marginalized, not simply in this particular instance but in subsequent security crises involving the United States. While this would not have guaranteed its demotion to a second-class world power,

\textsuperscript{28} Though admittedly Britain’s relative position is deteriorating in light of the rise of powers such as China and India.
Britain sees its global ambitions closely tied to its extraordinarily close relationship with the United States.

*Threat Perceptions*

While British leaders did perceive the threat posed by Saddam Hussein as more menacing and credible than did their French or German counterparts, external threat perceptions were not the main determinant in Britain’s decision to join the United States. While many within the British government saw Saddam Hussein as a festering problem that needed to be solved one way or another, there is no evidence that the British government perceived Iraq to be a direct or imminent threat to British security or to vital British interests. On the contrary, many in Whitehall believed that Saddam could continue to be contained.

There have been three major inquiries in Britain that have examined different aspects of the government’s actions in the lead-up to the invasion. The testimony contained in these reports provides evidence of British officials’ motivations and beliefs during the crisis. The Hutton inquiry, convened after the suicide of David Kelly, a British government scientist accused of leaking to the press the claim that the British government, in a dossier released in September 2002, exaggerated the threat posed by Iraq. The Butler Review conducted an inquiry into the intelligence on Iraq’s illicit weapons programs, which played a key part in the British government’s decision to invade Iraq. The report, which was published in July 2004, concluded that the key intelligence used to justify the war was unreliable. The Iraq inquiry, also known as the Chilcot inquiry, after its chairman, Sir John Chilcot, is an ongoing British public inquiry.
into Britain’s role in the Iraq war, including the allegations cited by the government to justify its involvement.

Blair shared the belief of many in the Bush administration that Saddam posed a threat. He told his closest political advisers in the summer of 2002 that, “It’s worse than you think, I actually believe in this.”\(^{29}\) Blair’s concern about Saddam had existed for many years. Paddy Ashdown, the former leader of Britain’s Liberal Democrat party, wrote in his diaries about a time he went to discuss a domestic matter with Blair, and all Blair could talk about was the threat Saddam posed. As Ashdown recounts the prime minister saying at the time, “I have now seen some of the stuff [intelligence] on this. It really is pretty scary. He is very close to some appalling weapons of mass destruction. I don’t understand why the French and others don’t understand this. We cannot let him get away with it. The world thinks this is gamesmanship. But it’s deadly serious.”\(^{30}\)

Blair and other British government officials were also concerned about the harm being done by Saddam’s continued defiance of successive Security Council resolutions, and his non-compliance with the ongoing weapons inspections, to the credibility and even the continued relevance of the Security Council. Saddam was not simply uncooperative with the UN, many British government officials believed; he seemed to openly mock the process.\(^{31}\)

The picture of Saddam that Blair laid out over the weeks and months of late 2002 and early 2003 was that of an irresolute tyrant bent on producing or otherwise acquiring


weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The threat posed by Saddam was based on three factors, according to a reading of Blair’s public statements: his history of aggression; his previous possession and use of WMD; and the possibility he might cooperate in the future with terrorist groups like al Qaeda.\(^\text{32}\) Especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Blair believed that Saddam posed an unacceptable security threat. The September 11 attacks changed how Blair viewed the ongoing containment policy against Iraq. As he said, “…what changed for me with September 11 was that I thought then you have to change your mindset…you have to deal with it because otherwise the threat will grow…you have to take a stand, you have to say, ‘Right, we are not going to allow the development of WMD in breach of the will of the international community to continue.’”\(^\text{33}\)

While many within the British government were growing increasingly concerned with Saddam, the government had to convince a skeptical British public that Saddam represented a serious threat to British interests and that he had to be confronted. Blair put in charge Alastair Campbell, his communications director, to make the public case for war.\(^\text{34}\) To bolster public support for the war, the British government decided to release a dossier on Iraq that would detail Saddam’s ongoing WMD activities.

On September 24, 2002, after much anticipation, Blair presented in the House of Commons a 50-page report outlining Iraq’s illicit weapons program. The report contained a number of allegations, including the claim that Iraq could unleash chemical or

\(^{32}\) Bluth, "The British Road to War."

\(^{33}\) Quoted in Ibid., 874.

biological weapons within 45 weapons of receiving orders. The report also claimed that Saddam had reconstituted his nuclear weapons program, and that he had sought significant quantities of uranium from Niger. These allegations mirrored some of the claims made by hawks in Washington. The claim about Saddam seeking uranium in Niger made it into Bush’s January 2003 State of the Union address.\(^\text{35}\)

Thanks to the Hutton inquiry, we know that previous drafts of the September dossier were more equivocal regarding Iraq’s WMD program. Earlier drafts stated that Iraq had the “capability to produce chemical and biological weapons,” but did not say that Iraq was actively working on such programs. Earlier drafts also stated that Iraq had a nuclear weapons program, but that it would “find it difficult to produce fissile material while sanctions remain in place.” Blair and other officials at Number 10 were disappointed with this version because it did not make the case to invade strongly enough. Several of the claims in the September dossier proved to be exaggerated. The claim that Iraq could produce biological and chemical weapons within 45 minutes, at the heart of the British government’s case that Saddam posed an imminent threat, could not be confirmed.\(^\text{36}\)

Despite these exaggerations, British government officials genuinely believed that Saddam posed a threat to regional stability and international security more broadly. In Blair’s speech to the nation on the initial day of combat operations, he said:

\(^{35}\) See Warren Hoge, “Blair Says Iraqis Could Launch Chemical Warheads in Minutes,” *New York Times*, September 25, 2002. The allegations included in the September dossier have since proven to be false. The Iraq Survey Group found no evidence to substantiate claims that Saddam had reconstituted Iraq’s nuclear weapons program, or that chemical or biological warheads could be launched within 45 minutes or receiving the order.

\(^{36}\) The British government published a second dossier on Iraq in February 2003 titled, “Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception, and Intimidation.”
Tonight, British servicemen and women are engaged from air, land, and sea. Their mission: to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction...Should terrorists obtain these weapons being manufactured and traded around the world, the carnage they could inflict on our economies, our security, to world peace, would be beyond our most vivid imagination. My judgment, as Prime Minister, is that this threat is real, growing, and of an entirely different nature to any conventional threat to our security, that Britain has faced before...So our choice is clear: back down and leave Saddam hugely strengthened; or proceed to disarm him by force.37

Even in the face of public skepticism and increasing opposition to British participation in a war, Blair maintained his position that Saddam posed an unacceptable threat. As he said to the House of Commons, “When people say to me: ‘Why are you risking everything...on this issue?’ I say I do not want to be the PM at whom people point a finger back in history and say: ‘He knew perfectly well that these threats were there and he did not do anything about it.’”38

Blair in fact displayed greater consistency than the Bush administration in the reasons he gave for the need and justification of disarming Saddam militarily. Unlike the Bush administration, whose justification oscillated between unsubstantiated claims of an Iraq-al Qaeda link, Iraq’s possession of WMD, and the regime terrorizing its own


citizens—which appeared to both detractors and even some supporters of the administration’s position as an attempt to find any justification that would stick—Blair’s message to the British public deviated little from September 2002 onwards: that Saddam Hussein, in possession of WMD, posed an unacceptable risk, especially after the September 11 attacks.

While the British government viewed Saddam as a menace, an irritant, and a threat to regional security, there is no clear indication that they believed Iraq posed an imminent danger to core British strategic interests. While it is a mistake to dismiss threat perceptions entirely, because British leaders did perceive Iraq to be threatening to regional security, threat perceptions alone are not sufficient to explain Britain’s enthusiastic support for the U.S. invasion. British leaders did not begin to call for forcible disarmament of Saddam until American leaders began to propose the idea in the late spring and early summer of 2002.

The legal basis for sending British troops to war was shaky, according to Britain’s Attorney general, Peter Goldsmith. In early 2002, Goldsmith stated that neither self defense nor regime change were valid legal reasons for going to war. Iraq did not pose a direct threat to Britain. The only justification for war, according to Goldsmith’s memo, would be to show that Iraq was in breach of past UN Security Council resolutions, especially Resolution 687, which declared Saddam had to disarm.39 In a memo written to Blair on January 30, 2003, Goldsmith wrote that Resolution 1441 did not allow for the use of military force. Goldsmith believed that another resolution would be required before military action could take place. A subsequent memo, this one written on March 7,

2003—eventually leaked to the press, which led the government to officially publish it on April 28, 2005—stated that “the argument that Resolution 1441 alone has revived the authorization to use force in Resolution 678 will only be sustainable if there are strong factual grounds for concluding that Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity. In other words, we would need to be able to demonstrate hard evidence of non-compliance and non-cooperation.” In Goldsmith’s final advice to the Government before hostilities began, written on March 17, 2003, Goldsmith stated that the use of force in Iraq was “lawful.” Due to the evolving legal advice he provided to the government, some charged Goldsmith of succumbing to political pressure to find legal justification for using force against Iraq.

Domestic Politics

Domestic politics ultimately played a small role in determining British strategy during the Iraq crisis. While domestic opposition to the war was intense and widespread, Blair and other British political leaders defied public opinion by supporting the forcible disarmament of Saddam. Many in Blair’s own Labor party and the majority of the British public had deep reservations about his strong support for the policies of the Bush administration. Public unease in Britain provided ample reason for Blair to take a more restrained and ambiguous approach to the possible use of force to disarm Saddam. Blair’s support for the war risked his party’s and his own political future.

Compared to French and German public opinion, the British public was marginally more likely to view Saddam as a threat and a menace to regional stability and international security, and (with Security Council authorization) was marginally more
supportive of the use of military force against Iraq. More Britons were wary to disavow publicly what the United States claimed to be an unacceptable risk to its security. Nonetheless, while there was initial support for the use of military force, this support eroded rapidly throughout the many months of negotiations and inspections, especially in the absence of a “smoking gun” in Iraq and a second Security Council resolution explicitly authorizing the use of military force.

Not only were large segments of the British public against the war, the decision to use force became a salient and controversial issue domestically. February 15, 2003, saw the largest street demonstrations in British history. An estimated 750,000 antiwar demonstrators marched in London and tens of thousands more across England, Wales, and Scotland. More than 25,000 demonstrators marched outside a Labor Party conference in Glasgow, Scotland, where Blair was making his case for the need and justification of the use of military force if Saddam continued his non-compliance with weapons inspectors and Security Council demands.40

Many in the British media were critical of what they viewed to be the inexorable Anglo-American march toward war, though the pro-war viewpoint had supporters as well. The conservative *Daily Telegraph* came out in support of the war, as did the *Economist* magazine. The *Times* of London was generally supportive of Blair and even the *Guardian*, despite the substantial antiwar sentiment among its readership, endorsed the Anglo-American claim that Saddam must disarm. A number of leading figures within the media were ruthless, however. Hugo Young, a leading British political commentator, writing in the *Guardian*, criticized Blair for his subservient position toward the United

States. The final column Young wrote before his death in September 2003 was titled, “Under Blair, Britain Has Ceased to Be a Sovereign State,” and in it he harshly criticized the prime minister for subordinating—even abdicating—British interests to maintain the close partnership with the United States. Other derogatory remarks about Blair, such as being Bush’s “poodle,” were widely circulated in the British media.41

On February 20, the two highest religious authorities in Britain expressed their unease over the war, which was increasingly seen as inevitable. The Most Reverend Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Church of England, and Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, said in a joint statement that, “Doubts still persist about the moral legitimacy as well as the unpredictable humanitarian consequences of a war with Iraq.”42

Doubts and criticisms of the march toward war extended into Blair’s own cabinet and to some of Blair’s closest political associates. Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, said in an interview with the BBC on March 9 that Blair’s support for the war had been “deeply reckless” and threatened to resign if Britain went to war without an explicit UN mandate.43 Robin Cook, leader of the House of Commons and Blair’s own former foreign secretary, resigned in protest of the move toward war, and made an impassioned speech in the House of Commons in which he called the war


42 “Joint Statement on Iraq from Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal.” For full text, see http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/852. Despite Blair’s self-proclaimed religiosity, this seemed to have little impact on his decision-making.

unjustified and a strategic mistake.\textsuperscript{44} “In principle, I believe it is wrong to embark on military action without broad international support,” he said. “In practice, I believe it is against Britain’s interest to create a precedent for unilateral military action.”\textsuperscript{45} Voicing a sentiment that was shared by many Britons—and many Europeans in general—Cook publicly questioned the threat posed by Saddam. “Ironically, it is only because Iraq’s military forces are so weak that we can even contemplate this invasion.”\textsuperscript{46}

Blair’s support for the policies of the Bush administration separated him from many members of his party. The traditional grass-roots pacifist impulse that defined the British Labor Party for decades, if now somewhat obsolete, continues to hold appeal for many Labor MPs and voters. The Liberal Democrats predictably opposed the war by a wide margin and its leader, Charles Kennedy, became one of the more prominent critics of Blair’s foreign policy. A majority of the opposition Tories supported the war, however, and even with the Labor defections this virtually assured that Blair would get a majority in Parliament who backed him on Iraq. During a daylong debate in the House of Commons on February 26, 2003, 122 of the 410 Labor MPs supported a motion that argued the case for military action against Iraq was “as yet unproven.” A subsequent vote the same day on the government’s policy of obtaining UN authorization for the use of force, which would make clear it would be the “final opportunity” Saddam had to

\textsuperscript{44} See Robin Cook, \textit{The Point of Departure} (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003).


\textsuperscript{46} Quoted in Kennedy-Pipe and Vickers, "Blowback for Britain?," 206. On Cook’s resignation, see also Hoge, "In a New Setback for Blair, Cabinet Minister Resigns."
comply, passed by a vote of 434 to 124. The passage of a second resolution in the Security Council would thus be critical for Blair’s ability to convince Parliament and the majority of British voters to support him on Iraq.

Domestic politics shaped procedural rather than substantive aspects of British strategy. Blair was able to convince Bush, over the objections of some of Bush’s closest political advisers and some of the principal architects of Iraq policy in the Defense Department and Vice President’s office, to table a second resolution that would explicitly authorize the use of force to disarm Saddam. As Blair told some of his political aides, “I’ve just got to tell Bush clearly that if he does this wrong, he’ll have governments toppling all over the place and cause absolute chaos.” According to Bob Woodward, in a meeting in Washington in January 2003, Blair told Bush that a second resolution was an absolute political necessity for him—and therefore British participation in the war.

Though Bush, Blair, and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar proposed a second resolution, the proposal never was voted on in the Security Council. It was unlikely to receive the necessary nine votes in the Council to pass. Had the measure failed to pass in the Security Council, it would have been extremely difficult for Blair to disregard the “collective will” of the Security Council and the international community and authorize British participation in an Iraq invasion. Instead, Blair was unintentionally aided by Chirac, who announced on French television that France would veto any resolution that authorized the use of force if Saddam continued his non-compliance.


48 Campbell, The Blair Years, 670.

Chirac believed that the British, Americans, and their allies needed explicit Security Council authorization for the use of force. Sensing a political opening, Blair and Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott blamed France’s “intransigence” for the failure of diplomacy. “Nobody has tried harder than our government and our prime minister to resolve this diplomatically,” Prescott stated, “but once France made clear they could veto a new resolution, whatever the circumstances, it became impossible to move forward.”

As the impetus for war increased and Bush issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam, perhaps the most important vote of Blair’s premiership took place in Parliament on March 18. At issue was British participation in the America-led war in Iraq.50 Blair knew that if Parliament rejected the government’s resolution to use force in Iraq, British troops would not be able to take part in the war.51 After twelve hours of debate, Parliament ultimately voted 412 to 149 to support the war. Despite what turned out to be strong support for the measure, the outcome of the vote was uncertain until the very end. An initial whip count suggested that as many as 200 Labor MPs might defect and vote against the war resolution. Jack Straw, the foreign secretary, said that, “The projected voting figures were very serious…I knew there would be a point at which Tony [Blair] would resign and I would resign as well.”52 In the end 139 out of 412 Labor MPs voted against the motion.

Blair was helped by the fact that the opposition Conservatives were too weak and disorganized to challenge him on Iraq and because a majority of Tory MPs supported the

50 For the planning and mood of Blair and his closest political advisers for this debate, see Campbell, The Blair Years, 680-681; Peter Stothard, Thirty Days: Tony Blair and the Test of History (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 71-96.

51 Campbell, The Blair Years, 672.

use of force to disarm Saddam. Moreover, the only man within the Labor Party who could have challenged Blair, Gordon Brown, at the time the Chancellor of the Exchequer, also supported the war, as did most of Blair’s cabinet. A mass exodus of close Blair associates against the war would have raised the political costs immeasurably. Blair’s position within the Labor Party, therefore, remained generally strong though by no means absolutely secure. Had the vote in the House of Commons on March 18 gone against the government, Blair could have faced a rash of resignations from his cabinet, including the foreign secretary, and calls for Blair’s own resignation would have been intense.

Despite the fact that Blair’s premiership survived Parliamentary and public opposition to the war, his stature—both morally and politically—diminished considerably both in Britain and in other parts of Europe. The war—and in particular the bloody civil war that followed—hung over the remainder of his term as prime minister. Blair’s approval ratings sunk to their lowest recorded levels on the eve of hostilities, and many Britons came to view the war as a mistake. As Pond says, “For Blair, who had built his reputation on his own honesty and conscience—and who had built his case for the Iraq was on the WMD ledger—the loss of credibility was devastating. For the first time in six years the Labor Party sagged below the Tories. By autumn, retrospective support for the

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53 On the support Blair received from the political right, see Alan Cowell, “Blair, the Hawk, Finds Himself with Some Unlikely Friends,” New York Times, February 23, 2003.

54 Sullivan, “For Blair, a Legacy Overshadowed.” Though, perhaps not surprisingly, Blair’s stature in the United States reached remained at a very high level.

55 On Blair’s sinking popularity, see Alan Travis and Ian Black, "Blair's Popularity Plummets," The Guardian, February 18 2003. A March 2007 poll found that 60 percent of Britons thought the war in Iraq was a mistake. See http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6467147.stm
Iraq war fell from 63 percent in March to 38 percent; half of British voters thought Blair should quit; and Labor’s own support dropped to 30 percent.”

There were abundant domestic political incentives for the British government to have adopted a more nuanced and ambiguous strategy than it actually did. The political situation Blair faced domestically explains why he fought so hard for the passage of Resolution 1441 and, in February and March 2003, for a second resolution that would have explicitly authorized war should Saddam continue his non-compliance with weapons inspections. While domestic politics was a major determinant in the character of British strategy during this crisis, it was not a major determinant of substantive British policy goals. Blair and other British political leaders took a real political risk in being such strong and early supporters of the use of military force against Iraq. Blair’s support for Bush administration policy paid few political dividends to him in Britain, or to his long-term reputation. Thanks to his relatively secure position within his own Labor Party, the weakness of Tory opposition, and the favorable vote in Parliament on March 18, Blair avoided a forced resignation.

**Burden Sharing**

British strategy during the Iraq crisis contradicts the hypothesis that states seek to ride free on the contributions of bigger allies. Britain knew that the United States had both the will and the capacity to assume the entire costs of disarming Saddam and forcing regime change. The Bush administration was intent of an invasion and regime change, with or without the support of its traditional allies. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald

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56 Pond, *Friendly Fire*, 111.
Rumsfeld, noting the political difficulties Blair was facing in Britain, stated that the United States could easily execute the military campaign alone. Rumsfeld’s remark angered Blair and other British political leaders. Blair in particular wanted to provide a major contribution to the war effort, rather than simply a symbolic one. British political leaders wanted to make a major demonstration of their support, in material terms. By sharing some of the burden, British leaders believed they could prevent a more unilateral and independent American approach.

David Manning, Blair’s chief foreign policy adviser (and later Britain’s ambassador to the United States), told Condoleezza Rice that the British government realized the United States could go it alone. But as he said to her, “If it wanted company, it would have to take account of its potential coalition partners… Renewed refusal by Saddam to accept unfettered inspections would be a powerful argument.” Sir Christopher Meyer, Britain’s ambassador to the United States, said the same thing during a lunch with Paul Wolfowitz, deputy Secretary of Defense and one of the war’s leading architects. “The U.S. could go it alone if it wanted to. But if it wanted to act with partners, there had to be a strategy for building support for military action against Saddam.”

At 46,000 troops, Britain provided by far the second-largest contribution to the invasion. Britain was given responsibility for southern Iraq, and commanded the post-invasion Southern Zone, comprising Basra (Iraq’s second-largest city), Amarah, Nassiriya, and Samawah.

*Alliance Security Dilemma*
External threat perceptions, domestic politics, and burden-sharing concerns do not provide a convincing explanation of why Britain decided to join the United States in the invasion of Iraq. The main determinant for British participation in the war was British government officials’ fear of American abandonment. While British political leaders did believe that Saddam posed a threat to international security and regional stability, preventing a purely unilateral American action was an even bigger strategic concern, as was maintaining Britain’s unprecedented influence on American policymaking. This policy produced a number of risks for the British government.

Blair knew he was taking a huge political risk in aligning British policy so closely to the Bush administration’s policy on Iraq. The war’s legality was questionable, it was not popular with the British public, and he knew that postwar instability in Iraq was likely. He judged these risks worth taking to preserve the special relationship.

By September 2002 at the latest, Blair had given his full support for the U.S. policy on confronting Iraq. Even when his own political future was at risk and Bush had given him the opportunity to stay out of the initial combat phase of the mission, Blair again pledged his belief in the necessity and justification of the mission and told Bush that he would stick with him “to the very end.”

Blair’s concern with maintaining the special relationship was his overriding strategic objective in the crisis. Britain’s political leadership clearly concurred with Margaret Thatcher’s advice—apropos the 1956 Suez crisis—that, “We [the British]

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should never again find ourselves on the opposite side of the United States in a major international crisis affecting Britain’s interests.”60 Blair interpreted this dictum—as virtually every postwar British prime minister had before him—that the credibility of Britain’s role in the Anglo-American alliance did not lie simply in providing counsel and sympathy, but rather full cooperation, up to and including the planning and execution of a military invasion such as Iraq.61

In early discussions on British strategy regarding the possible use of force against Iraq, Blair told his political advisers that a failure to align with the United States would be the biggest shift in British foreign policy in fifty years. As he put it, maximum closeness publicly was the best way to maximize influence privately.62

Blair said that the lack of British support would provide the United States with the “biggest impulse toward unilateralism there could ever be.”63 Blair and his closest political advisers decided relatively early on to remain closely allied with the United States and seek to influence the direction of American policy by being inextricably linked with it at virtually every stage of the policy process. The costs for the Bush administration of disregarding Britain entirely would be too much to bear, especially for a policy that badly needed some appearance of international legitimacy—both for


61 Alex Danchev, “Tony Blair’s Vietnam: The Iraq War and the ‘Special Relationship’ in Historical Perspective,” Review of International Studies 33, no. 2 (2007). This is the reason Clement Attlee and his military chiefs of staff decided to provide a token ground force in the Korean War as “a valuable contribution to Anglo-American solidarity.”

62 Campbell, The Blair Years, 630.

international and domestic consumption. British support for the Bush administration’s policy on Iraq was crucial to preserve at least a semblance of legitimacy for the invasion.

The chief strategic goal would be to restrain the unilateralist impulses of the chief foreign policy architects of the Bush administration, especially those surrounding the vice president and the defense secretary. Some of the key planners and decision-makers of that time, such as Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz, were unabashed defenders of the United States’ exclusive prerogative to use military force when and under what conditions they deemed necessary. They rejected and even ridiculed appeals that the United States should seek legitimacy or authorization for proposed military action through international institutions such as the UN. As Sir Jeremy Greenstock, at the time the British ambassador to the United Nations, said: “There were compelling reasons for staying with the United States in this complex operation, not only because Britain had something valuable to offer … but also because the damage to world diplomacy if America went solo was too awful to contemplate.”

The government’s rationale that Saddam posed an imminent threat deteriorated under closer inspection. Many British government officials thought that Iraq’s unconventional weapons program was modest—largely because of the UN inspections. Much of the intelligence on Saddam’s WMD programs was speculative and rested on unreliable intelligence. Since Saddam kicked weapons inspectors out of the country in 1998, there were few reliable on-the-ground reports of Iraq’s WMD programs. The main

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problem with the September dossier was that it implied Iraq had a “vast arsenal.” This was not what the experts believed. The UNMOVIC inspection team found no evidence that Iraq had reconstituted its WMD programs. The real concern was not what Saddam had at that point, but what he would have in the future.

Internal memos show that a number of high-ranking British government officials found the official case for war unpersuasive. In a March 22 memo from Peter Ricketts, Political Director of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Ricketts wrote: “U.S. scrambling to establish a link between Iraq and al Qaida is so far frankly unconvincing. To get public and Parliamentary support for military action, we have to be convincing that: the threat is so serious/imminent that it is worth sending our troops to die for; it is qualitatively different from the threat posed by other proliferators who are closer to achieving nuclear capability.”

Nevertheless, even if Iraq had chemical and biological weapons, they presented little threat to Iraq’s neighbors or stability in the Middle East. They would have posed a negligible threat to Britain or the United States. The Butler report stated that Britain’s policy toward Iraq changed not because there was new evidence that Saddam had reconstituted his illicit weapons program, or that he posed an imminent threat to British interests, but because of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Evidence provided to the postwar inquiries show that senior government officials knew the evidence about Iraqi WMD was weak and unreliable. Shortly before the dossier outlining Iraq’s WMD programs was made public, Jonathan Powell, Blair’s chief of staff, wrote to John Scarlett, saying, “The document does nothing to demonstrate a threat, let

66 For the full memo, see http://hosted.ap.org/specials/dowdoc/ricketts020322.pdf.
alone an imminent threat from Saddam... We will need to make it clear in launching the document that we do not claim that we have evidence that he is an imminent threat.”

There is evidence that Blair’s support for the war, and his decision to commit British troops to the invasion, did not ultimately rest on the belief that Saddam had WMD. The so-called “Bush-Blair memo” of 2003 shows that Britain had signed up for the war by the end of January 2003. The United States and Britain would pursue the invasion and regime change in Iraq whether or not UN weapons inspectors discovered illicit weapons. This contradicts statements both Bush and Blair subsequently made that Saddam would be given a final chance to disarm.67 These inconsistencies undermined the credibility of the government’s case.

Britain’s decision to ally so vigorously with the United States obviously had its costs for Blair, the Labor Party, and, many would argue, British national interests. It would have been more politically expedient for Blair to have adopted a posture closer to that of Chirac than the one he actually did; that is, as a disinterested observer who would make decisions on the basis of both the degree and the immediacy of the threat as well as the ability of the United States to assemble a large, multinational coalition operating under the authority of the Security Council. Blair’s decision to vigorously support the war did nothing to improve his political standing in Britain. “I do not seek unpopularity as a badge of honor,” he said at a Labor party meeting in Glasgow. “But sometimes it is the price of leadership and the cost of conviction.” 68

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France: Visions of a United Europe

The story of the breakdown within the Atlantic Alliance over the Iraq war is often told as one pitting France and Germany against Britain and the United States. While there is some truth to this characterization, it overlooks the fact that as late as January 2003 France were prepared to assist, albeit in a small supporting role and only with explicit UN authorization, the American-led war against Iraq. French diplomacy was much more nuanced and flexible than was the categorical opposition to the war put forth by Gerhard Schröder and German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, which is examined below. Indeed, it was not until the French had realized that they had essentially been misled by the Americans for many months—that the Americans had decided long before February or March 2003 that the use of force against Iraq was inevitable, and that going through the Security Council was largely done to appease Blair and moderates within the Bush administration such as Secretary of State Colin Powell—did French opposition to the war become more rigid.

Indignation over the French reluctance to submit to the Anglo-American position on Iraq was intense.69 The American media questioned everything from French honor and virtue to the presence of shadowy and cynical Gallic motives. Thomas Friedman, writing in the New York Times, wondered if France had actually become not just an occasional irritating ally but rather an actual enemy of the United States.70 Bans on French products became commonplace. One of the most notorious examples was when the cafeteria in the

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United States Congress substituted “French fries” with “freedom fries” and Air Force One substituted “French toast” with “freedom toast.”71 The sentiment among many Bush administration officials that the French had to be “punished” for their intransigence marked a fundamentally different—and more hostile—reaction to differences within the Atlantic Alliance compared to past disputes.72

French opposition to the war was largely based on two factors: first, a genuine belief that the threat Iraq posed, both regionally and to countries in the West, had been exaggerated by the United States and Britain. As a result France feared becoming entrapped in what it viewed as an unnecessary conflict in a volatile part of the world. Second, French opposition was a product of an understanding of the proper management of world affairs in the twenty-first century, particularly concerning the legitimate use of military force. No state had the right to claim an exclusive prerogative to use force in the absence of a broad international consensus. This position, however, had less to do with a true belief in the inviolable sanctity of international law—France has not hesitated to conduct interventions, such as in the Ivory Coast, without first seeking international authorization—but rather to maximize French influence and control over the major decisions that shape international politics and the forum for these decisions: the UN Security Council, where France maintains a permanent seat and veto power.73

How Chirac and de Villepin managed French diplomacy in this crisis closely accorded with long-held fears of American entrapment, and to opposition to American


72 Hoffmann, Gulliver Unbound.

unilateralism, which was especially pronounced under the Bush administration. In response, France sought a united Europe with strong French leadership (with Germany following close behind). The French government’s approach during the Iraq crisis closely mirrored French public opinion, but public sentiment was not the underlying motivation behind French strategy. As noted above, Chirac held out the possibility of French participation until just two months before the actual commencement of military operations. French fears of entrapment, more than external threat perceptions, concerns over burden sharing, or a calculation of domestic political costs and advantages, best explain French strategy during the Iraq crisis.

France’s Historical Role in Iraq

Since the end of the Cold War and the onset of American global primacy, France—and Chirac in particular—became increasingly uneasy about American preponderance, and what many French political leaders viewed as excessive and unabashed American unilateralism. For years France had chafed under what it viewed as the increasing domination of les Anglo-Saxons and the marginalization of France’s global role and influence. Hubert Védrine, foreign minister from 1997 to 2002, characterized the United States as a hyperpuissance, or hyperpower, placing it in an even higher category than its status as Cold War superpower.74

To be sure, the world had never seen such an imbalance in power between the strongest state in the international system and the second tier of great powers, which included France. French political leaders often spoke of both their desire for but also the

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fact that the world was moving toward multipolarity, with a united Europe as one pole, along with the United States, India, and China. Georges-Henri Soutou found, for example, that the word *multipolaire* appeared 152 times in speeches or official pronouncements Chirac made in the period just before his assumption of the presidency in 1995 to the end of July 2003.\(^75\)

France had largely been caught off-guard by the major political events and shifts in the international system since 1989: the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet empire; German unification; American primacy; and the expansion of the EU to the east. France’s role in world affairs was becoming increasingly ambiguous and it was left searching for a foreign policy identity and strategy for the post-Cold War era. Almost by default, this at times meant clashing with the United States and Britain over how to manage world affairs, particularly in the Middle East. While France signed on for the 1991 Gulf War, its differences with its Anglo-American partners—especially over the inspection and sanctions regime—caused France to withdraw its participation in the enforcement of the northern and southern no-fly zones in 1998.

The Gulf War taught France some other lessons: the extent of its near total diplomatic subordination on the United States; its own military deficiencies and outmoded equipment, particularly compared to the state-of-the-art military technology the United States had at its disposal; and France’s limitations at force projection—France remained heavily reliant on American logistics, transport, battlefield intelligence, and

planning during the war. France remained very much the junior partner in trans-Atlantic relations.

In the post-Cold War international system, however, there have been two institutions through which France could exercise its role as great power, and perhaps even augment its influence relative to its size and material capabilities. One of these venues has been the Security Council, where France maintains its seat as a permanent member. From the first stages of the Iraq crisis, therefore, Chirac and other French leaders insisted that the Security Council was the only legitimate body to decide cases as important as the disarmament and possible use of force against a UN member state. In an interview with the New York Times, Chirac said that the Bush administration’s doctrine of preventive war, or war waged in anticipation of future threats, was “extraordinarily dangerous.” “As soon as one nation claims the right to take preventive action, other countries will naturally do the same.” The only way to avoid such a destabilizing order was to maintain the Security Council’s exclusive authority to legitimize the use of force.

The second way France believed it could augment its influence was through the EU. A united EU could recapture Europe’s—and especially France’s—waning influence in world affairs, especially on security issues. However, Chirac knew that without British participation the EU would never be able to play an important political role internationally. As the diplomatic row over Iraq became more serious, Chirac worked to forge a common European position. When that proved impossible, he tried to reorient

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78 When it comes to trade and economics more broadly the EU rivals the United States.
British policy in a less pro-American and more pro-European direction. If no common European position could be achieved—which seemed apparent by January 2003—then a close Franco-German partnership was critical. After successive expansions that increased the number of states within the EU from six to fifteen and—coming in May 2004—to twenty-five, France saw its influence even within Europe being slowly diluted. The countries set for accession were generally more pro-American and less likely to look to Paris for leadership, especially on security issues. Strong Franco-German partnership on Iraq could reestablish these two countries as the motor and true center of Europe.

Despite French resistance to Washington’s approach to Iraq, there was concern among French policymakers that they would find themselves isolated on this issue. At least since Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik and the Nixon-Kissinger orchestrated détente with the Soviet Union, French political and military leaders have feared being overshadowed either by a German-Soviet/Russia or American-Soviet/Russian hegemony over Europe. Pompidou and Giscard maintained close bilateral relations with Washington for practical reasons. With the end of the Cold War, Mitterand restarted the old Gaullist initiative to expand Europe’s own security and political institutions. Chirac enthusiastically pursued this strategy and made it a core element of French strategic thinking throughout his presidency. And when Chirac realized that Schröder would not be moving closer to the American position following his reelection, Chirac felt more confident taking a more hard-line approach against the American position.

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Despite an often fractious relationship, the French refusal to cooperate with the United States, and its attempt to impede the United States’ ability to get Security Council authorization for an Iraq invasion, was a clear break from the past. It constituted a significant departure from the time when de Gaulle—never shy to stand up to the United States—told Secretary of State Dean Acheson in October 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis that he did not need to see the evidence that Soviet missiles had been based in Cuba. As he told Acheson, “Great nations such as yours would not take a serious step if there were any doubt about evidence.”

Instead, during the run-up to the Iraq war, especially the two months prior to the invasion, France seemed to embody a completely different worldview from the United States.

Domestic Politics: Public Opposition to War and Concerns over Internal Order

Though French public opinion was strongly against the war, domestic politics alone is not enough to explain French opposition to the policies of the Bush administration. While domestic politics may explain why Chirac kept distance from Bush and Blair, domestic politics cannot explain why Chirac sought to bind the United States and Britain within the institutional constraints of the Security Council or why he actively sought to impede U.S. diplomacy. Chirac could have voiced his opposition, either publicly or in private, and quietly withheld French participation from any military campaign. This would have satisfied French public opinion while not inflaming Paris’

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relationship with Washington. Instead, France sought to establish a consensus among its European counterparts against the decision to forcibly disarm Iraq.

At no point did the French public support a military intervention against Iraq. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Group in December 2002, 27 percent of French respondents said they were opposed to war in Iraq under any circumstances, including with UN authorization, though 63 percent said they would be willing to support a war if it had Security Council authorization. As the United States moved closer to war in the first few months of 2003, however, a significant majority of the French public voiced strong opposition to any kind of French participation. Sixty-six percent of French respondents in a January 2003 poll said they opposed the use of force against Iraq. There were clear political incentives for Chirac to maintain his skepticism regarding the case the Bush administration was making for the need and justification for war.

While France had minimal economic relations with Iraq at the time of the invasion, there was the prospect of reaping significant economic gains in the rebuilding phase of the war. At minimum, this could have led France to take a less strident position, so that it would not hurt French firms’ bids for new contracts. Neither was France’s opposition to the war based on protecting its economic interests in Iraq. In 2001 France sold only $650 million worth of goods to Iraq, and in 2002, this figure barely exceeded

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83 One of the few influential French public figures to support the war was Bernard Kouchner, cofounder of Médecins sans Frontières and at the time one of the most popular politicians in France. He would later become Foreign Minister under Sarkozy. As he said, “Saddam must go. He’s one of the great murderers of the twentieth century. It’s not realistic to think we’re going to disarm him with inspections.” Quoted in John Vincour, "One Popular French Voice Who Supports a War," New York Times, February 24, 2003.
$1 billion. There were in fact compelling economic incentives for France to encourage regime change in Iraq, if only tacitly. France had substantial economic relations with Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s. French trade with Iraq fell drastically due to the sanctions imposed on Iraq following its occupation of Kuwait in August 1990. Because it enjoyed significant economic trade with Iraq before the sanctions went into place, French firms would have been in good position to take advantage of the open Iraqi economy.

There was no domestic constituency strongly in favor of war and opposition to American war plans was widespread across French society. However, domestic politics cannot explain why Chirac or his foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, began to actively oppose the war and obstruct the British and the Americans from attaining UN authorization for the use of force. France could have abstained on the proposed second resolution. Not only was France opposed to the second resolution, actively lobbied the undecided Security Council members against it. Had France decided to abstain on the second resolution or refrained from lobbying other members on the Council, the resolution likely would have passed. Thus the invasion of Iraq would have been, in theory, legitimate.

*External Threat Perceptions:*

External threat perceptions also provide only a partial explanation of French opposition to the Iraq war. French leaders clearly did not share the Bush administration’s urgency in dealing with Saddam, and were not prepared to face the enormous risks of an invasion, forcible disarmament, and regime change. On the contrary, an invasion could undermine regional stability, including empowering the majority Shiite population in Iraq.
and usher in theocratic rule. Empowering the Shiites would also be a huge strategic boon to neighboring Iran.

French political leaders did not think Iraq posed a serious threat to their interests. France had pulled its military forces out of Iraq in December 1998 and had started to advocate a suspension of the sanctions that had crippled Iraqi society.\textsuperscript{84} France historically had close relations with Iraq, and had been Iraq’s main military supplier in the West before the 1991 Gulf War. French technicians were building the nuclear reactor at Osiraq that Israel destroyed in an attack in 1981.\textsuperscript{85} Indeed, until the 1991 Gulf War, France probably had a closer relationship with Iraq than did any other Western country. During the 1990s French companies received contracts in Iraq worth billions of dollars under various UN programs.\textsuperscript{86}

French opposition focused on the unpredictable nature of any intervention. As de Villepin stated, “No one can assert today that the path of war will be shorter than that of inspections. No one can claim either that it might lead to a safer, more just, and more stable world. France has said all along: We do not exclude the possibility that force may have to be used one day if the inspectors’ reports concluded that it was not possible to continue the inspections.”

Nevertheless, France was prepared to assist in a military operation if the diplomatic effort failed. Chirac sent the French Chief of Staff to the Pentagon on December 21, 2002. The Chief of Staff indicated that France was prepared to contribute

\textsuperscript{84} Byman, "After the Storm," 8, 13, 19.


15,000 troops and 100 aircraft to a possible conflict. This was about the same level of contribution France had provided during the Persian Gulf War.

_Burden Sharing_

Concerns about burden sharing did not figure into French calculations. By early January, if not earlier, French political leaders realized that the United States was moving inexorably toward war and regime change. While the United States would have accepted French political or military assistance—at minimum it would have given the war greater legitimacy around the world—the United States clearly did not rely on French assistance. It was no secret that Washington was prepared to assume virtually the entire cost of the war.

_Alliance Security Dilemma_

The main determinant of French strategy during the Iraq crisis was its fear of entrapment. France perceived no strategic interests to be at stake in Iraq, and in fact anticipated a deteriorating security situation in Iraq and Middle East more broadly if the United States moved ahead with the invasion and regime change. French officials also worried about the fallout from French participation in the war, including terrorist attacks on French soil or on overseas French assets, and domestic violence among France’s large Muslim population. France’s preferred outcome was therefore continued weapons inspections and peaceful disarmament.

Chirac’s position was thus different from that of French President François Mitterand during the Persian Gulf War. Shortly after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990,
Mitterand stated in a cabinet meeting that, “If we have to choose, I believe we must join the struggle against Saddam Hussein, no matter what the consequences. If we don’t do it, we will be the false friends of the West.”

Not only did France not join the U.S.-led coalition, Chirac, Villepin, and other French officials sought to undermine the need and justification for war.

Chirac, along with Schröder and, provocatively, Putin, called for an extension of the UN inspectors’ work in Iraq rather than forcibly disarm Saddam. Since France could not deter the United States, the strategy it adopted focused on the legal justification of the war, and to continue weapons inspections. Paris and Washington argued over what constituted a “material breach” of Resolution 1441, and under what conditions the United States and coalition partners could inflict the “serious consequences” against Saddam. Paris insisted that only the Security Council could declare Iraq in material breach of Security Council resolutions.

Germany’s opposition to the war benefited France by ensuring Paris would not be isolated in the anti-war camp. In fact, Schroeder’s rigid antiwar stance made it possible for France to distance itself even further from the American approach. But by carefully calibrating its opposition—not stating categorically it would oppose a war, even making preparations for French involvement, it gave itself room to rejoin the United States if Saddam’s non-compliance continued. France thus had considerable leverage over Germany. Schröder had come out much more strongly against the war, and he feared that Chirac would abandon him at the last minute, and leave him isolated in Europe, or alongside Russia as the main opponents to war.

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87 Quoted in Cogan, "The Iraq Crisis and France," 121.
French policymakers believed that a war against Iraq—especially one that involved regime change—was a fundamental strategic mistake. It would be a distraction from a much more serious threat—transnational terrorist groups—which, French officials believed, did actually pose a threat to the West’s security and strategic interests. A war against Iraq and the occupation that would inevitably follow would have the reverse effect on terrorism than what many within the Bush administration were claiming: it would inflame anti-American and even anti-Western sentiment throughout the Middle East and would be a rallying cry for the most violent and anti-Western strands of Islamic fundamentalism. The threat of terrorism would increase, not decrease, with an invasion and occupation of Iraq.88

French strategy toward Iraq was also heavily influenced by its own at times restive Muslim community. Chirac was concerned that participation in a war against a Muslim country that would almost certainly lead to a lengthy occupation, sectarian conflict, the killing of innocent civilians, and which would provoke anti-Western sentiment across the Muslim world, would inflame France’s Muslim population.89 Chirac and other French officials genuinely worried that a war that lacked legitimacy except in the United States, Israel, Britain, and with select pro-American European governments would be seen by the rest of the world and the Middle East in particular as a “clash of


“civilizations” and would lead to more violence, especially in the form of terrorist attacks against the West, rather than less.

With an estimated Muslim population of 5 to 6 million (out of a total population of 62 million), France has the largest Muslim population in Europe, and it is rising fast. France’s Muslim population remains relatively poor, undereducated, and poorly integrated into mainstream French society. The unemployment is several times higher for Muslims living in France compared to non-Muslims. The large housing projects in the suburbs of Paris, Marseilles, Lyon, and other cities have been the scene of social tensions—often violent—between restive Muslim youth and French police. It was precisely this level of alienation that many French Muslims feel that, Chirac believed, could turn into violence and a backlash against the French government if France took an active role in the military invasion.

**Germany: Complete Opposition**

Though not as central a protagonist as Britain or France, Germany’s behavior in the run-up to the Iraq war elicited perhaps the sharpest criticism and condemnation from Washington. When Schröder’s interior minister, Herta Däubler-Gmelin, was quoted in the Schwäbisches Tagblatt, a regional newspaper near Stuttgart, that Bush had used the same tactics as Hitler by using the pretext of war to divert attention from domestic problems, Bush administration officials responded with disbelief and outrage. Condoleezza Rice, at the time the national security adviser, said that the U.S.-German relationship had become “poisoned.” Szabo, Parting Ways, 1. The interior minister’s exact words were: “Bush wants to divert attention from his domestic problems. It’s a classic tactic. It’s one that Hitler also used.”

dismissively classified France and Germany as “old Europe” and, in testimony before Congress, gratuitously grouped Germany with authoritarian Libya and Syria as the only three countries that stated they would not aid in the reconstruction of Iraq under any circumstances.91

Germany was in a different position than France and Britain for several reasons. Unlike Britain and France, Germany is not a permanent member of the Security Council, though starting in January 2003 Germany did begin a two-year term as a rotating nonpermanent member. Unlike France it had no recourse to a veto threat in the Security Council. Despite being the largest economic power in Europe and arguably the most important geopolitical power as well, Germany continues to occupy a subordinate position in political and security institutions such as the Security Council. Predictions from a number of realists that the structural changes in Europe initiated by the end of the Cold War would lead to a reorientation of German foreign policy—one that would be more assertive in pursuing its strategic interests—had not come to pass.92 German foreign policy continued to be deeply affected by historical, constitutional, political, and moral constraints.

Instead of pursuing a more independent post-Cold War foreign policy, Germany embedded itself more deeply within the institutional structures of the EU, diffused rather than concentrated its power, and adopted a more “Europeanized” identity.93 Despite


92 See, for example, Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics.”

Schröder and Fischer’s desire to “normalize” German foreign policy—which included deploying German combat troops to Afghanistan as part of the NATO operation in that country—deep unease remained within Germany regarding force commitments overseas, especially participation in non-peacekeeping military operations. Moreover, significant moral and constitutional obstacles to German participation in military campaigns outside of the NATO area persist. Like Japan, Germany has adopted many of the features of a “civilian” power.

Even today, more than 60 years since the end National Socialism, there remains a deep ambivalence among many Germans regarding the country’s participation in military combat operations. German troops have been active in peacekeeping missions both within and outside of Europe, but there continues to be a deep aversion to war, especially sending German troops into combat missions outside of Europe. German troops have participated in NATO missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, slowly shedding some of the decades-long constraints and taboos associated with participation in foreign military operations. German troops have taken part in UN or EU peacekeeping missions in, among other places, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Nevertheless, German troops often have highly restrictive rules of engagement (or “national caveats”) in combat zones. In Afghanistan, for example, German troops can only conduct patrols

during certain hours of the day and cannot be sent to the much more violent and unstable south, where the risk of casualties is much higher.\(^9^7\)

While maintaining its commitment to multilateralism and anti-militarism, there has been an emerging consensus, especially among German political elites, that Germany must take a more assertive role politically.\(^9^8\) Its political role, which would include a military dimension, would reflect its status as a global economic power and its geopolitical importance in Europe.\(^9^9\) In turn, as Germany expands its role internationally, its influence and seriousness as a global political actor would increase. This would be the process of “normalizing” German foreign policy.\(^1^0^0\) That is, a Germany that self-confidently acts like other states in pursuit of its interests rather than being paralyzed by its own past.\(^1^0^1\) Or, as Hubert Zimmermann puts it, the transformation of Germany from an “importer” of security to an “exporter” of security.\(^1^0^2\)


\(^9^9\) See, for example, Szabo, Parting Ways, 19.


Germany’s role within the EU has also undergone reexamination. Some Germans, including Schröder, signaled a desire to reorient the traditional Franco-German engine of the EU to incorporate Britain into a Franco-British-German “leadership triangle.”

Despite general consensus on the appropriateness of such shifts in German foreign policy, a reorientation has been difficult to implement.

Two conventional explanations for Germany’s opposition to the Iraq war should be rejected immediately. These include Germany’s supposed deep-rooted anti-Americanism, exacerbated by antipathy toward George W. Bush and some of his closest advisers, and postwar German pacifism. A number of commentators have attributed the estrangement between Washington and Berlin over Iraq on a creeping anti-American sentiment in Germany. There is no question that the view of the United States among the German public deteriorated rapidly during the Iraq crisis. In 1999, nearly 80 percent of Germans held a favorable view of the United States; by spring 2003 that number had shrunk to only 23 percent. This represented more of a short-term reaction to specific decisions made by the Bush administration—that also sparked opposition in the United States—rather than a permanent structural shift. Germany’s postwar relationship with the United States—one of the enduring and most successful elements of postwar Germany—was never fundamentally reconsidered, even by the “new generation” of politicians such

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104 Tuomas Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq: Anti-Americanism, Pacifism, or Emancipation?", *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 2 (2005).


106 Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq," 221.
as Schröder and Fischer. Indeed, many Germans sought to differentiate between their opposition to U.S. foreign policy and their affection for Americans.\textsuperscript{107}

It is true that many Germans hold a profound aversion to war, especially to German participation in military campaigns other than peacekeeping, and for many Germans a “civilian power” role significant appeal. This should not be taken too far, however. Schröder is certainly not a pacifist. Germany took part in the NATO-led war against Serbia in 1999 and sent troops to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Indeed, Germany even assumed joint command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in February 2003. As German defense minister Peter Struck said, “The defense of Germany begins in the Hindu Kush.” Germany has participated in a number of military and peacekeeping missions overseas, and, as Klaus Becher notes, since 1998 more than 100,000 Bundeswehr troops have taken part in overseas missions.\textsuperscript{108}

Even if it would have been politically impossible to include German troops in an actual combat role in an Iraq invasion, the Schröder government, like the Kohl government during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, could have provided financial assistance or tacit diplomatic support to the campaign. Rather than providing troops for the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the Kohl government engaged in “checkbook diplomacy,” providing over $6.5 billion to the war effort.\textsuperscript{109} Schröder did neither, however, instead drawing a sharp distinction between his own strategic assessment of the

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\textsuperscript{107} Pond, \textit{Friendly Fire}.
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\textsuperscript{108} Klaus Becher, "German Forces in International Military Operations," \textit{Orbis} 48, no. 3 (2004).
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Iraq threat and that put forward by the Bush administration. Schröder was not shy about voicing his differences with the Bush administration; he also sought to take advantage of the German public’s wariness over a military invasion of Iraq for his own political purposes.

*External Threat Perception*

Schröder’s motives were not purely self-regarding or cynical. Like Chirac, Schröder genuinely believed the war was not simply unnecessary, but constituted a major strategic mistake. His opposition thus was not due purely to electoral opportunism, as his critics both in and outside Germany alleged. In an interview with the German newsmagazine *Stern*, Schröder stated that his opposition to the war was based on strategic rather than moral or legal considerations. The threat posed by Saddam, in Schröder’s estimation, did not constitute an immediate threat.\(^{110}\)

This position was widely held in the German government. As one senior German Foreign Office official said in an interview:

German intelligence shared assessments with British and other European intelligence and found no provable link between al Qaeda and Iraq. In addition, we did not believe Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The assessment was that some old pre-1998 weapons of mass destruction survived but that there was no evidence that new ones had been added. The threat perceived by some in the U.S. government was not perceived as a threat by Germany.\(^{111}\)

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\(^{110}\) Forsberg, *German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq,* 223.

\(^{111}\) Szabo, *Parting Ways,* 45.
Like France, Germany was not prepared to incur the enormous risks and costs associated with an invasion and occupation of Iraq. There was widespread unease within the German Foreign Ministry over the potentially explosive implications for regional stability in the Middle East as a consequence of invasion and regime change in Iraq. German government officials envisioned a scenario in which Iraq became a power vacuum within the Middle East, leading to a Shiite-dominated theocratic state closely allied with Iran.

Schröder made the uncertainty of what would come after a war against Iraq a major element of his opposition. As he said in an interview with the *New York Times*:

“According to my information, no one has a really clear idea of the political order that would follow in the Middle East. And such an idea is needed. No one has a clear idea about what the effects would be in the moderate Arab countries or what new political order might emerge after a military intervention in Iraq.”

Schröder was also uncomfortable, as were many Germans, with a war on the scale of Iraq that was not authorized by the Security Council and that failed to attain broad international consensus.

**Domestic Politics**

Polls showed that the German public was overwhelmingly opposed to the use of military force against Iraq. In February 2003, at the height of diplomatic tension, 71 percent of Germans supported Schröder’s opposition to the war while 24 percent opposed

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Even if Iraq had been found to be in possession of nuclear weapons, about half of all Germans still would not have thought war to be justified. This pronounced anti-war sentiment heavily influenced Schröder’s political and strategic calculations during the crisis. Just as the diplomatic maneuvering was heating up in the late summer and early fall of 2002, Schröder was facing an election with his popularity badly damaged.

The German public was more concerned about Germany’s stagnant economy and high unemployment than the need to forcibly disarm Saddam and effect regime change in Iraq. Facing an array of domestic problems and seeing his personal popularity at an all-time low, Schröder soon realized that his forceful opposition to war was a crowd pleaser at campaign rallies. His outspoken opposition to the war had the added benefit of deflecting attention from real domestic problems in Germany and gaining the electoral support of older women, who were widely opposed to the war. Schröder’s antiwar message also appealed to many voters in eastern Germany who were deeply ambivalent about the use of military force and who had traditionally voted for local socialist or “neocommunist” political candidates.

The war in Iraq, particularly after a speech Vice President Cheney gave in August 2002 in which he said Saddam posed a “mortal threat,” signaling that the United States was seriously considering regime change, became a major campaign issue. In this

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114 Szabo, Parting Ways, 85.


117 William Chandler, "Foreign and European Policy Issues in the 2002 Bundestag Elections," German Politics and Society 21, no. 1 (2003); Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq." It is not clear whether Iraq would have been a major issue had Schröder not decided to focus on it so heavily in his campaign speeches. While the antirwar sentiment certainly existed, Schröder was instrumental in making it one of the principal campaign issues.
speech Cheney said that Iraq would be in possession of nuclear weapons “fairly soon” and action to prevent this was necessary before it was too late.\textsuperscript{118} Even if Schröder had his doubts whether Cheney was speaking for Bush, the perception among the German press and general public was that the United States was moving quickly and inexorably toward war, with or without its traditional European allies. Despite being more ambivalent just a few months prior on the decision to forcibly disarm Saddam, holding open the possibility of tacit diplomatic support, Schröder began to adopt a position of near-categorical opposition to the possibility of any German participation in such a conflict.

In their first televised debate, Edmund Stoiber, the Christian Democratic (CDU) challenger, criticized Schröder for putting Germany in a “fully irresponsible position” regarding Iraq.\textsuperscript{119} Schröder, according to Stoiber, had committed himself too strongly to the antiwar position, and by doing so he had forfeited Germany’s traditional position between France and the United States. Schröder’s opposition may have revived his sagging electoral fortunes, but from a strategic viewpoint it had done little for Germany. Not only had it damaged Germany’s relationship with the United States, it left very little room for Germany to influence policy makers in the Bush administration to move in a direction more palatable to German interests.

\textsuperscript{118} For the full speech, see “Remarks by the Vice President to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, August 26, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html.

\textsuperscript{119} John Vincour, "Schröder and Stoiber Spar on TV over Iraq," \textit{International Herald Tribune}, August 26, 2002.
Schröder went on to win re-election in September 2002 by some 6,000 votes, the closest election in postwar German history.\textsuperscript{120} Though Schröder was able to hold onto power, his parliamentary majority was roughly halved, to nine seats. The traditionally pacifist German Green party, led by Joschka Fischer, perhaps Germany’s most popular politician during this period, had their best-showing ever, reflecting general dissatisfaction with Schröder’s Social Democrats.

Among the opposition Christian Democrats, there was opposition to both the tone and the substance of Schröder’s message. Angela Merkel, the leader of the CDU, criticized Schröder’s lack of restraint and stated publicly that Saddam posed a serious threat to regional security and Western interests, and that pressure on him to disarm had to be maintained. She stated, moreover, that Germany should take an active role in such a policy. A wide majority of CDU supporters opposed the war in Iraq, however, and many of Merkel’s CDU colleagues showed little enthusiasm for German participation in a war in the Middle East. CDU opposition remained fractured, ambivalent, and therefore largely ineffective, thus unable to temper some of Schröder’s opposition.\textsuperscript{121} Because of the widespread antiwar sentiment among the German public, it is not clear whether German strategy would have been any different had the CDU won the September parliamentary election. At minimum, the tone from Berlin would have been more restrained had Stoiber rather than Schröder been Chancellor during the critical months of 2002 and 2003.

\textsuperscript{120} Szabo, \textit{Parting Ways}, 31.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 41.
Following the poor showing of Schröder and the SPD in state elections in February 2003, criticism of Schröder’s foreign policy became more widespread. More Germans, especially the opposition Christian Democrats, wanted Schröder to align German’s policy on Iraq closer to the French position. That is, a more cautious wait-and-see approach rather than the categorical opposition Schröder had pursued for many months. Such restraint held little appeal for either Schröder or Fischer, however. Fischer in particular stated on a number of occasions that Germany did not want to be treated like a satellite state. The underlying concern was of course a legitimate one: the United States should consult with its NATO allies rather than simply announce what it intended to do, with or without input or support from its allies. However, the tone obscured the substance of the message. U.S.-German relations deteriorated to perhaps their lowest level in the entire post-World War II period following Schröder’s victory on an explicitly antiwar and anti-U.S. platform in the 2002 elections. Despite the fact that they were heads of state of two countries that had been close allies for nearly 60 years, Bush and Schröder went nearly a year without speaking to each other.

Schröder’s handling of the crisis came under heavy criticism in the German press. As Pond notes, “In the quality press the chancellor was widely chastised for isolating Germany from its EU allies and especially—for the first time in the half-century existence of the Federal Republic—for alienating Germany from its long-time American patron. Criticism was only to be expected in the center-right Allgemeine Zeitung and the more right-of-center Die Welt, but it was equally vehement in the center-left Suddeutsche
Zeitung. And in regional elections in early 2003, the antiwar issue would find no resonance whatever as Social Democrats suffered their worst defeat in half a century.”

While Schröder was quick to take advantage on the anti-Bush sentiment among the German public for his own reelection, he capitalized on this mood rather than creating it himself. The Bush administration’s unilateralism created the climate, and Schröder was astute enough to realize that he could prolong his own political career by reflecting this anti-war and anti-Bush mood. For this reason—that Schröder’s opposition was mainly tactical rather than principled—there was a broad expectation, in London and Washington but even in Germany itself, that after the election Schröder would scale back his opposition to U.S. war plans and take on a more ambivalent or even conciliatory position on the Bush administration’s Iraq policy. At minimum, it was widely expected that he would exercise more restraint in his condemnation of Washington’s war plans. Following Schröder’s re-election, Blair even told Bush that he could bring Schröder around to the Anglo-American position.

Despite his reelection, Schröder did not dampen his opposition to the war or reorient German foreign policy to its traditional position between France and the United States. Instead, Schröder essentially placed Germany under French leadership, especially following the Franco-German summit at Versailles. Schröder’s pandering to voters and his refusal to adopt a more flexible approach even after his electoral triumph—he feared he would lose all credibility by doing so—broke with over five decades of German Atlanticism. From Adenauer, to Brandt, Schmidt, and Kohl, Germany had a reputation as

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122 Pond, *Friendly Fire*, 58.

a dependable ally of Washington; after London, Bonn/Berlin was arguably Washington’s most important bilateral relationship in Europe.\textsuperscript{124} For the first time since 1945, a German chancellor had consciously sought to create separation between Berlin and Washington on a major security issue.

Both Schröder and Fischer came from the 1968 protest generation, a period of self-indulgence, political turbulence, and political radicalism. Unlike many who led the Federal Republic in the postwar period, neither Schröder nor Fischer was reflexively Atlanticist. As youths they had protested the U.S. war in Vietnam. They were part of a new generation of German policymakers who had no personal experience of postwar Atlanticism. It is unimaginable that Adenauer, Brandt, Kohl or virtually any postwar chancellor would have taken such a public stance against Washington and exercised so little restraint.

Despite his opposition to the war, which mirrored the broad antiwar sentiment among much of the European public, Schröder—unlike Chirac—showed little inclination to “speak for Europe.” Schröder and Fischer had been claiming for several years that Germany should occupy a new position of leadership and authority within the EU. Rather than using the Iraq crisis as an opportunity to assert German—or perhaps Franco-German—leadership within Europe, Schröder ultimately decided to remove Germany from the wait-and-see approach adopted by officials in other countries who were also uneasy with a possible controversial war against Iraq. Even as inspectors continued their work in Iraq, Schröder stated Germany would not participate in any war in Iraq, even if it

\textsuperscript{124} The first President Bush even toyed with the idea of making a unified Germany the United States’ “privileged partner” in Europe.
had Security Council authorization. This exceeded anything Chirac or even Putin
dared.125

This decision had two consequences. First, Schröder seriously miscalculated how
his electoral posturing would hurt his relationship with the Bush administration and
especially with Bush himself. Schröder failed to anticipate the estrangement that
occurred. This also shows Schröder as more of a tactician than a strategist.126 His
opposition to the war was motivated more by parochial electoral reasons than a well-
developed strategy to inhibit or constrain the exercise of American power. This was not
an example of counterbalancing behavior.

Second, Schröder’s approach reduced his influence among his European partners.
While his strong opposition to the war may have helped him in the short-run
domestically, he was badly weakened in Europe and internationally. His stature and
credibility were seriously weakened by his misjudgment and inflexibility. As a result,
Germany had essentially no role in shaping the pre-war strategy of the Bush
administration, or really any influence on decisions made in Washington. On one of the
most important security issues since the end of the Cold War, Germany played virtually
no role. While Blair’s close support for the United States resulted in Britain punching
above its weight during the crisis, Germany clearly was punching below its weight.

With a degree of irony probably lost on the chancellor, Germany’s
uncompromising stance on Iraq amounted to its own kind of unilateralism. As Alain
Juppé, a former French prime minister who served under Chirac, said, “When Schröder

126 Szabo, Parting Ways.
says he won’t in any circumstances participate [in an invasion of Iraq], that’s unilateralism.”¹²⁷ The categorical opposition to war extended beyond the chancellor. Peter Struck, the defense minister, said that, “As long as I am defense minister, the Bundeswehr will not be deployed in Iraq.”¹²⁸ These positions were different from that of the foreign minister, however. Unlike Schröder, Fischer had assiduously refrained from categorically ruling out German support—at least diplomatic—for an invasion of Iraq.¹²⁹ This led to even greater confusion over the basic position of German foreign policy during this period; its principal architects were not on the same page.

Schröder’s uncompromising attitude would have put him in an awkward position had the Security Council ultimately passed a second resolution explicitly authorizing war in Iraq. He could either backtrack on his assertions and promises he had made the previous six months or ignore the “collective will” of the international community. Neither would have been a palatable decision, and either likely would have hurt him even more politically. Luckily for Schröder, the Security Council remained divided and he was not faced with that dilemma.

**Burden Sharing**

Since it was clear the United States was willing and able to conduct the war itself if necessary, concerns about burden sharing was not a determinant behind Germany’s opposition to the war. As indicated above, though Germany did not provide combat troops to the Persian Gulf War, it did provide around $6.5 billion toward the war effort.


¹²⁹ Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq," 219.
With Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Japan, Germany provided much of the war’s financing. Considering Germany’s historical legacy and the public opposition to the war, the Bush administration likely would have been satisfied with a symbolic financial contribution to the war effort. Even this was not forthcoming.

**Alliance Security Dilemma**

German calculations in late 2002 and early 2003 rested on fears of being entrapped in a situation in which there were no German interests directly at stake. German political leaders believed that an invasion of Iraq would lead to chaos and possibly broader regional destabilization. They believed that toppling Saddam’s regime would strengthen Iran, and shared France’s skepticism of moving quickly to bring democracy to Iraq, which risked empowering clerics of the majority Shia and Iran’s influence in Iraqi politics.

By late January 2003, the German government recognized that averting war was increasingly unlikely.\(^{130}\) Because Schröder had largely dissociated himself from the debate, there was little Germany could do to influence Bush administration strategy. As Elizabeth Pond said, “With his uncompromising stance, Schroeder left no flexibility for accommodation of either American or European allies on the issue—and therefore no room for coaxing a more multilateral approach to Iraq out of Washington by setting tactical conditions and then negotiating some in-between position.”\(^{131}\)

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\(^{131}\) Pond, *Friendly Fire*, 57.
While Germany’s overriding fear was entrapment, paradoxically by the end of the crisis some German officials were starting to worry about American abandonment. Because the disagreement between the United States and France and Germany had turned so acrimonious—more acrimonious than anyone in Berlin anticipated or desired—the real worry for some German political leaders was that the United States, chastened by the opposition it encountered from its traditional allies, might declare its independence from an ungrateful and entangling Europe.

While Schröder displayed perhaps the most vocal opposition to the war, Germany ultimately aided the United States in a number of ways. As Gordon and Shapiro point out, Germany’s contribution to the war actually exceeded that of many “official” members of the war coalition. “Berlin gave the United States basing and overflight rights, maintained chemical and biological warfare detection vehicles in Kuwait, and deployed antimissile defense systems to Turkey.”\(^{132}\) Perhaps it was for this reason that Washington simply sought to “ignore” Germany rather than “punish” (as in the case of France) it after the crisis had abated in the weeks and months after the start of major combat operations.\(^{133}\)

Alternative Explanations: Neorealism, Institutionalism, Constructivism

The neoclassical realist model applied in this chapter offers a better explanation than perspectives such as neorealism, institutionalism, and constructivism for why allies

\(^{132}\) Gordon and Shapiro, *Allies at War*, 171.

\(^{133}\) Condoleezza Rice was widely quoted as telling close associates to “punish France, ignore Germany, and forgive Russia.” Elizabeth Bumiller, "Condoleezza Rice: Bush's Tutor and Disciple," *New York Times*, November 17 2004.
pursued very different strategies during the Iraq crisis. Each paradigm has difficulty explaining the main dynamics of this crisis.

**Neorealism**

Despite possessing an unprecedented power advantage over its alliance partners, not only did a number of America’s closest European allies refuse to support the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, they openly opposed it and lobbied other states (in Europe and in the Security Council) to oppose it as well. Such a situation—some of America’s closest European allies actively seeking to undermine the United States in a situation it claimed was vital for its security—had never happened in the history of the Atlantic Alliance.

The structural position of each state was a poor predictor of whether it viewed the military campaign against Iraqi as necessary. Britain adopted a more aggressive posture than did France or Germany, who called for continued diplomacy and negotiations to reach a diplomatic settlement and the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. Second-tier powers in Europe, such as Italy and Spain, were initial supporters of the war, though when their center-right governments were defeated in elections by center-left governments, this support quickly evaporated. Poland and several smaller countries in central and eastern Europe viewed it as a sign of national pride to support the United States both diplomatically and materially.

**Institutionalism**

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Institutional constraints—whether those of NATO or of the EU—did little to mitigate the most vitriolic disagreements between Britain, France, and Germany. Javier Solana, the High Representative for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Chris Patten, the EU external affairs commissioner, played a clearly subordinate role to even medium-sized member states such as Spain, Italy, and Poland. Neither Solana nor Patten were able to move European heads of government to a remotely common position, nor were they given significant access to the principal decision-makers in London or Paris, let alone in Washington. After the war had begun, Solana traveled to Cairo to meet Powell, who was in the Egyptian capital during a visit to the Middle East. Powell declined to make time to meet with Solana, and soon left for his next destination with little more than a perfunctory phone conversation with the supposed foreign policy chief of the EU.\(^{135}\)

All the mechanisms, institutions, and expectations designed to encourage foreign policy convergence—or at least consultations—among EU member states were marginalized during the diplomatic crisis. When the leaders of Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Portugal—the so-called “gang of eight”—pledged their collective support to the United States in an op-ed that appeared in newspapers across Europe, none of them even bothered to consult with Solana; the

foreign minister of Greece, which held the rotating EU presidency at the time; or either Chirac or Schröder. Not only did the gang of eight fail to consult their EU partners, they implicitly criticized the approach taken by Chirac and Schröder. Their letter pointed to Saddam’s history of “deception, denial, and non-compliance,” and, in a veiled reference to France and Germany, the letter went on to say that, “If [the resolutions demanding Iraqi disarmament] are not complied with, the Security Council will lose its credibility and will suffer as a result. We are confident the Security Council will face up to all its responsibilities.”

The Iraq crisis demonstrated how the intergovernmental structure of CFSP ensures that national reflexes will persist and often prevail in highly salient foreign and security policy cases. Rather than converging around a common position, each individual political leader pursued what he perceived to be in his country’s—or sometimes his own—political interest. On everything from threat perception, the basic assumptions of international order, and the optimal—in terms of both efficacy and legitimacy—manner in which to confront those leaders who defy international obligations, standards, and norms, such as Saddam Hussein.]

*Constructivism*

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Ostensible norms of consultation, policy consensus, and policy co-determination were routinely violated during the run-up to the Iraq war. In fact, the episode showcased some of the nastier sides of European politics.

What was even more galling to Chirac than the letter from the “gang of eight,” and perhaps more disappointing for Solana, was the subsequent letter from the “Vilnius 10,” which referred to the city in which these states committed themselves to NATO membership in May 2000.\textsuperscript{138} Published on February 5, the day Colin Powell made his case to the United Nations, and orchestrated by Bruce Jackson, an American with close ties to the Bush administration, the letter proclaimed solidarity with the United States, cited the “compelling” evidence of Iraqi malfeasance, and pledged their support for the forcible disarmament of Saddam Hussein, if that became necessary.

In response to this latest proclamation of support for the United States, Chirac showed his exasperation, saying that the leaders of the “Vilnius 10” had “missed a good opportunity to keep quiet.” As future members of the EU, Chirac maintained, these countries were required to provide “a minimum of consideration for others, a minimum of policy coordination. If, when a difficult subject comes up, you start giving independent points of view that have not been coordinated with the group you want to join, well, that’s not very responsible behavior.”\textsuperscript{139} This remark prompted the foreign minister of the Czech Republic to say that, “We thought we were preparing for war against Saddam Hussein and not Jacques Chirac.”\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{138} The “Vilnius 10” included Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania. See especially Gordon and Shapiro, \textit{Allies at War}, 128-136.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 134.

Summary

The most severe crisis of the past five decades in the Atlantic Alliance was not a product of divergent threat perceptions, disagreements over burden sharing, or differences over public opinion. Instead, it was a result of different perceptions of the alliance security dilemma. Britain feared U.S. abandonment, and thus oriented its foreign policy early on to support the United States. France and Germany feared entrapment in a conflict they had few interests at stake and which they predicted could produce serious instability and political fallout. They had no desire to incur the enormous risks they believed an invasion would create. They therefore dissociated themselves from American war plans.

This chapter also shows the weaknesses of a neorealistic, institutionalist, or constructivist explanation of this crisis. Each approach would have predicted more cohesion within the alliance than in fact transpired. A neoclassical realist model that incorporates perceptions of abandonment and entrapment can explain why America’s closest European allies were split on the decision whether to support the United States or to oppose U.S. policy toward Iraq.
CHAPTER FIVE

Negotiations with Iran: Cooperation to Forestall American Attack

Negotiations with Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program became one of the most high profile instances of a cooperative European foreign policy operation since the end of the Cold War. Beginning in May 2003, less than a year after an Iranian opposition group revealed that Iran had been working on a clandestine nuclear weapons program for the past 18 years, and through the first round of sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council in December 2006, the so-called E3 of Britain, France, and Germany emerged as the primary diplomatic interlocutors with the regime in Tehran. ¹ Since 2006, the E3 has been part of the wider “contact group” with China, Russia, and the United States. ² This chapter focuses on the period from May 2003 to December 2006, when the E3 led the diplomatic effort, and the threat of an American military campaign against Iran was perceived in European capitals to be highest.

Unlike the other two case studies examined in this dissertation, E3 negotiations with Iran represented an instance in which Britain, France, and Germany were able to arrive at a common strategy. It is important to study this case to understand the factors that led to policy convergence on this issue but divergence in the other two cases. What proved different in this situation?

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¹ Though Britain, France, and Germany dominated the European delegation, the E3 received an official EU imprimatur in December 2004 when Javier Solana, at the time the EU foreign policy chief, formally joined the negotiation framework.

² This “contact group,” the main negotiating framework since June 2006, comprises the permanent five members of the UN Security Council (P5) plus Germany (P5+1). It operates outside the structural and institutional constraints of the Security Council, however, a reflection of the growth in such informal groupings of states in recent years. See Jochen Prantl, "Informal Groups of States and the UN Security Council," International Organization 59, no. 3 (2005).
The conventional wisdom is that shared threat perceptions, namely Iran becoming the world’s next nuclear power, were the basis for cooperation. This position rests on the presumption that Iran had strategic incentives to pursue a nuclear weapons program, that it was taking material steps toward achieving that goal, and that Iranian nuclear weapons—or Iran as a tacit nuclear power, having the capability to build nuclear weapons but not doing so—posed a serious threat to British, French, and German security or their vital interests.

I show that this explanation rests on dubious empirical evidence. Though each country strongly opposed Iran developing nuclear weapons, fear that Iran would suddenly pose a mortal threat to their security was not the basis for their cooperation. Nor did cooperation emerge through agreements on burden sharing. The Europeans never seriously considered coercive measures against Iran beyond economic sanctions and embargoes. There was thus not much burden to share. Domestic politics does not explain cooperation either. While the vast majority of Europeans were opposed to Iran producing or acquiring a nuclear weapon, the issue was not a salient one for most Europeans.

Instead, cooperation was a product of a desire to avoid entrapment in a U.S. military campaign against Iran, which they perceived to be a real possibility in the period examined in this chapter. When negotiations with Tehran began, Iraq had yet to fully devolve into chaos and instability. U.S. military power, following the stunning success of the initial Iraq invasion, resonated throughout the Middle East and European capitals. The United States seemed ascendant, and increasingly there were calls within the Bush administration that regime change in Iran should be next.
Since the conventional wisdom is that European governments were simply responding to a common threat, and because this poses the most compelling explanation to my own, the next section examines and evaluates this proposition, and shows why it does not stand up to empirical scrutiny.

Response to Threat?

While political leaders from Britain, France, and Germany took the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons seriously, preventing Iran’s development of nuclear weapons was not the main determinant of their cooperation. The external threat argument is based on the presumption that Iran had a strong incentive to pursue nuclear weapons, that it was making material progress toward that goal, and that Iranian nuclear weapons would threaten European security or European interests. In this section I take up each of these claims.

An Incentive for Nuclear Weapons?

There were several reasons why Iran would want nuclear weapons, which were responses to both internal and external factors. American and European intelligence agencies believed that Iran was intent on developing the capability to produce nuclear weapons. Even the IAEA eventually agreed with this assessment. Whether Iran would

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actually take the next step and develop nuclear weapons was a separate question, however.

Among American and European intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), there were widely differing estimates of how long it would take Iran to develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons. These estimates were notoriously inaccurate, but the consensus was that officials in the Bush administration thought this was a more imminent threat than did their European counterparts or officials in the IAEA. There was also disagreement on the appropriate response, namely whether diplomacy, sanctions, or military action was the best way to prevent Iran from getting to that position. The Bush administration seemed to prefer a military solution, whereas European allies—including the British—thought a military campaign could backfire and have disastrous consequences.

External Sources

Nuclear weapons are expensive, dangerous, and essentially useless in war. They are highly effective at deterring adversaries, however. Iran’s strategic situation had charged markedly in the past decade.⁴ Iran watched the different fates that befell Iraq and North Korea, like Iran two longtime U.S. adversaries, and understood that nuclear weapons would provide a solid deterrent against experiencing the same fate. The United States invaded Iraq and Afghanistan—two countries known not to possess nuclear weapons—but engaged in diplomacy with North Korea, a self-declared nuclear power after its renunciation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and nuclear test in

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2006, and offered it a number of concessions and inducements in the process. As the conservative Iranian newspaper Jumhuri-ye Islam stated, “In the contemporary world, it is obvious that having access to advanced weapons shall cause deterrence and therefore security, and will neutralize the evil wishes of great powers to attack other nations and countries.”

The impact of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, during which Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian military forces and launched missile attacks on Tehran and other Iranian cities, forced Iran to rethink its nuclear weapons program, which it had abandoned following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The main motivation behind Iran’s decision to restart its nuclear program in the 1980s was, therefore, to develop a deterrent capability against Iraq, especially its use of chemical weapons, not as an instrument to brandish against the United States, let alone Europe. The outcome of the Iran-Iraq war likely would have played out differently if Iran had nuclear weapons at its disposal. With nuclear weapons, Iran could feel relatively secure.

Responding to external threats does not provide a full picture of why Iran would want nuclear weapons. By the spring of 2003 Saddam Hussein had been deposed, and the Shiite majority, long suppressed under Saddam’s brutal dictatorship, was poised to dominate Iraqi politics. Iraq would likely become a key ally, and Iran would have a...

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7 Iran and Iraq are the two main countries in which Shiite Muslims form a majority of the population.
major role in Iraqi politics. Many of the Shiites in position to hold leadership roles in Iraq had lived in exile in Iran. The United States thus unintentionally helped Iran’s strategic position by getting rid of its main—perhaps sole—regional threat, and ensuring that Iran would play a major role in Iraqi politics.

Contrary to media speculation, Iran viewed a military attack from Israel as a minimal threat. As Ray Takeyh notes, “For the Islamic Republic, Israel may be an ideological affront and a civilization challenge, but it is not an existential threat mandating provision of nuclear weapons.” As two long-time observers of Iranian politics say, “Iran has no historic enemies; existential threats; or giant, hostile neighbors requiring it to compensate for a military imbalance with a nuclear program.” External threat perceptions were a main reason why Iran reconstituted its nuclear program in the 1980s. It is less satisfactory after Iraq was removed as a regional threat. While Iran would have reason to feel secure once it had nuclear weapons, it was opening itself up to significant risks by pursuing nuclear weapons.

Iran had long sought a greater geopolitical role in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Due to its rich cultural past, historical importance, size, strategic location, economic potential, and material power base, Iran saw itself as the rightful and natural leader of the region. Since its principal rival, Saddam Hussein, had been removed from power, Iran saw a window of opportunity to shift the region’s balance of power decisively in its

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favor. While Iran’s ambition to spread its brand of Islamic theocracy stalled many years ago, it continued to hold grander ambitions for its role and influence in the region. Iran’s ambition was in part explained by this motivation, to achieve something approximating great power status, a position no other country in the Middle East had ever achieved. Having nuclear weapons—or the capability to develop them relatively quickly—would burnish Iran’s power and prestige throughout the region.

Internal Sources

There is a strong degree of Persian nationalism and even Persian exceptionalism that makes the nuclear program popular among many Iranians. Iran is an ancient civilization at the crossroads of history. It is more accustomed to acting rather than being acted upon. For historical reasons Iranians are sensitive to the perception of foreign interference in its domestic politics. Feelings of victimhood and being the object of Western imperial powers are prevalent among many Iranians. That Pakistan, which many Iranians view as culturally and technologically inferior, had developed nuclear weapons but Iran had not was beyond comprehension for many in Iran.


14 This includes British and Russian imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the CIA-orchestrated coup in 1953 of the popularly elected Mohammed Mossadeq, and the almost pathological claims of American interference in post-1979 Iran.
The nuclear program had generally wide domestic support in Iran, especially among the clerical elite, and brought with it a degree of prestige to the Islamic Republic. Even more than the prestige that nuclear weapons would bring to Iran, the issue was, for many Iranians, one of basic rights and of resisting foreign interference in its internal affairs. Iran’s sovereign right to the peaceful use of nuclear power became a national issue. Upon taking office in 2005, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sought to use this to his political advantage, especially with inflation hovering around 17 percent and an official unemployment rate of 12 percent (likely much higher). Many of the economic problems Ahmadinejad vowed to fix during his tenure, such as economic inequality and stagnant economic growth, continued to be persistent problems for the Iranian economy.

Long sensitive to the perception of external powers dictating what it could and could not do, many Iranians viewed uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes as an unimpeachable right that the United States or other Western powers had no authority or legitimacy to question, let alone seek to prevent. The idea that Western powers have meddled in Iranian domestic politics—and subjugated it to humiliating compromises—is a core element of Iranian national memory. More than that, it is what Jack Snyder calls “myth-making,” the creation of national myths by the political elite to justify an allocation of state resources for narrow domestic interests. Creating the perception that Iran was standing up to illegitimate encroachment in areas of Iranian national sovereignty

15 Note Dueck and Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Challenge."

16 The inflation rate of 17 percent and unemployment rate of 12 percent are the official government estimates, as reported in the CIA World Factbook. Many believe the inflation rate to be much higher.

17 Jack Snyder, Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). In this case the interest would be the preservation of the regime.
had the ability to pay big political dividends, both in Iran and more broadly in the “non-aligned” world.

There was no real domestic constituency in Iran that was opposed to the nuclear program. There were of course some who believed that the clerical and political elite, and especially Ahmadinejad, handled the issue poorly, unnecessarily isolating Iran diplomatically and economically. Rather than being a monolith, there was real disagreement among the clerical elite, both on the nuclear issue but also on broader political and social questions. However, Iran lacked the kind of liberating coalition of big business, liquid asset holders, export-oriented firms, state monetary agencies, and other technical, scientific, and service-based firms that relied on access to global markets. Such groups and individuals can have real influence over states’ nuclear postures.¹⁸

Sanctions would have to become significantly more painful for average Iranians for the domestic political calculus to shift. European states cautioned against implementing truly crushing sanctions—on gasoline or other refined fuel, for example—that would hurt ordinary Iranians and that might serve to rally the Iranian people around the regime. Despite the authoritarian nature of the political system, the regime did not have a free hand when it came to the political decisions and strategies it took. Rather than suffering no political costs with its behavior, Iranian political leaders had to be concerned with domestic audience costs in the context of nuclear negotiations. The regime would suffer if it were seen to have back down in the face of Western pressure.¹⁹

Iran’s Technical Capabilities

The full extent and sophistication of Iran’s nuclear program was not fully known during this period. This was due to Iran’s concealment from IAEA weapons inspectors of its current and past activities; the inherent limitations of intelligence-gathering and monitoring; different interpretations of intelligence that had been accumulated; the inaccessibility—or only partial accessibility—of known and suspected nuclear sites; and the flood of inconsistencies and deceptions from Iran’s political leadership. In light of this evasion, many Western analysts and political leaders believed that a weapons program was the only credible explanation for Iran’s uranium enrichment program.

Iran received substantial assistance with its nuclear program from other states, rogue nuclear scientists and technicians, and transnational proliferation networks.20 Countries that helped Iran’s nuclear program include Russia, China, North Korea, Pakistan, and South Korea.21 There is well-documented evidence that Iran has benefited from cooperation with the A.Q. Khan network out of Pakistan.22 North Korea helped Iran with its ballistic missile program. It is possible that this cooperation extended into the nuclear realm as well.23 Iran made steady progress toward a sophisticated understanding of uranium enrichment and reprocessing. Enrichment, the process of turning raw uranium


22 Delpech, Iran and the Bomb, 53-55.

23 Ibid., 30-31.
into reactor or bomb fuel, is the most difficult step to master in developing a nuclear weapon. Enrichment took place at the nuclear facility at Natanz (and possibly other, undeclared sites).

Including uranium enrichment, Iran had made significant progress in two of the three steps necessary for developing a nuclear weapon. For Western negotiators, it seemed to be only a matter of time before Iran would have the capability—whether it decided to do so was another question—to enrich uranium to weapons-grade, or a concentration in excess of 90 percent purity. Many experts believed that Iran at minimum pursued a “break-out capacity,” a situation in which it would possess the requisite amount of fuel and expertise to be able to build a bomb relatively quickly without actually doing so. The number of operational centrifuges, the machines that actually enrich uranium, in Iran steadily increased.24

The other two steps are designing and building a warhead and building a reliable delivery system, such as a ballistic missile. Iran made steady progress in its ballistic missile program. Iranian ballistic missiles had the capability to strike Israel and even parts of Western Europe.25 Tel Aviv would be within easy missile range. The latest Shahab missile, the Shahab-3b, has a distinctive nosecone that is widely viewed as serving as a possible delivery vehicle for a nuclear weapon.26 Iran’s missile program—running parallel to its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities—further raised

24 By the end of 2010, Iran had nearly 5,000 centrifuges installed or being installed, and stated it intended to increase this number. See Nazila Fathi, "Iran: More Centrifuges Reported," New York Times, November 27, 2008.

25 Iran’s ballistic missile program has continued apace. Its Shahab-3 missile, which Iran tested in July 2008, has a range of 2,000 kilometers, or about 1,250 miles.

suspicion that its motives were not purely civilian or benign, despite its repeated assurances.

The one indeterminate element was whether Iran had decided to pursue the technology to fit a nuclear warhead onto a ballistic missile. According to a 140-page U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released in December 2007, Iran halted its weaponization program in 2003. The NIE reported two facts with “high confidence” that were either previously unknown or highly disputed: that Iran had in fact operated a secret, military-run nuclear weapons program, in addition to its declared nuclear power program; and that Iran halted this secret military program in 2003, “primarily in response to international pressure.”

Not all U.S. allies shared this assessment. German intelligence believed that weapons work was never halted, and Israel believed that weaponization was restarted in 2005 on direct order of Khomeini. While projections of when Iran would have a nuclear weapon have been notoriously inaccurate over the past decade, most experts believed that Iran was, at most, ten years away from having a fully functional nuclear weapon. Most experts believed at the time that the only thing that would prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons would be a political decision at the highest levels of the regime not to do so.

The Threat


Iran would be the world’s tenth nuclear weapons state, and, following India, Pakistan, and North Korea, the fourth newly declared nuclear power since the end of the Cold War. While the United States, Europe, and the international community opposed each of these new cases of proliferation, the possibility of Iran developing its own nuclear weapons engendered very strong opposition. The internal nature of the Iranian regime—an opaque, radical, authoritarian state with a long record of supporting terrorist groups, and its troubled relations with the West since the 1979 revolution—caused anxiety in the United States and the West in general. Additionally, Iran’s repeated provocations, violations of its treaty commitments and resolutions from the Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors, statements from Ahmadinejad, like when he said that Israel “should be wiped off the map,” publicly questioning the historical veracity of the Holocaust, contributed to the concerted opposition of the United States and the EU to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

A nuclear Iran could pose a threat to European interests in the region, destabilizing the Middle East and Persian Gulf, strategically important regions—economic and politically—for all three countries. If Iran moved to weaponize its nuclear program, this could lead other states in the region, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular, to rethink their own nuclear strategies. A nuclear Iran could ultimately precipitate a regional nuclear arms race. A nuclear arms race in the Middle East, the world’s most

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31 Joseph Cirincione, "A Mideast Nuclear Chain Reaction?" *Current History* (2008); François Heisbourg, "L'Iran Et La Bombe, La Guerre Ou La Paix," *Le Monde*, September 11 2007. The belief that Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons would hasten the spread of nuclear weapons throughout the Middle East is far from unanimous, however. See Christoph Bertram, "Rethinking Iran: From Confrontation to
volatile region, would be a political nightmare. Even if countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey chose not to pursue their own nuclear programs, they could decide to substantially increase their conventional military capabilities. Such a scenario could further destabilize an already fractious, unstable, conflict-prone region, and further heighten the security competition among states in the Persian Gulf and Middle East.

Rather than making Iran feel more secure, or encouraging greater restraint in its foreign policy ambitions, the possession of a small nuclear arsenal may actually lead it to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy.\textsuperscript{32} Iran’s strategic position and bargaining leverage would improve significantly if it developed or otherwise acquired nuclear weapons. In such a scenario, the concessions necessary to satisfy Iranian negotiating demands would increase for Western negotiators.

Iran has a long history of funding, training, and arming terrorist groups in the Middle East—Hezbollah and Hamas in particular.\textsuperscript{33} Iran’s support for these two groups has been a major point of contention between Tehran and the West for decades. Iran continues to provide Hezbollah in excess of $100 million in support each year, in addition to weapons, explosives training, and logistical and political aid.\textsuperscript{34} The U.S. State Cooperation," in Chaillot Paper, No. 110 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2008). On Saudi Arabia’s nuclear posture, see Bahgat Gawdat, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Case of Saudi Arabia," Middle East Journal 60, no. 3 (2006).

\textsuperscript{32} This is the concept of moral hazard. When an individual (or state, in this case) is insured against catastrophic loss, there are incentives to act more incautiously.


\textsuperscript{34} Graham Allison, Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe (New York: Times Books, 2004), 34-37.
Department has called Iran the world’s principal state sponsor of terrorism. While it is unlikely that Tehran would share actual nuclear weapons with terrorist groups, Iran’s could use its connections to Hezbollah and Hamas to orchestrate terrorist attacks in other countries. Iran threatened to send 40,000 suicide bombers to strike “American and British sensitive points” in the event of a military strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities. Iran could help unsavory regimes and governments in their own weapons design, enrichment capabilities, or other technical assistance.

A nuclear Iran would challenge, perhaps irrevocably, the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Even Iran’s continued uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, done in the presence of IAEA inspectors, posed a challenge to the relevance and authority of the NPT. If Iran were to develop nuclear weapons, the sanctity and continued relevance of the NPT would be in serious jeopardy.

The consequences and risks of a nuclear-armed Iran were thus clear. While it could threaten their economic and political interests in the region, Iranian nuclear weapons would not pose a credible threat to core British, French or German interests. Though Iran was working to improve both the range and the accuracy of its long-range ballistic missiles, Paris, Berlin, and London will be well out of range for some time. European governments were negotiating not because they believed their security would be threatened by a nuclear Iran, but because they worried that the United States might take matters into its own hands and they would be dragged into the conflict.

36 “Iran Suicide Bombers ‘Ready to Hit Britain’,” The Sunday Times (London), April 16 2006.
37 Though current Iranian missile technology would have the ability to strike parts of southeastern Europe. Roshandel, “Iran's Evolving Defense Strategy.”
While Iran in possession of nuclear weapons was a scenario they clearly sought to prevent, a much more serious—and imminent—threat was a decision by the Bush administration to take out Iran’s nuclear facilities in a military campaign. As I describe below, the consequences of this scenario was much more threatening for British, French, and German security. It was this that they mainly sought to avoid.

In the next three sections I examine in more detail bilateral relations between Britain, France, and Germany and Iran. I then show that fears of entrapment were a more compelling reason for European states to cooperate than were fears of Iran developing nuclear weapons, serious as that was.

**Britain**

Compared to France and Germany, Britain adopted a position on Iran somewhat closer to that of the United States. Though all three of America’s European allies preferred to pursue negotiations rather than a U.S. military campaign to resolve the crisis, Blair argued that the military option should be kept on the table, a position long taken by officials in the Bush administration. Britain was also a strong advocate of imposing sanctions and other coercive measures on Iran if it continued its uranium enrichment program in defiance of the IAEA and Security Council. This included potentially imposing a worldwide ban on foreign investment in Iran’s oil and gas industries, which was seen as one of the most devastating steps to take.\(^{38}\)

Britain traditionally had advocated a policy of “critical engagement” with Iran, despite lingering political tensions between the two countries. Britain, like many other

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Western governments, severed official diplomatic relations with Tehran following the 1979 Islamic revolution. Formal diplomatic relations were restored only in 1988. Relations were severed again the following year after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, at the time Iran’s Supreme Leader, issued his infamous fatwa calling for the murder of British writer Salman Rushdie for his purportedly blasphemous novel *The Satanic Verses*. In 1990 Anglo-Iranian relations were restored, but only at the chargé d’affaires level. Full diplomatic relations were later restored, but there was little cooperation between the two countries beyond sporting events and some cultural exchanges.

The policy of critical engagement with Iran was launched at the 1992 EU Summit in Edinburgh. It linked opportunities for greater EU-Iran trade, investment, and technology partnerships with improvements in Iran’s behavior in a number of areas: human rights; greater press freedom in Iran; an end to Iran’s support of terrorism; and support for American and European efforts to establish Middle East peace. Blair later sought to link progress on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iran, which would lower tariffs on goods traded between the two countries and establish greater cooperation in trade and investment, to greater Iranian cooperation on the nuclear issue.

*Threat Perceptions*

British security services said that, after al Qaeda, Iran posed the biggest threat to British security and British interests. Blair reserved a particular animus for Ahmadinejad. He called Ahmadinejad’s statement that Israel should be “wiped off the map” a “disgrace,” and said, “If they carry on like this the question people will be asking us is,
‘When are you going to do something about Iran?’ Can you imagine a state like that with an attitude like that having a nuclear weapon?’\textsuperscript{39}

While Iran posed a problem, for the reasons described above, it did not pose an imminent threat to British security. Iran is far from Britain, and spends a fraction on defense per year compared to Britain. A much greater threat, both strategically and politically, would be entanglement in a second war in the Middle East, especially as the security situation in Iraq was deteriorating rapidly.

\textit{Domestic Politics}

As the condition in Iraq continued to deteriorate from 2004 onwards, Blair’s popularity among British voters sunk to an all-time low. Despite his exasperation over Iranian dissembling and the lack of progress in E3 negotiations, Blair clearly preferred that they continue. Because of his political vulnerability at home, not to mention his weakened stature in Europe, he had no alternative.

There was little domestic opposition to how Blair handled the Iranian nuclear issue. No domestic constituency had come out in opposition to British objectives and strategy on the issue. Trade between Britain and Iran constituted negligible fraction of total EU-Iran trade. British public opinion clearly sided with the basic thrust of the government’s response. British public opinion was highly skeptical of Iran’s motivations regarding its nuclear program, and viewed the Iranian government as a threat to regional stability and international security. In a June 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 89 percent of Britons opposed Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. Forty-nine percent believed

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{The Times} (London), 28 October 2005.
the goal of Iran’s nuclear program was to produce nuclear weapons, and 48 percent said that Iran would be likely to attack the United States or Europe if it developed nuclear weapons. Thirty-four percent said Iran posed a “great danger” to its region and the world (which was up from 11 percent in May 2003) and only 16 percent said that Iran posed a “small or no danger” (down from 34 percent in May 2003).  

Despite this sentiment, the British public opposed a military campaign against Iran’s nuclear facilities, even if Iran continued to enrich uranium. In a November 2007 survey, only 11 percent of British respondents supported military strikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities if it continued uranium enrichment. Forty-four percent supported continued diplomacy without the imposition of any economic or commercial sanctions. 

The opposition Tories largely supported the government’s strategy and objectives regarding Iran. Some Conservative MPs were more stalwart in maintaining that the military option should be kept on the table than the official government position. As Liam Fox, at the time the shadow Defense Secretary, said in February 2006, “Every pressure must be brought. But it was wrong for the European Union’s foreign affairs spokesman Javier Solana to rule out the use of force. It is wrong for Britain’s foreign secretary, Jack Straw, to echo him.”  

Basic agreement among parties of the political left and political right on Iran policy was evident in France and Germany as well.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw was strongly opposed to the idea of using military force against Iran. He said that military action against Iran was “inconceivable” and that

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40 The full report can be viewed at http://pewglobal.org/2006/?cat=survey-reports.


he could “envisage no circumstances in which military action would be justified.” Still, perhaps partly because of his role advocating a military intervention against Iraq on the grounds of an illicit weapons program that proved baseless, Straw was extremely cautious on Iran. The prime minister did not share Straw’s blanket anti-war sentiment, however, and replaced him in a Cabinet reshuffle following a poor showing for the Labor Party in local elections in 2006. Blair consistently stated that military force could not be ruled out completely if Iran continued to defy its obligations under both the Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol, echoing arguments made by many in the Bush administration.

Despite reflecting public opinion and other domestic political constraints, domestic politics was not the main determinant of British strategy. Iran was not a highly salient political issue in Britain. Starting negotiations with the Iranian regime was not based on domestic political pressures—if anything there were incentives to maintain a low profile on the issue and focus on Iraq. Instead, the British government quickly entered into nuclear diplomacy with Iran in the summer of 2003, precisely the time when it perceived a strong possibility the United States might seek regime change in Iran.

Alliance Security Dilemma

The British government’s freedom of movement on the Iran issue was limited. Britain would have been unable to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy toward Tehran even if it envisioned the need and justification for some kind of military intervention. It was more important for Britain to avoid a situation it faced during the

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prelude to the Iraq war: the United States moving inexorably toward war with another country in the Middle East, and having to decide whether to support or dissociate itself from such a policy.

There was no way Britain could have joined the United States in a military campaign against Iran. Its military was stretched just by its presence in Iraq. British government officials would have had to come out publicly either in support or in opposition to a U.S.-led military campaign. Because of the widespread perception that the Bush administration had misused and manipulated the intelligence on Iraq, the British government would have faced a skeptical Parliament, media, and public regarding the credibility of Iranian intelligence. Having successfully maneuvered to preserve its close partnership with the United States despite the political costs doing so entailed at home, Britain would be faced with an even more precarious dilemma if the United States waged a preemptive strike against Iran.

**France**

While skeptical of the calls by some in the Bush administration to disable Iranian nuclear facilities via a preemptive strike, French policymakers took a generally tough approach against Iran. This included supporting several rounds of both Security Council and EU sanctions against individuals and groups associated with Iran’s nuclear program. This approach was in marked contrast to the skepticism France displayed during the prelude to the Iraq invasion.

The Iran case spanned the presidencies of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy. Unlike Chirac, however, Sarkozy had little foreign policy experience before becoming
president. Despite sharing the same Gaullist foreign policy perspective as Chirac and many of his predecessors, and believing, with Chirac, that France must project power through the EU to increase its political influence, Sarkozy adopted a warmer relationship with the United States. Despite speaking of seeking a “rupture” with some elements of the past, especially what he viewed as a kind of reflexive anti-Americanism in French politics and foreign policy, Sarkozy’s foreign policy thinking was still based on core Gaullist principles: a critical role for France to play in international politics; an expanded role for the EU in world affairs; and a multipolar world with a united Europe as a major bloc. Regarding relations with the United States, Sarkozy subscribed to Hubert Védrine’s motto of “Friends, allies, not aligned.” Sarkozy adopted a tougher rhetorical tone against Tehran, echoing American warnings that “all options should be left open” to prevent Tehran’s development or acquisition of nuclear weapons.

*Threat Perceptions*

Chirac and many within the French government highly distrusted Iranian motivations and ambitions. Chirac privately expressed his belief that the regime in Tehran could not be trusted. In addition to Iran’s obfuscation on the nuclear issue, Chirac’s distrust was based on the destabilizing influence Iran had played in both Lebanon and Syria. France traditionally had important strategic interests in those two

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45 Tiersky, "France Returns to Center Stage."

46 Justin Vaisse, "A Gaullist by Any Other Name," *Survival* 50, no. 3 (2008), 2, 4.

countries, especially Lebanon. In an interview with *Le Monde* in July 2006, for example, Chirac cited Iranian arms shipments and funding of Hezbollah via Syria as factors that contributed to the destabilization of Lebanon.48

Chirac caused a minor diplomatic crisis in February 2007 when he stated in an interview that the prospect of Iran acquiring one or even two nuclear weapons was “not very dangerous.” According to Chirac, a nuclear Iran would not pose a threat to a country like Israel because any attack on Tel Aviv would result in the immediate destruction of Tehran. As Chirac stated:

I would say that what is dangerous about this situation is not the fact of having a nuclear bomb—having one, maybe a second a little later, well, that’s not very dangerous. But what is very dangerous is proliferation. This means that if Iran continues in the direction it has taken and totally masters nuclear generated electricity, the danger does not lie in the bomb it will have, and which will be of no use to it.

Where will it drop it, this bomb? On Israel? It would not have gone 200 meters into the atmosphere before Tehran would be razed to the ground.

What is dangerous is proliferation. It is really very tempting for other countries in the region that have large financial resources to say: “Well, we too, we’re going to do it. We’re going to help out others to do it.” Why wouldn’t Saudi Arabia do it? Why wouldn’t it help Egypt to do so as well? That is the danger. So one has to find a way to settle this problem. That, then, is the military nuclear issue.49

Within hours of the publication of these comments, Chirac attempted to clarify his remarks, saying: “France, along with the international community, cannot accept the prospect of a nuclear armed Iran.”50 Chirac had seemingly upset the careful diplomatic

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consensus on which the E3 had based their negotiating position. While the development of an Iranian nuclear arsenal could precipitate a regional nuclear arms race in the Middle East, a clear strategic and security threat, Chirac appeared relatively sanguine about the prospect of an Iranian nuclear weapon.

Many people—in Europe and in the United States, in government as well as academia—shared the belief that Iran could effectively be contained even if it developed nuclear weapons.\(^{51}\) This view was based on the logic of nuclear deterrence and the cost-benefit calculations of nuclear powers. Védrine also believed that containment and deterrence would be effective against a nuclear Iran. After Chirac’s interview Védrine said that, “Jacques Chirac said things that many experts are saying around the world, even in the United States. That is to say, that a country that possesses the bomb does not use it and automatically enters the system of deterrence and doesn’t take absurd risks.”\(^{52}\) Former U.S. national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski voiced a similar belief, saying that Iran could be contained because while members of the Iranian political leadership “may be dangerous, assertive, and duplicitous, there is nothing in their history that suggests they are suicidal.”\(^{53}\)

Despite its bluster, Iran’s actual behavior has been cautious. As Hendrik Hertzberg, writing in the *New Yorker*, said, “There is no evidence that Khamenei, Ahmadinejad’s superior and the Islamic Republic’s ‘Supreme Leader’ in fact as well as in name, would provoke the annihilation of everything Iranian—the cities, the people, the


future, and of course the regime—by launching a nuclear attack, directly or by terrorist proxy, on a country that is known to possess a large nuclear arsenal, and an ability to use it in a second strike.”

Before the French presidential election in May 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, a one-time Chirac protégé and the candidate from the center-right Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) said that the Iranian nuclear program would be the most urgent foreign policy issue he would face if elected. His Socialist Party candidate, Ségolène Royal, said she would oppose even a civilian nuclear program in Iran, echoing some of the same comments made by neoconservatives and other hard-liners in Washington. It was perhaps the first time in history that a Socialist candidate for the French presidency and American neoconservatives agreed on a major question of international security. Sarkozy called Royal’s position “irresponsible” and said that France should instead help countries establish civilian nuclear programs.

At a speech in Washington in September 2007, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner outlined the many risks associated with a nuclear Iran: “For the security of the region, including—but not only—that of Israel, for our security as Europeans, for credibility of the Non-Proliferation regime and for the credibility of the UN Security Council, in other words the future of the multilateral order . . . And don’t forget the risk that a nuclear-armed Iran would create in terms of regional proliferation. Its neighbors would be tempted to follow the same path.” The concern that an Iranian nuclear arsenal


56 For the full text of the speech, see http://ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article662.
would lead to greater proliferation in the region, which was also shared by Chirac, rested on a shaky foundation. If an Israeli nuclear arsenal did not precipitate a fundamental rethinking of Saudi or Egyptian nuclear ambitions, it is not certain an Iranian nuclear arsenal would.

Parallel to its role in negotiations with Iran, Sarkozy sought to reassert French strategic influence in the Persian Gulf. He announced in January 2008 the creation of a permanent French base in Abu Dhabi, on the Persian Gulf. The base would lie across the Strait of Hormuz from Iran and would be the first permanent French military base in the Gulf region. The base could eventually have up to 400 military personnel from the French army, navy, and air force.

The creation of this base was part of a broader strategic reorientation. France is in the process of repositioning its forces for what it views as the most important strategic and volatile region of the world. The 2008 French White Paper on security and defense detailed "an arc of crisis from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, characterized by a combination of instability, multiple sources of inter-state and non-state violence, the prospect of proliferation and the concentration of energy resources."

**Domestic Politics**

Domestic political opinion in France largely reflected the government’s skepticism of Iran’s claim that its nuclear program had purely civilian motives, as well as

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government officials’ distrust of key Iranian policymakers. In the June 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey cited above, 92 percent of French respondent opposed Iran acquiring nuclear weapons; 31 percent said Iran posed a “great danger” to its region and the world (up from 11 percent in May 2003), and only 21 percent said that Iran posed a “small or no danger” (down from 48 percent in May 2003). Seventy-seven percent held an unfavorable view of Iran (only 22 percent had a favorable view), and 74 percent believed that nuclear weapons were the real goal of Iran’s nuclear program. Forty-eight percent believed that Iran would be likely to attack the United States or Europe if it developed nuclear weapons.

French investments in Iran, at one time substantial, had gradually diminished by the middle of the last decade. Sarkozy unsuccessfully lobbied his European counterparts to decrease their economic ties with Iran. Tension with Germany, which maintained a comparatively robust commercial relationship with Iran, arose on this issue. Kouchner accused the German government of being too soft on Tehran to protect its own economic interests. In an interview with Der Spiegel in October 2007, Kouchner pointed out that Germany and Italy had greater economic interests in Iran than did France, and that “more severe sanctions would not affect all countries equally.”

If anything, there were domestic political incentives to take a stronger position on Iran. The French public was overwhelming skeptical of Iranian intentions, and with sanctions lifted on Iran, there was the possibility of lucrative business deals. Nevertheless, French officials understood that a stronger approach to Iran—including the

59 For a full transcript of the interview, see http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/Spiegel-interview-with-Bernard.html.
use of military force—would likely lead to significant political fallout and a number of unintended consequences.

*Alliance Security Dilemma*

Chirac’s strategy attempted to situate France as a broker between the United States and Iran. He rejected the more militaristic voices in Washington calling for a more aggressive policy toward Iran, including the use of military force. Chirac was also—as were many Europeans—reluctant to impose the absolutely crushing sanctions on Iran that were being advocated by some Bush administration officials. Asked in an interview with *USA Today* in September 2006 whether he would support sanctions, Chirac said:

I am in principle opposed to sanctions. Experience has shown that sanctions never lead to anything positive, especially with a great and proud people that have an ancient civilization like Iran. I don’t believe that sanctions are the way to obtain something. I’m not ruling out however the possibility of sanctions. But they should be examined by the Six [the contact group consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany] and initially they should be provisional and proportionate. But it’s not the scenario I’m taking as my basis. We should be able to arrive at a solution, I hope, which excludes on one hand sanctions and on the other enrichment. In any case that is the goal we’re pushing.\(^{60}\)

\(^{60}\) For a transcript of the interview, see http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/anglais/speeches_and_documents/2006/interview_of_president_jacques_chirac_with_the_daily_usa_today.60740.html.
A strategy based on imposing increasingly severe sanctions could backfire: it could harm ordinary Iranians and serve to unite the various factions in Iran around the regime. Chirac and other French officials supported continuing to press Iran’s leadership to open their nuclear activities to international inspection and verification, and to provide full documentation on all nuclear-related activities that Iran had not yet disclosed to the IAEA.

In his first major foreign policy address as president, Sarkozy said in August 2007 that Iran open itself to militarily attack if it did not adhere to its international obligations on the most sensitive parts of its nuclear program. Sarkozy did not specify whether France would take part in any military campaign against Iran, or whether it would tacitly support an American military operation while remaining on the sidelines. Nonetheless, Sarkozy began to move French policy closer to that of the United States. He also praised the strategy of UN-imposed sanctions on Iran, a break from the position of Chirac.

Other members of the Sarkozy administration also adopted a sharper rhetorical tone against Tehran as well. Bernard Kouchner, the foreign minister (and co-founder of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning humanitarian organization Doctors without Borders) said, “It is necessary to prepare for the worst,” meaning the possibility of the use of military force. Kouchner also attempted to differentiate French strategy under Sarkozy from that

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of Chirac. “We don’t take our orders from Washington,” he said, “even if we have a different policy than the one that was based on permanent anti-Americanism.”

Despite generating surprise at the bluntness of Kouchner’s remarks, others within the French government voiced similar sentiments. François Fillon, the prime minister, said that “The foreign affairs minister is right because everybody can see that the situation in the Near East is extremely tense and that it’s getting worse.” The French foreign policy establishment was more hawkish on Iran than they were on Iraq.

Chirac’s statement that Iran could be effectively contained revealed the predominant view of many in the French government. While Iran developing its own nuclear weapons was a situation they wished to prevent if possible, a greater threat would have been a unilateral military campaign by the United States. The political fallout of an attack would likely be significant, and could directly threaten French interests. It is likely Chirac and other French officials also wanted to avoid a repeat of the acrimonious debate over the Iraq war. Not only would negotiations forestall an American attack, it could also burnish France’s and Europe’s image as a geopolitical heavyweight.

Germany

Compared to France and Britain, Germany had a long history of commercial relations with Iran. Its commercial relationship was part of a broader strategy of “constructive engagement” with Iran. This strategy had roots in Germany’s own

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experience, namely its policy of *Ostpolitik* toward East Germany in the 1970s. Instead of continuing East Germany’s isolation, a combination of trade and diplomacy was credited with real political gains, even hastening the demise of communism and the end of the Cold War.\(^64\) It is a model that Germany tried to adopt with Iran.

The most conspicuous difference between negotiations with Iran and the decision to invade Iraq was that Schröder did not seek to exploit his differences with the United States in his reelection bid against Angela Merkel, despite trailing badly at the polls. At a news conference with Bush in June 2005, Schröder agreed with the American president’s position that an Iranian nuclear weapon was “unacceptable.”\(^65\) The German chancellor would be alone if he advocated a more cautious approach toward Tehran. He did not have the support of Paris and it would have seemed that the German chancellor was aligning with Moscow and even China against London, Paris, and Washington. This was a step too far even for Schröder.

Schröder could not resist making no reference to the Iranian nuclear issue in the course of the election campaign, however. On the campaign trail the month following his trip to Washington, Schröder announced that he would refuse under any circumstances the involvement of German forces in any military campaign against Iran. Again Schröder sought to exploit the unease many Germans feel regarding the use of military force, particularly outside Europe’s borders. This statement had another effect, however, one that Schröder had not intended. His statement represented a shift not simply in the German position, but instead the demands the E3 had placed on Iran. In effect Schröder

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\(^64\) Charles Lane, "Germany's New Ostpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 6 (1995).

had offered Iran an explicit security guarantee in the absence of any equivalent Iranian concession on enrichment or related activities. Even if the European negotiators had no intention of taking part in a military campaign against Iran, many viewed it as irresponsible to publicize this sentiment so openly and so unequivocally. The center-right Die Welt said that “the chancellor should be ashamed.”

Merkel went on to narrowly defeat Schröder in October 2005 parliamentary elections, forming a government only after protracted negotiations between the CDU/CSU and SPD. Merkel was forced to give major concessions to the SPD, including eight of sixteen cabinet seats. The CDU/CSU and SPD formed a coalition government (the “grand coalition”), with the SPD in charge of the foreign affairs, finance, and justice portfolios. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Schröder’s former chief of staff and a close political protégé of the former chancellor, was appointed foreign minister.

Merkel emerged as one of the leading European voices in global, and particularly trans-Atlantic, politics. Like Sarkozy, Merkel was more pro-American and Atlanticist than her immediate predecessor. Schröder, like Chirac, resisted perceived American unilateralism and the Iraq war in particular, seeking instead to create greater space between the United States and Europe. Both Chirac and Schröder expressed support for a more balanced, multipolar world where power was distributed more evenly. Merkel attempted to reestablish the balance for German foreign policy between France and the United States.

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Merkel adopted a slightly more hawkish position than Schröder on the use of force, refusing to rule out categorically a military response against Iran. Other members of Merkel’s coalition government did not share the depth of her concerns. Her SPD foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, said that the military option should be moved off the table. The German government was thus close to having two policies on Iran, that of the chancellor and that of her foreign minister.

Threat Perceptions

Threat perceptions played a small role in shaping German policy on Iran. Merkel stated repeatedly that Iran’s development of nuclear weapons would be unacceptable, and drew on the mistakes made in Europe by not challenging Hitler and Nazi Germany’s increasingly aggressive foreign policy in the 1930s. Merkel stated that Iran “blatantly crossed the red line” with its disregard for its obligations as a signatory of the NPT, and rebuked Ahmadinejad for his statements on Israel and his questioning of the Holocaust.69 Merkel told the German newsmagazine Stern that, “All those with political responsibility in Germany are aware of their responsibility to stand by Israel.”70

There is no indication that German leaders saw a mortal danger in Iran’s pursuit of a nuclear weapon. Indeed, Germany was one of Iran’s most important trade partners in Europe. Commercial interests led Germany to take a somewhat more accommodative approach toward Iran, which at times angered its French and British partners.


Domestic Politics

There were few domestic incentives for either Schröder or Merkel to take a firm position on Iran’s nuclear issue. As in Britain and France, the vast majority of Germans harbored suspicions about Iran’s nuclear program. In the June 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey cited earlier, 97 percent of Germans opposed Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. Eighty-two percent of Germans held an unfavorable view of Iran while only 12 percent held a favorable view. Fifty-one percent thought that Iran posed a “great danger” to its region and the world (up from 18 percent in May 2003), while only 10 percent said that it posed a “small or no danger” (down from 28 percent in May 2003). Seventy-one percent believed that nuclear weapons were the primary goal of Iran’s nuclear program and 53 percent said Iran would be likely to attack the United States or Europe if it developed nuclear weapons.

While the vast majority of Germans were skeptical of Tehran’s claims that its nuclear program had purely civilian purposes, Iran’s nuclear program was not a highly salient political issue in Germany, especially compared to Germany’s own domestic issues. Instead, there were strong domestic political incentives—especially from business groups in Germany opposed to greater restrictions on trade to Iran—for Schröder or Merkel to take a more accommodating position on Iran. Germany had traditionally been one of Iran’s biggest European trading partners. More recently Germany had become Iran’s most important trade partner in Europe.

Iran held significant trade and economic appeal for Germany and other countries in Europe. Iran is a huge potential market of over 70 million people, and continues to be dependent on imports for high-tech goods and services. Iran depends on investment
capital from the West rather than the East, and after the destruction wrought by the Iran-Iraq war, Iran was looking to develop its scientific, technological, and industrial base. German companies such as Siemens, Mannesmann, BASF, ThyssenKrupp, and Daimler-Benz have all done business in Iran. Trade between Germany and Iran covered a wide variety of areas: engineering and manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, steel, automobiles, energy, and banking.

Germany was instrumental in the construction of the Bushehr nuclear reactors before they were bombed by Iraq in 1983 during the Iran-Iraq war. Beginning in 1974, Siemens, a German contractor, helped construct the two heavy-water nuclear reactors near the town of Bushehr in western Iran. By the time of the overthrow of the shah in 1979, one of the reactors was approximately 85 percent complete while the other was only partially begun. After an initial unwillingness to restart development of the nuclear program, Ayatollah Khomeini changed course and reached out to Siemens to finish work on the Bushehr reactors. After expressing some initial interest, German officials concluded that the project was too sensitive politically and did not want to strain Germany’s relationship with the United States. Russia took over development of the reactors but progress was slow, owing partly to Russian allegations that they did not receive payments from Iran for the work they had already completed.

Germany’s commercial relationship with Iran was a source of friction with the United States and other European governments. Particularly controversial were the German government’s export credit guarantees. Companies that did business in Iran

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71 Lane, "Germany's New Ostpolitik."

received loans from German banks to finance investment and trade deals. The banks then received loan guarantees from the German government because such investments are by nature risky. The German government was one of the largest providers of export credit guarantees in Europe. In 2005, for example, the Germany government provided $5.4 billion of such credits, trailing only Italy, and far ahead of France ($1.4 billion), and Spain, Austria, and Britain ($1 billion each).73

The volume of trade between Germany and Iran was hardly affected during the period of direct E3-Iran negotiations. Unlike the restrictions placed by the U.S. government on American firms doing business in Iran, German companies had cultivated close trading relationships with Iranian firms. Germany was one of the few advanced, industrialized countries that did not have near-total sanctions and embargoes on trade with Iran. In fact, trade both ways increased substantially between 2003 and 2008, as the table below shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GERMAN EXPORTS TO IRAN</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
<th>GERMAN IMPORTS FROM IRAN</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>+8.9</td>
<td>577.8</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3,604</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>+40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4,110</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4,429</td>
<td>+24</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3,574</td>
<td>+33</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some accused Germany of following a unilateral policy, not just on Iran, but increasingly on other foreign policy and security issues. As one of the world’s leading exporters, the manufacturing and industrial sectors in Germany hold strong influence over foreign policy, more so than in other European countries. They sought to maintain their access to the Iranian market.

Alliance Security Dilemma

Merkel staked out a different German approach on the Iranian nuclear issue, different both from that or her predecessor as well as from her European and American partners. She insisted on the need to get the United States more directly involved in negotiations, and pressed Bush a number of times on this issue. Merkel also signaled that Germany would be willing to downgrade its economic relationship with Iran, a step her predecessor was reluctant to take. Germany decreased its export credits, but in 2007 some 1,700 German companies continued to do about $5 billion worth of trade with Iran.

Merkel supported Putin’s proposal to enrich uranium on Russian soil for Iran and then ship it back, thereby keeping one of the most sensitive phases of the nuclear program out of direct Iranian control. While the Bush administration was skeptical of the plan,

74 See http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Laenderinformationen/01-Laender/Iran.html#t2.


Merkel told Bush that the idea should be taken seriously. Not only would it prevent Iran from enriching its own uranium, it would also keep Russia involved in the negotiation process.

Germany was mainly concerned about the prospect of a unilateral American military campaign against Iran. The German foreign intelligence service believed that an attack on Iran would have disastrous economic consequences. An attack could provoke Tehran to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which 40 percent of Gulf oil transships. The price of oil would skyrocket, making Iran even more flush with oil revenue and potentially even more defiant to Western demands.

Germany would also be pressed to contribute in some manner to the military campaign, if only financially. Opposing the United States yet again on a major security issue might have been too much, especially for Merkel. But without credible evidence that Iran was in fact developing nuclear weapons, it would be hard to get the support of the German public.

**Preemption**

Political leaders in Britain, France, and Germany feared that Iran’s clandestine nuclear weapons program could provoke a military confrontation with the United States. A military campaign against Iran could lead to regional destabilization and directly threaten European interests in the region.\(^77\) If the United States decided to strike Iran

\(^{77}\) On Israel’s capability to take out Iran’s main nuclear facilities, see Whitney Raas and Austin Long, "Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (2007). Raas and Long argue that Israel has the capability to attack Iran’s three facilities most critical for its nuclear program with at least as much confidence as Israel had when it decided to attack Iraq’s Osiraq reactor in 1981. See also Alexander H. Montgomery, "Ringing in Proliferation: How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb Network," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (2005).
militarily, there would be pressure on European countries to contribute in some way, either with material support for combat operations or, at a minimum, tacit diplomatic and financial support for what would essentially be a unilateral U.S. operation.

Pressure would be especially intense on European countries to act in the face of continued Iranian dissembling and non-compliance, and most intense if irrefutable evidence surfaced that signaled the imminent development or acquisition of a nuclear weapons. Even if European support remained tacit in such a situation, the backlash against Europe could be significant, and was a situation they desperately sought to avoid.

There were clear incentives for Britain, France, and Germany to cooperate on this issue. They could take the lead on an issue the United States had refused to become directly involved with, and avoid being dragged into a military confrontation they sought to avoid. Cooperation on Iran could also alleviate some of the animosity created over the Iraq crisis.

There were several reasons America’s European allies sought to preempt a U.S. attack on Iran. These included the growing recognition in Washington and European capitals that Iran had emerged as the geopolitical winner of the Iraq war, a situation some in the Bush administration wanted to redress; the possibility that a conflict could escalate and spread to other countries; and the fallout of an attack, and especially the consequences it would have on oil supply and prices, Iran’s support for terrorism, and Iran destabilizing Iraq even further.

While Iran’s oil production may not be affect by an air strike, Iran could retaliate by disrupting the world oil market. Iran could block the Strait of Hormuz, through which the majority of Persian Gulf oil transships. It could also retaliate against oil facilities in
other countries in the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. The price of oil could skyrocket, and in the short term European countries may face critical supply shortages.

While Iran’s military could not directly threaten European countries’ security, it would likely retaliate asymmetrically by using terrorist proxy groups. With the help of Hezbollah, Iran could unleash a series of terrorist attacks—in Iraq, against other countries in the Middle East, and within Europe itself.

In response to an attack, Iran would also certainly intensify the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Coalition forces would experience more casualties, the insurgents would be better armed, and the countries would be more difficult to pacify and govern. This would be most threatening to Britain, who controlled southern Iraq, but even to French and German interests.

America’s European allies sensed a high risk that the Bush administration was planning a military strike against Iran. It had intensified its public rebukes of the regime in Tehran, started to complain more loudly about Iranian meddling in Iraq, including killing U.S. soldiers, authorized clandestine activities inside Iran, and initiated planning for a possible major air campaign. There was a growing conviction that the Bush administration’s ultimate goal was regime change, and that Bush and Cheney believed a bombing campaign would be necessary. Indeed, many Europeans thought that the Bush administration wanted and was actively seeking confrontation with Iran. It saw a window of opportunity and were actively searching for a casus belli.

78 Seymour Hersh has done some excellent reporting on this subject. In particular, see Seymour Hersh, “The Iran Plans” New Yorker, April 17, 2006; Seymour Hersh, “Shifting Targets,” New Yorker, October 8, 2007; Seymour Hersh, “Preparing the Battlefield,” New Yorker, July 7, 2008.
Even the British thought a military campaign against Iran was a bad idea. It would have been difficult to get support from the Europeans unless the Bush administration was able to uncover a smoking gun. A bombing campaign might actually galvanize support for the regime. Ahmadinejad was unpopular and the economy was weak. The Europeans were also skeptical of the intelligence cited by Cheney and other neoconservatives, because they exaggerated and misused intelligence to justify war against Iraq.

While Iran refrained from renouncing the NPT entirely and negotiate as a self-described nuclear power—a step taken by North Korea—it maintained and even augmented what emerged as a robust nuclear program, despite mounting opposition from the international community. While there remained some ambiguity over Iran’s motivation to continue to pursue uranium enrichment and reprocessing in the face of international pressure, many believed that Tehran’s strategy was to develop a “surge capacity” or “breakout capability” in which it would possess the infrastructure, personnel, and scientific and technological expertise to be able to build a nuclear weapon in a relatively short period of time, perhaps within a matter of months.79

Iran maintained a degree of strategic ambiguity over its nuclear intentions, further dividing other countries—especially Russia and China from the Western approach—over the appropriate to response to Iran.80 By carefully calibrating its actions and its level of cooperation with the IAEA, the E3, and other actors involved in negotiations, Iran could position itself in a way that it could renounce its membership to the NPT and develop a


80 On nuclear “fence sitters,” see Solingen, "The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint."
nuclear weapon soon thereafter, leaving the international community with few desirable options.

European countries were therefore facing potentially serious consequences from an American attack against Iran. E3 negotiations began in the summer of 2003, and proceeded in successive phases, usually distinguished by an agreement between the two sides only to see it fall apart months or even weeks later.\(^81\) The E3 was not operating under an official EU banner initially. Even Italy, at the time holding the rotating EU presidency, was not directly included in negotiations. The exclusivity of the E3, particularly before the addition of Solana, caused some consternation among other EU member states.\(^82\)

The goal of the E3 from the beginning was a permanent and verifiable suspension of Iran’s uranium enrichment program, backed up by intrusive and regular inspections by the IAEA. By convincing Iran to permanently suspend its enrichment activities, the E3 would prevent proliferation in the Middle East and appease Bush administration officials who advocated taking a more confrontational approach against Tehran.

E3 negotiations with Iran during this period can be divided into two main phases. The first phase, beginning in 2003 and extending until August 2005, failed to reach a settlement on Iran’s permanent suspension of uranium enrichment, though Iranian and European negotiators did arrive at two major agreements. The second phase, from December 2005 to December 2006, saw the E3 adopt a more coercive approach. After


two years of fruitless negotiations, the E3 decided to support the U.S. recommendation to impose Security Council sanctions on Iran.

*May 2003-August 2005: Conditional Engagement*

In August 2002, an Iranian dissident group, the National Council of Resistance in Iran, revealed the existence of a clandestine Iranian nuclear program. Alireza Jafarzadeh, a spokesman for the group, called the Iranian nuclear program “sophisticated, advanced, and serious” and called on the international community to confront Iran on the issue. The IAEA immediately demanded access to inspect the suspected sites to verify the group’s claims. In a confidential report released in June 2003, Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei, the head of the IAEA, said that Iran had “failed to meet its obligations” under the NPT by failing to report certain activities, but did not go so far as to suggest outright non-compliance, which the United States had pressed for.

During inspections IAEA inspectors discovered traces of highly enriched uranium in environmental samples taken at the Natanz facility. Iranian authorities claimed that the traces came from material that had been imported and thus was contaminated with the substance before it arrived in Iran. This seemed to contradict Iranian claims that its nuclear program was entirely indigenous. The IAEA Board of Governors asked Iran to

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83 The facility at Natanz was designed for fuel-enrichment whereas the facility at Arak was a heavy-water production plant. See Mark Landler, "U.S. And UN Agency Press Iran on Its Nuclear Program," *New York Times*, June 18, 2003.

84 Ibid.


86 This despite Iran’s repeated assertions that its nuclear program was entirely indigenous.
sign the Additional Protocol to the NPT as a sign of its compliance with the international nonproliferation regime and ordered Iran to provide unambiguous proof by October 31 of that year that it was not working on a secret weapons program. The IAEA also demanded that Iran provide a full dossier of its nuclear program, including full disclosure of past activity.

Because of the clandestine nature of its nuclear program, other states, especially the United States and the E3, demanded that Iran commit to an enhanced inspections program. Under this arrangement, the IAEA would be given unimpeded access to any declared or suspected nuclear site. This would include unannounced inspections. EU foreign ministers issued a joint statement requesting that Iran “sign, ratify, and implement the additional protocol without delay as a first and essential step to restore international trust in the peaceful nature of its nuclear program.” Iranian officials declared that the nuclear program had no malicious purpose, stating “we consider the acquiring, development, and use of nuclear weapons inhumane, immoral, illegal, and against our basic principles. They have no place in Iran’s defense doctrine.”

In August the E3 foreign ministers sent a letter to the Iranian foreign minister, Kamal Kharrazi, that called on Iran to permanently suspend uranium enrichment. The letter specified that cooperation between the EU and Iran on a number of issues, including advanced technology, would be possible if Iran agreed to abandon all uranium enrichment and related activities. After a series of meetings with its E3 counterparts,

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including a trip to Tehran by British foreign minister Jack Straw, French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin, and German foreign minister Joschka Fischer, on October 21, 2003, Iran agreed to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and to work more closely with the IAEA, including allowing stricter and more expansive inspections of suspected nuclear sites.  

This agreement was seen as potentially a major breakthrough and a real diplomatic success for the Europeans, though few in the United States thought that Iran would long abide by its commitment. In addition to the prospect of finding a quick and mutually acceptable diplomatic agreement with Iran, European cooperation on this issue, less than a year after the bitter feuds in the Security Council over the necessity and legitimacy of the Iraq war, assuaged many fears of a long-lasting rupture between the most influential European states. It would also forestall more aggressive measures by the United States.

The October 2003 agreement covered a number of second-order issues between Iran and Europe. Iran stated in the agreement that it had no intention of developing nuclear weapons, and reiterated that its nuclear program had purely civilian purposes. Iran also stated that it would sign the Additional Protocol and, “as confirmation of its good intentions,” Iran agreed to abide by the terms of the Protocol even before the Iranian Parliament ratified it. Additionally, while noting that it had the right under the terms of the NPT to have a peaceful nuclear energy program, Iran announced that it would voluntarily suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities as defined by the IAEA.

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90 Sciolino, “Iran Will Allow UN Inspections of Nuclear Sites.”
In return, the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany recognized Iran’s right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy; signaled that long-term cooperation between Iran and the EU, including on technology, would be possible; and signaled the willingness to cooperate with Iran “to promote security and stability [in the Middle East].”\footnote{“Statement by the Iranian Government and visiting EU foreign ministers,” October 21, 2003, \url{http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/statement_iran21102003.shtml}.} The foreign ministers also signaled that they would resist calls by some Bush administration officials to put more pressure on Iran, including referral to the Security Council for possible sanctions.\footnote{Steven Everts, \textit{Engaging Iran: A Test Case for EU Foreign Policy} (London: Centre for European Reform, 2004).}

Since uranium enrichment is legal under the terms of the NPT, the E3 did not suggest that Iran would have to abandon its civilian nuclear program. The problem with Iran’s civilian nuclear program arose because of the dual use of enrichment procedures: the technology for enriching uranium at low levels for civilian reactors is nearly identical to enriching uranium to much higher concentrations necessary for nuclear bombs.

Any notion that a relatively quick and easy diplomatic solution was within reach proved premature. An IAEA report released on November 10 stated, in part, “It is clear that Iran has failed in a number of instances over an extended period of time to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material and its processing and use, as well as the declaration of facilities where such material had been stored and processed.”\footnote{Report by the General Director, International Atomic Energy Agency, “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” November 10, 2003, pp. 1-2.} The IAEA was unable to declare conclusively that Iran was in fact working on an illicit weapons program, but also could not conclude...
with certainty that it was not. “Given Iran’s past pattern of concealment, it will take time before the Agency is able to conclude that Iran’s nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes.” Despite this report, Iran signed the Additional Protocol in December 2003 at IAEA headquarters in Vienna. This obligated Iran to accede to more intrusive inspections and to halt uranium enrichment.

By late 2004 some strain had emerged in the coherence of the E3 approach. They found themselves occupying an untenable position interposed between Iran, which by then was indicating that it might restart uranium enrichment, and the United States, which refused to grant Iran any concessions. The United States possessed the real diplomatic leverage—through its unilateral trade embargo and sanctions, the prospect of restoring full diplomatic recognition, and achieving some kind of regional security arrangement that included Iran. It was clear that the Iranians were calibrating their behavior with the United States rather than the European powers in mind. Moreover, the E3 was unable to provide what the Iranians really sought, and which might actually have produced some negotiating leverage: American recognition of the legitimacy of the Iranian regime; explicit security guarantees; recognition of legitimate Iranian interests in its region; and ending Iranian political and economic isolation. The lack of any American role in the negotiations frustrated the Europeans and they pressed the Bush administration to become more directly involved.

Nevertheless, on November 14, 2004, the EU-3 (the shift in nomenclature signaling that Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, had become involved in negotiations) and Iran signed the Paris Agreement. Iran again agreed to suspend uranium

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94 Ibid., p. 10.
enrichment, reprocessing, and related activities and to continue to voluntarily implement the Additional Protocol.\textsuperscript{95} In return for full verification of this suspension, the Europeans again confirmed Iran’s right to a peaceful nuclear energy program and promised greater nuclear, technological, and economic cooperation. Despite the agreement, the two sides were still far apart on the core issue of negotiation. Iran viewed this as a purely temporary suspension of uranium enrichment whereas the EU demanded a complete and permanent cessation as well as Tehran providing “objective guarantees” that its nuclear program had purely civilian purposes.\textsuperscript{96}

In addition to the inducements it offered to Tehran for continued cooperation and restraint, the Europeans indicated that any resumption in enrichment or related activities would ultimately result in referral to the Security Council, for the imposition of sanctions and other punitive measures. The Bush administration was becoming increasingly impatient with the pace of negotiations. The E3 threatened referral to the Security Council was thus a gesture both to Tehran and to Washington.

In May 2005 the Europeans again spoke of their frustration that the United States continued to refuse to become directly involved in negotiations. In the previous two months, however, the Europeans more closely aligned their approach with that of the United States. During President Bush’s visit to Europe in early 2005, shortly after the beginning of his second term, the United States and its European allies reached a general agreement.

\textsuperscript{95} For the full text of the agreement, see www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2004/infcirc637.pdf. The “related activities” were specified as “the manufacture and import of gas centrifuges and their components; the assembly, installation, testing or operation of gas centrifuges; work to undertake any plutonium separation installation; and all tests or production at any uranium conversion installation.” In the agreement the EU-3 recognized that “[Iran’s] suspension is a voluntary confidence-building measure and not a legal obligation.”

\textsuperscript{96} See “Statement by Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, on the agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme,” SO304/04, Brussels, November 15, 2004.
policy reorientation on Iran. Bush signaled that the United States would take a less aggressive line toward Iran and the Europeans resolved to send the Iran dossier to the Security Council in the event of further violations of the Paris Agreement, new violations discovered by the IAEA, or continued Iranian defiance and obstructionism. After two years of pursuing fundamentally different strategies toward Iran, the Europeans and Americans at last seemed to be speaking the same language. In return for greater U.S. involvement, the Europeans pledged that they would support American efforts to establish punitive measures on Iran should it continue to flaunt IAEA demands, something they had refrained from doing before.

The failure of the negotiations was due to a number of factors, but two stand out in their importance. First, the Europeans (and the Bush administration) were demanding complete and permanent suspension of all uranium enrichment in Iran, which was a non-starter for the Iranians. Iran had agreed to a temporary suspension of enrichment as a confidence-building measure, but no Iranian negotiator would ever accept permanent suspension. Second, the two sides were never able to overcome the suspicions regarding the intentions and good faith of the other side. According to Hassan Rowhani, who was the chief Iranian negotiator until he was replaced with Ali Larijani in August 2005, neither the Europeans nor the Iranians trusted each other. Under such circumstances any agreement the E3 and Iran were able to reach would likely be fragile.

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97 Delpech, Iran and the Bomb, 22-23.


In the lead-up to the June 2005 Iranian presidential election, many observers within and outside Iran thought that former president Ali Akhbar Hashemi Rafsanjani would win and bring a moderate, pragmatic approach to the nuclear issue. In a crowded field that included Rafsanjani and the little-known mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, no candidate received a majority of the votes in the initial round of voting, which would have provided an immediate victory. In a run-off between Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad, an arch-conservative and favorite of the clerical establishment, Ahmadinejad received nearly 62 percent of the vote.\(^{100}\) Few people outside Tehran had even heard of Ahmadinejad before the election. Myriad voting irregularities and outright corruption ensured that the hard-line and ultra-conservative Ahmadinejad would prevail.

The election of Ahmadinejad, who had close ties to both the mullahs and the Revolutionary Guards, surprised many around the world and in Iran. His election signaled that Iran had implicitly decided on a more confrontational approach with the West. While Ahmadinejad’s populist message of economic reform had significant popular appeal, particularly among the lower middle class and rural populations, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei indicated to the Revolutionary Guards and the bassiji, the paramilitary force that is closely allied with the clerical elite and Revolutionary Guards, that Ahmadinejad was the preference of the ruling elite.\(^{101}\)

As expected, Ahmadinejad immediately began taking a more hard-line approach than his predecessor. Ahmadinejad’s invectives that Iran possessed a sovereign right to produce nuclear energy and the hypocrisy of the United States for issuing threats to Iran

\(^{100}\) Keith Crane, Rollie Lal, and Jeffrey Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), 30.

\(^{101}\) Delpech, *Iran and the Bomb*, 7.
but condoning Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons found many supporters, both within Iran and among many other non-aligned countries. It is important not to overstate Ahmadinejad’s authority or influence, however, particularly regarding the nuclear program. While the authority structure in Iran is complex and defined by both formal relationships and institutions but also informal networks, ultimate authority resides with the Supreme Leader and his closest advisers and, increasingly, with the Revolutionary Guards.

In August of that year the EU offered a sweeping, comprehensive proposal for cooperation in the political, economic, and security realms. This would bring the most sweeping level of engagement with Iran in these areas since the 1979 revolution. The 35-page proposal reaffirmed Iran’s rights under the NPT as well as providing internationally guaranteed fuel supplies through the IAEA for Iran’s civilian nuclear program. To give further assurance to Tehran, the E3 stipulated that this agreement would be reviewed every ten years to ensure that both sides remained satisfied with the other’s commitments. Iran rejected the proposal days later, claiming it did not recognize Iran’s right to enrichment. The Iranian response claimed that “the proposal is extremely long on demands from Iran and absurdly short on offers to Iran … It amounts to an insult to the Iranian nation, for which the E3 must apologize.”

The Bush administration and E3 pressed the IAEA Board of Governors to refer the Iran dossier to the Security Council, but they could not get the necessary support from

102 Iran and Venezuela in particular have pursued closer relations over the past several years, reaching a number of economic, energy, and even military agreements.

the other Board members. China and Russia opposed referral and would have blocked any measure that would have led to sanctions or other punitive measures on Iran.\textsuperscript{104} Despite finding that Iran was in non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement, the Board decided not to refer Iran to the Security Council when Russia suggested a compromise in which it would carry out the most sensitive aspects of uranium enrichment for Iran on Russian soil. While the United States and E3 did not explicitly endorse the plan, they did not reject it out of hand either.

\textit{December 2005-December 2006: Move to Isolate Iran}

In the second phase of negotiations, the E3 approach moved closer to the American strategy of isolating and imposing sanctions on Iran, targeting those individuals, groups, and institutions most closely associated with the nuclear program.

In December 2005, after a four-month hiatus in negotiations, representatives from the E3 met with their Iranian counterparts to restart negotiations. While no substantive ground was made, the two sides agreed to continue talks the following month. On January 9, however, Iran declared that it had resumed uranium enrichment, which had been suspended since November 2004. This step constituted for many the Iranian regime crossing a serious red line. Not only was Iran’s behavior becoming more confrontational and erratic, Ahmadinejad had started to replace Iranian negotiators, ambassadors, and other officials suspected of holding moderate views with hardliners.

Dismayed at this provocation, the E3 foreign ministers, with Solana, released a statement rebuking Iran. The statement said, in part, “This is not a dispute between Iran

\textsuperscript{104} Katz, “Putin, Ahmadinejad, and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” 203.
and Europe, but between Iran and the whole international community. Nor is it a dispute about Iran’s rights under the NPT. It is about Iran’s failure to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.”

It further claimed that Iran had continued its practice of only partial cooperation with the IAEA and had ignored many of the Agency’s requests for greater transparency. In the statement the Europeans signaled their belief that the time had come to refer Iran to the Security Council.

Despite these setbacks, the E3 and Solana continued to work toward a diplomatic solution. In June 2006 Solana presented on behalf of Britain, France, Germany, and the United States a set of proposals to Iran. The proposals outlined a number of specific nuclear, technological, political, and economic areas in which greater cooperation could develop between Iran and the international community. The proposal failed to include possible punishments or retributive measures if Iran rejected the proposal and continued its enrichment and reprocessing activities. Solana relayed a message orally to his Iranian counterparts that there would be “serious consequences” for Iran if its noncompliance continued.

In December 2006 the Security Council unanimously passed, for the first time, a limited set of sanctions against Iran. The resolution, sponsored by Britain, France, and Germany, banned both “the import and export of materials and technology used in enrichment, reprocessing, and ballistic missiles.” The resolution also froze the assets of

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twelve Iranian individuals and ten companies suspected of involvement in the nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The Security Council passed an additional round of sanctions in March 2007 that instituted an arms embargo, froze the assets of an additional twenty-eight individuals, blocked loans and other forms of financial assistance to the government in Tehran, and imposed modest travel restrictions on a number of Iranian individuals.\textsuperscript{107} The restrictions on loans to the Iranian government, supported mainly by France and the United States, would deprive the Iranian government of the foreign capital necessary for new investment in the oil industry, critical infrastructure projects, and other strategic sectors of Iran’s economy.\textsuperscript{108}

Representatives of the E3 sought to impress upon Iran the consequences it would face if it continued to defy international standards and the terms of its own agreements it had reached earlier with the E3. Emyr Jones Perry, Britain’s ambassador to the UN, said the resolution possessed a “very tough message.” Jean-Marc de la Sabelière, the French ambassador, said that, “Iran has now a very clear-cut choice to make. Cooperate with the international community or be more and more isolated.”

Despite the sharp rhetoric, it was clear that the E3’s diplomacy was not bearing significant results. This was acknowledged in a February 2007 classified EU foreign policy paper Solana’s staff produced. Reported in the \textit{Financial Times}, the report stated:


\textsuperscript{108} An arms embargo was part of the sanctions imposed on Iran because the United States, along with Israel, claimed that the Revolutionary Guards supplied Hezbollah and Hamas with small arms, rockets, and other weaponry. The United States has also accused Iran of providing explosives that have been used against American forces in Iraq.
“Attempts to engage the Iranian administration in a negotiating process have not so far succeeded.” The report continued, “In practice … the Iranians have pursued their program at their own pace, the limiting factor being technical difficulties rather than resolutions by the UN or the International Atomic Energy Agency.”

Summary

This chapter has examined British, French, and German negotiations with Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program. The basis for the E3’s close cooperation on this issue was a shared fear of becoming entrapped in an American military campaign against Iran. The consequences of such a conflict would pose serious threats to the E3’s interests. It would likely cause Iran to retaliate in a number of destructive ways, from disrupting the world’s oil supply in the Persian Gulf, to unleashing terrorist attacks in Europe through proxy groups, to further destabilizing Iraq and Afghanistan.

Perceptions that Iran posed a mortal threat to their security, cooperation on burden sharing, or domestic political or economic incentives do not provide a compelling explanation of European cooperation. While they take the threat of a nuclear Iran seriously, European countries did not perceive Iranian nuclear weapons to be a mortal or imminent threat to their own security. Rather than free riding on the United States (which was not taking part in negotiations) or one of its European allies, the E3 shared the burden of negotiating with Iran among themselves. While the European public was opposed to Iran developing nuclear weapons, it was not a salient political issue. There were few domestic political incentives to take a leadership role on negotiating with Iran.

Instead, there was a real fear that a replay of the Iraq crisis would happen with respect to Iran. Another dispute with the United States in which it claimed its security was at stake would have fractured the Atlantic Alliance even further.

This chapter also shows how medium powers can adopt strategies that mitigate the alliance security dilemma. America’s European allies implemented a successful strategy of preemption to forestall an American attack. The next chapter examines another strategy medium and small powers may take to mitigate the risks and costs of the alliance security dilemma: stalling.

Additionally, neorealism, institutionalism, and constructivism do not provide a compelling explanation for the character of alliance dynamics in this case. Despite its overwhelming material advantage, the United States was unable to get the E3 to adopt a more confrontational approach, one closer to its own. Many in the Bush administration were openly calling for regime change in Iran. This is problematic for a neorealist perspective of alliance dynamics, which suggests that the strongest state in the alliance can largely dictate its strategy on medium and small alliance partners.

Institutions and norms cannot account for alliance dynamics in this case either. Institutions played a minimal role in shaping European countries’ strategy. Rather than operating through the EU, the E3 decided to take the lead in negotiations. They arguably had more to lose if the situation escalated, and they also had the capacity and credibility to initiate negotiations with Iran. This also implicitly violated the norm of policy consultation and co-determination, especially with smaller countries in the EU. The E3 excluded big countries like Italy and Spain, as well as the head of the EU’s rotating presidency, and, for many months, the EU’s very foreign policy chief.
CHAPTER SIX

Europe’s Pipeline Realpolitik

Transnational energy pipelines connecting suppliers with consumers have existed for over a century. In earlier periods demand for energy was lower and supply tended to be more plentiful; today the reverse is true. Governments around the world face a growing challenge to find and maintain reliable sources of energy—oil and natural gas in particular.¹ Securing energy supplies, which is best achieved through numerous, competing, and individually adequate sources, is now a core element of the foreign policies of all the world’s major powers. In some regions it is taking on the dynamics of traditional geopolitics.²

Energy security has become an increasingly important foreign policy and security challenge for European governments.³ Despite incentives to cooperate, European governments have resisted adopting a common strategy toward energy security, instead pursuing independent and at times competing energy policies. There is little coherence in European governments’ relations with key energy producer and transit states, and European countries largely lack the ability to redistribute energy resources among each


National rather than European interests continue to predominate in the strategically important energy sector. Governments negotiate their own bilateral energy supply and pricing deals, even though the outcomes of these negotiations affect other EU member states. Politics and profit overlap in the energy market, and the competition by national and corporate interests for energy resources continues.

Instead of a more unified energy market, therefore, Europe is a series of energy islands. Europe’s natural gas sector is firmly dominated by a handful of major players, including Gazprom of Russia, E.ON of Germany, GDF Suez of France, Eni of Italy, Gasunie of the Netherlands, and Norsk-Hydro of Norway. Due to energy’s strategic importance and because they represent significant strategic assets, these energy companies maintain close relationships with their national governments. Europe’s energy market is dysfunctional in part because these big vertically integrated monopolies, or “national champions,” act as national cartels: they resist efforts to introduce greater competition into the European energy market (which would reduce their market share) and they pursue their own corporate interests rather than broader aims of European public policy.

Since energy represents a strategic economic and political sector, European governments have resisted efforts by the European Commission, which is responsible for promoting competition in the EU, to dismantle these big utility monopolies. The major exception has been Britain, which has consistently pressed for more liberalization in

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4 Most of the natural gas pipelines in Europe flow east to west; there are few interconnecting pipelines that travel north and south.
Europe’s energy markets and has gone furthest in liberalizing its own energy market.\(^6\) Governments claim it is necessary to maintain big vertically integrated energy monopolies to be able to negotiate on a more equal basis with powerful outside suppliers such as Gazprom, the state-controlled Russian natural gas giant. Energy national champions are also necessary for long-term planning. Pipeline infrastructure is expensive and takes years to develop; national champions are better able to invest in local grids, capacity, transmission, and storage facilities.\(^7\) Many policymakers and analysts also claim they are also better able to negotiate long-term contracts with suppliers such as Gazprom.

Natural gas has become increasing important for Europe’s energy needs and to maintain its energy diversity. Natural gas is projected to be the fastest growing fossil fuel globally to 2030.\(^8\) Natural gas has grown from 10 percent of Europe’s total primary energy supply (TPES) in 1973, to 18 percent in 1990 and 25 percent in 2005.\(^9\) Italy, Britain, and Germany are Europe’s major gas users. Natural gas represents 38 percent of Italy’s TPES, 35 percent of Britain’s, and 23 percent of Germany’s.

Europe, already a huge energy market and the biggest natural gas importer in the world, is projected to grow even bigger over the next two decades. Europe’s collective natural gas consumption is projected to grow 1.4 percent per year and by a total of 40 percent by 2030.\(^10\) The European Commission estimates that gas consumption in Europe

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\(^7\) *Economist*, "Do You Want Putin's Paw on the Pipe?," July 11, 2007.


\(^9\) Ibid.

could rise to as much as 815 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year by 2030, from 502 bcm in 2005.\textsuperscript{11} This new demand will have to be met by imports; as a result European countries will become even more dependent on outside energy suppliers. As output from the North Sea and other European fields decline, the share of imports as a percentage of Europe’s natural gas consumption is expected to increase from one-third in the early part of this century to two-thirds by 2020.\textsuperscript{12} According to some projections, the imported share of European natural gas could climb to as high as 80 percent. According to a study by the European Commission, by 2030 Europe could be importing 84 percent of the gas it consumes and 93 percent of its oil.\textsuperscript{13}

Imports already constitute a majority of Europe’s natural gas consumption. In 2007, Europe imported 300 bcm of gas, which accounted for 60 percent of total use. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has predicted that Europe’s net gas imports will rise by at least 100 bcm per year by 2030. As Europe’s reliance on imports increase, so will the role it occupies in its governments’ foreign policies.

Russia is by far Europe’s most important natural gas supplier.\textsuperscript{14} Russia accounts for one-quarter of the EU’s entire gas consumption and more than 40 percent of its gas imports (and 30 percent of oil imports). Russia’s share of the EU’s gas imports is forecast


\textsuperscript{13} Buchan, \textit{Energy and Climate Change}, 11.

\textsuperscript{14} In addition to Russia, Europe’s main suppliers are Norway (27 percent of total imports), Algeria (17 percent), and Nigeria (5 percent).
to rise to as high as 70 percent by 2020.\textsuperscript{15} Most of this gas continues to travel from gas fields in western Siberia to Western Europe through old Soviet-era pipelines.

Russia is well positioned to meet Europe’s growing energy needs. It is the largest natural gas producer and exporter in the world—and now the world’s biggest oil producer as well.\textsuperscript{16} Russia produced 527.5 bcm of gas in 2009, which accounted for 17.6 percent of global production. This was actually lower than the amount produced in 1999 (535.7 bcm). In the past decade, Russia’s output peaked in 2008 at 601.7 bcm. In 2009 Russia had proved reserves of 44.38 trillion cubic meters, 23.7 percent of the world’s total. According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA) of the U.S. Department of Energy, Russia’s gas reserves are more than twice as large as Iran’s, which is thought to hold the world’s second-largest reserves.\textsuperscript{17}

Russian gas is highly divisive for European governments. The segmentation of Europe’s national energy markets is Europe’s major weakness with Russia. Every European country has its own agenda and priorities for its relationship with Russia: cheap and secure gas supplies, economic trade, and the opportunity for lucrative investments. These national and corporate interests tend to trump any concern about dependence on Russian energy.\textsuperscript{18}

A more unified European energy policy would have a number of advantages. Europe could reap the benefits of economies of scale and increase its bargaining leverage.

\textsuperscript{15} Christophe-Alexandre Paillard, “Rethinking Russia: Russia and Europe's Mutual Energy Dependence,” \textit{Journal of International Affairs} 63, no. 2 (2010).


\textsuperscript{17} “Key World Energy Statistics,” (International Energy Agency, 2008).

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Economist}, "All for None," January 24, 2008.
Supply shortages, especially for countries in Eastern Europe, would be less of a threat. The EU would be in a more advantageous position to negotiate better deals with outside suppliers, especially Russia. Europe collectively is much bigger and richer than Russia. Instead of forging a common approach, however, bilateral deals predominate. Despite growing concern over Europe’s dependence on Russia, it is still “business as usual” between Moscow and governments in Western Europe.

European countries face different degrees of dependency on Russian gas.¹⁹ Gazprom supplies 36 percent of German natural gas consumption, 20 percent of French consumption, and 10 percent of British consumption. Further east, the situation is much different. Finland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and the three Baltic states are 100 percent dependent on Russian natural gas. While these countries are desperate to achieve greater supply diversification, bigger countries like France and Germany are careful not to antagonize Moscow and threaten their own lucrative bilateral energy, investment, and trade relationships.

In the hierarchy of policy issues in Europe, relations with Russia, especially on energy security, is perhaps the most divisive. Few issues symbolize the contrasts and divisions among Britain, France, and Germany—and European countries as a whole. As former EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson said, “No other country reveals our differences as does Russia.”²⁰ Or as Andris Piebalgs, former EU energy commissioner, said, “Energy is sometimes used as an excuse to hide political reasons for taking different approaches to Moscow.”


²⁰ Quoted in Buchan, Energy and Climate Change, 93.
The desire for a smooth relationship with Russia extends well beyond natural gas. Germany relies on a steady and secure supply of gas and other raw materials, but also desires a stable relationship with Russia based on the memories of the destruction the two countries did to each other during World War II. For France, Charles de Gaulle tried to cultivate a close political relationship with Moscow despite Cold War antagonisms. Subsequent French presidents have continued to view Russia as a potentially useful counterweight to German dominance in Europe and American overbearing. Britain historically has viewed Russia as a geopolitical and ideological behemoth that must be contained, either in the context of control over Central and South Asia during the nineteenth century or more recently during the Cold War.

How to explain the dynamic that exists between European governments and Russia on energy matters? This chapter argues that European governments have sought to avoid becoming entrapped in American efforts to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian natural gas through new and expensive pipeline projects. They are careful not to jeopardize their own bilateral economic and political relationships with Russia. At the same time, they fear each other’s abandonment, namely, that one will establish a close strategic partnership with Russia that would threaten their own interests. This fear of abandonment is especially pronounced in France and its fear of a rapprochement between Germany and Russia.

To avoid the risk of entrapment, European governments have moved slowly on developing alternative pipeline routes and supplies in a deliberate strategy of stalling. They give just enough rhetorical and diplomatic support to keep these projects alive, but have avoided taking major political or financial steps to make them a reality.
Additionally, France has dealt with Germany’s potential abandonment by bandwagoning. French energy giant GDF Suez has acquired a stake in the Nord Stream consortium, which is building a natural gas pipeline that runs under the Baltic Sea, directly connecting Russia and Germany.

This chapter first examines how energy security has assumed new strategic importance in Europe, especially Russian natural gas imports. It then briefly examines American pressure on European countries to reduce their dependence on Russian energy supplies. In the next three sections I examine British, French, and German bilateral relations with Russia, and how their own bilateral relationships with Moscow take precedence over a common EU policy on energy security. I then show how European governments have used a deliberate strategy of stalling to avoid antagonizing Russia but at the same time placating the United States.

**Energy Politics: A New Type of Geopolitics?**

Not since the oil crisis of the 1970s has energy dependence and its potential vulnerability received as much attention in European governments’ energy policies and even their foreign policies than today. Energy dominance has the potential to breed political clout, and even has the potential to transform the power balance in Europe. The major sources of concern for European governments are perceptions of Moscow’s increasing use of its energy resources as a political weapon, the erratic behavior of transit
countries such as Ukraine, and Russia’s own dwindling natural gas reserves, which may affect the amount of gas it is able to export to Europe.\textsuperscript{21}

This renewed concern over energy security reemerged as a major policy area as early as November 2000, when the European Commission published a Green Paper on a European strategy for the security of Europe’s energy supply.\textsuperscript{22} The report stated that imports as a share of EU’s energy needs will continue to rise in the next 20 to 30 years. It also noted that Russia’s share of EU gas imports could rise even higher as consumption increases and the accession of countries in Eastern Europe, where dependence on Russian gas is more pronounced.

Despite these warnings, Europe’s energy market remains highly segmented. Europe’s energy monopolies are partly responsible for this. Rather than greater liberalization—deep, liquid markets where there is greater competition and where gas could move from where it is cheap and abundant to where it is expensive and scarce—energy monopolies prefer energy islands. By reducing consumers’ choices, they can extract premium prices and maintain market share. They do not invest in pipeline interconnectors necessary to quickly move gas around the continent. The European Commission has threatened to break these utility monopolies up, but there is stiff resistance since energy national champions represent some of the most powerful interests


\textsuperscript{22} "Green Paper: Towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply."
in some of Europe’s biggest countries. Russia has taken advantage of European disunity by pursuing bilateral deals with energy companies.\(^{23}\)

A number of events over the past decade have highlighted Europe’s dependence and possible vulnerability and have made energy security a focus for policymakers. The most important was the pricing dispute between Russia and Ukraine in January 2006 that briefly shut off the flow of gas to Europe. Eighty percent of the gas that flows from Russia to Europe transits by pipeline through Ukraine (the other 20 percent flows through Belarus).\(^{24}\) Although Gazprom continued to feed gas intended for its customers in Western Europe into the pipeline, and demanded that Ukraine let this gas pass through, downstream European customers still experience a drop in their gas supply. An even more serious gas standoff between Russia and Ukrainian occurred in January 2009, which lasted two weeks. The 2009 standoff provided a stark reminder of the extent of Europe’s dependence on Russian natural gas.\(^{25}\)

The gas shutoff in Ukraine in 2006 served as a catalyst for revisiting plans to diversify Europe’s supply sources and routes.\(^{26}\) The most important of these proposed projects was Nabucco, which gained renewed seriousness. Countries in Eastern Europe that are entirely dependent on Russia for natural gas are especially interested in Nabucco,

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and make up the majority of its consortium. Energy security has since become as important as emissions reduction and price stability in European energy policies. In March 2006, the European Commission published a widely anticipated report titled “A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive, and Secure Energy.”\(^{27}\) The report placed as much emphasis on ensuring the security of Europe’s energy supply as it did on the economic and environmental aspects of energy policy.\(^{28}\)

Dependency and vulnerability are, however, not the same. Some European countries are dependent and vulnerable whereas others are dependent but not vulnerable. A country could be dependent but not vulnerable if it imports a majority of its energy but when supply is secure, the cost is sustainable, and there are diversified suppliers and supply routes. Several factors thus affect a country’s energy security: the type of energy a country uses, its source of supply, and reliability of transit. The natural gas markets in Britain, France, and Germany differ in size, market penetration, stage of liberalization, and perceptions of likely security risks.\(^{29}\) Their policy responses reflect these differences. Germany has placed its bets on securing long-term supplies from Russia. Britain has pursued a long-term partnership with Norway. France (like the Baltic states and Finland) relies on nuclear power for much of its power generation.

As Europe’s demand for natural gas is projected to increase steadily over the next several decades, it will face rising competition for supplies from Russia itself, the


Caspian region, Central Asia, and East Asia. As Ariel Cohen notes, “China has turned into a hungry, 800-pound gorilla in the energy market.” The planned construction of oil and gas pipelines from Eastern Siberia to China may decrease the amount of gas available for export to Western Europe. European governments thus view securing reliable sources of supply to meet their growing demand as increasingly important. Due to a number of factors—geographic proximity, critical infrastructure already in place, political agreements, and long-term supply contracts—Russia will continue to be the single largest supplier to Europe, as well as the sole supplier for a number of countries.

Gas is an attractive energy source for several reasons, and will continue to be necessary to meet Europe’s energy needs for many decades. Natural gas is relatively abundant, which is especially true for Europe due to its proximity to Russia and the Caspian region. Gas is the cleanest of all the fossil fuels. It produces less carbon dioxide (the key greenhouse gas) and pollution than coal or oil. Electricity generated from natural gas emits only 40 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by electricity generated by coal. Europe’s move toward energy conservation and finding alternative sources of energy—including renewables—is motivated by geopolitical as well as environmental concerns.

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Energy interdependence between Europe and Russia has existed for several decades.\textsuperscript{33} Even during the Cold War the Soviet Union shipped natural gas to Western Europe. Nevertheless, from the first gas shipments in 1968, East-West energy trade has been controversial.\textsuperscript{34} Despite American objections, European governments were instrumental in providing the financing and technology necessary to extend the Soviet Union’s existing pipeline system during the Cold War, creating a new system of unprecedented size and complexity. Europe thus was partly responsible for developing Russia’s current pipeline network.\textsuperscript{35} To placate American fears, West Germany and other major gas importing countries unofficially kept Soviet imports below 30 percent of total natural gas imports.

Rather than being highly asymmetric, with Russia maintaining unshakeable economic and political leverage from Europe’s dependence on its energy supplies, the relationship between Russia and Europe is thus highly interdependent. While Russia is Europe’s most important gas supplier, it is far from a monopoly supplier. Russia’s share of European gas imports has actually dropped from roughly 80 percent in 1980 to 40 percent today.\textsuperscript{36} Between 2000 and 2005, Russia’s share of gas imports declined from 50 percent of the European market to 40 percent.


Russia’s ability to use gas as a commercial or political weapon—or the credibility of such a threat—is limited. Europe maintains its own considerable leverage over Russia. As the largest market for Russian gas, Europe is vital for Russia’s economic well-being. Europe accounts for 80 percent of total Russian exports and provides 75 percent of foreign investment that goes to Russia. Russia’s budget is heavily dependent on its export revenues from oil and gas. They typically account for one-third of Russia’s entire economy, two-thirds of all export earnings, and, in a country that faces persistent and seemingly endemic tax evasion, 60 percent of total tax revenues. Given the fragility of the Russian economy, the Kremlin is careful not to do anything that could threaten this revenue.\textsuperscript{37}

In addition to investment and technical expertise, Russia is also dependent on technology transfers from Europe. Russian industry remains at least twenty years behind Western Europe. As the gas fields in western Siberia are depleted, and Russia seeks to develop new fields in inhospitable locations such as the Arctic, Russia will be even more dependent on outside investments and technical expertise.

Even in the midst of the Cold War, Russia was generally a reliable natural gas supplier for Western Europe. There was no inclination on the part of the Kremlin to use gas as a political weapon against Western Europe. The perception of Russia’s reliability has deteriorated over the past decade, however. To the consternation of European governments (and the United States), the Kremlin has consolidated its control over Russia’s energy sector and the distribution of natural gas headed for Europe. Control of energy resources gives the Kremlin leverage over countries in Eastern Europe that are

heavily dependent on Russian natural gas, and the Kremlin has increasingly used energy supplies as a political weapon against countries it views within its historical sphere of influence.\footnote{Jeffrey Mankoff, “Eurasian Energy Security,” (Washington, D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009).}

There is greater instability and uncertainty in Russia’s leadership today compared to the Cold War. Rather than based on the institutional transfer of power within the communist party apparatus, political stability in Russia today is more ephemeral. It increasingly depends on Vladimir Putin and a close group of advisers rather than an institutional transfer of power.\footnote{\textit{Economist}, "A Bear at the Throat," April 14, 2007.} Instead of technocrats implementing centrally planned decisions, Russia’s energy companies today are “controlled by KGB men obsessed with money and power.”\footnote{Ibid.} People in Western Europe are therefore somewhat apprehensive about relying on these people to heat their homes and businesses.

Another important difference from the Cold War period is the role of transit routes. Countries once part of the Soviet Union are now independent, and today Russian gas must pass through Ukraine or Belarus to reach Western Europe. These countries have their own interests and incentives, and their unstable relations with Russia threaten shutdowns over tariffs and other disputes, as the 2006 and 2009 gas crises illustrated.

Gazprom increasingly seeks to acquire downstream assets in Europe. While the Soviet oil and gas ministry had no interest in expanding its control over Western Europe’s energy infrastructure, Gazprom is different. It aspires to control not just the gas infrastructure in Russia (and the Caspian and Central Asia) but increasingly to acquire a
stake in pipelines, storage facilities, and other assets in Europe. Russia seeks to lock in European energy companies into long-term contracts that are difficult to break. With these long-term contracts in place, it is more difficult for Europe to reduce its dependence on Russia and successfully diversify its energy sources. At the same time, it resists foreign companies from owning parts of its own energy infrastructure. Russia periodically revives the idea of establishing an international gas cartel, based on OPEC, with Qatar, Iran, and a number of other gas-producing countries.41

Russia faces its own problem of dwindling gas reserves, which leads some European governments to question whether it will be able to meet its supply commitments. Gazprom is notoriously corrupt and inefficient; it suffers from poor management and underinvestment and from constant state interference. It has the highest costs of any international gas company, and its finances are a mess. It carries $40 billion of debt, which makes it increasingly difficult to make necessary investments in its infrastructure.42

American Pressure

The United States has long pressed its European allies to decrease their dependence on Russian energy. American pressure began during the Cold War, when the first energy pipelines linking the Soviet Union and Western Europe were built, and has continued into the post-Cold War period. In the 1990s, a period of weakness for Russia,


the United States moved to develop oil and natural gas pipeline projects in the Caspian and Central Asia, thus reducing Russia’s residual influence in these regions. This proved moderately successful. The Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which ships oil from Azerbaijan to a port on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, began operating in 2005.

The United States has sought to develop the Caspian region and Central Asia’s hydrocarbon resources not only to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian hydrocarbons, but also to reduce its own dependence on Middle East energy. Developing pipeline projects in the Caspian, believed to hold vast amounts of hydrocarbons, could decrease U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil, an American objective since the oil crises of the 1970s.

Russia has reestablished itself economically and politically in the past decade, thanks in part to the windfall from record energy profits. Officials of the George W. Bush administration spoke bluntly about Russia’s use of its energy resources as an instrument of foreign policy. Vice President Dick Cheney, in a speech in Lithuania in May 2006, accused the Kremlin of using its energy resources as “tools of intimidation or blackmail.” The countries that see Russia as a serious threat—the Baltic states, Poland, Georgia—all maintain close security ties with the United States as a counterweight to Russian domination.

Europe’s dependence on Russian hydrocarbons has facilitated Russia’s geopolitical reemergence over the past decade. Russia’s energy exports create a reliable source of foreign exchange, which American officials claim can be used to help sustain

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Russia’s military buildup. American officials are also concerned that dependence on Russia future could one day be used for political blackmail against its Western European allies. The United States has thus been a strong supporter of the Nabucco pipeline project and other pipeline projects in Europe’s southern corridor. In addition to meeting some of Europe’s growing demand, these pipelines, which completely circumvent Russia, would reduce Russia’s influence.

Europe’s reluctance to dissociate itself from Russia is part of other divergent positions on Russian relations. NATO expansion and U.S. plans for building a missile defense system are two other areas in which the United States and its European allies take different approaches. The United States has taken a harder line than its European allies toward Russia.

With U.S. attention focused elsewhere in recent years—on Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, as well as domestic issues—American pressure on European governments to further diversify its energy supply and routes has decreased somewhat. It continues to be a basic American objective, however, as demonstrated during Hilary Clinton’s 2009 confirmation hearings before becoming Secretary of State. She said that Russia was “attempting to create a gas equivalent” of OPEC to expand its control of the international natural gas market. Of the political clout Russia gets from its energy exports, she said, “It is certainly a significant security challenge that we ignore at our peril.”45 While the U.S. position has a number of supporters in Europe—Britain, Sweden, and countries in Central and Eastern Europe that are completely dependent on Russian energy and see their

political and economic independence threatened by Moscow’s bullying—others are more circumspect, for fear that their own bilateral relations with Moscow could be jeopardized.

There has even emerged a compromise within NATO based on Europe securing its energy independence. The United States would accept a more autonomous role for Europe within NATO in exchange for a closer relationship between the alliance and the EU, a redefinition of NATO’s core tasks and functions, and reducing Europe’s energy dependence on Russia.46

**Energy Pipelines**

This section briefly examines three natural gas pipeline projects European governments have proposed or are already under construction: Nabucco, the proposed pipeline that would end Gazprom’s monopoly on gas pipelines from Russia and Central Asia to Europe; South Stream, a pipeline project backed by Gazprom that would directly compete with Nabucco; and the Nord-Stream pipeline, the first Russian pipeline to deliver gas directly to Western Europe.

*Nabucco*

Nabucco, the EU’s most ambitious infrastructure project to date, is a proposed pipeline intended to reduce Europe’s dependency on Russia by giving Europe direct access to natural gas in the Caspian region and the Middle East. First conceived in 2002, the pipeline would stretch 3,300 kilometers (2,050 miles) from the Caspian Sea, through Turkey, the Balkans, and Central Europe, finally terminating in Austria. It is currently estimated to cost 8 billion euros ($11.4 billion), but the final price could easily be twice

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that amount. It would eventually bring 31 bcm of gas to Europe each year.\textsuperscript{47} The first phase of construction was scheduled to begin in 2011, and by 2013-14 the pipeline was expected to be partially operational, with an annual throughput of 8 bcm. It has faced a number of delays, however, and now the pipeline is not expected to produce its full throughput of 31 bcm per year until 2019 at the earliest.

Gas from Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and the Kurdish region of Iraq would supply the pipeline with gas. Some have even suggested that Iran might one day contribute to the pipeline, but members of the Nabucco consortium have flatly rejected that possibility, saying they do not want any Iranian gas contribution. Because of the sanctions in place against Iran, any agreement would have trouble getting financial backing and the equipment needed to develop its natural gas fields, which desperately need investment and modernization. Though Iran has what is believed to be the second-largest reserves in the world, it continues to be a net importer of natural gas. The biggest prize for Nabucco would be getting gas from Turkmenistan. Though it is an authoritarian regime with a record of human rights abuses, it is thought to have some of the world’s largest natural gas reserves.\textsuperscript{48}

Nabucco would be of major strategic importance if it is built. Though the gas the pipeline would bring to Europe would be a small fraction of Europe’s total annual demand, it would represent a successful attempt at diversifying Europe’s energy supply sources and supply routes. It could raise European energy companies’ bargaining position and leverage with outside suppliers such as Gazprom. It could also reduce intra-European

\textsuperscript{47} See Daniel Freifeld, "The Great Pipeline Opera," \textit{Foreign Policy} (2009).

divisions over supply diversification. Nevertheless, Nabucco has sparked sharp divisions in Europe, on both its cost and its very necessity.\textsuperscript{49} Several European governments, including Germany, France, and Italy, are not convinced of Nabucco’s necessity. These governments maintain close ties to the Kremlin, have long-term gas contracts with Gazprom, and, in the case of Germany and Italy, are cooperating with Gazprom on competing pipeline projects.

The project’s commercial viability remains uncertain. The uncertainty surrounding potential suppliers and even consumers undermine the economic rationale of building the pipeline.\textsuperscript{50} The pipeline has been plagued with problems since it was first proposed, especially regarding its financing and sources of supply. Gas is not expected to start flowing by 2018 at the earliest. Nabucco’s original estimate of the pipeline’s cost, made in 2005, was 7.9 billion euros. A recent internal study by the British energy giant BP claimed that the pipeline could ultimately cost 14 billion euros to finish. At this cost, the pipeline would be unprofitable.

Despite proclaiming its strategic importance, in March 2009 the EU pledged only 200 million euros ($273 million) to the project—a tiny proportion of Nabucco’s estimated price—out of an EU budget of 3.97 billion euros ($5.65 billion) for energy-related projects. The companies that comprise the consortium have agreed to put up 30 percent of the initial construction costs. The Nabucco consortium is comprised on energy companies that lie along the pipeline’s proposed route: Botas of Turkey; Transgaz of

\textsuperscript{49} Dempsey, "Hoping for More Than Just Energy from a European Gas Pipeline."

\textsuperscript{50} See Pavel K. Baev and Indra Øverland, "The South Stream Versus Nabucco Pipeline Race: Geopolitical and Economic (Ir)Rationales and Political Stakes in Mega-Projects," \textit{International Affairs} 86, no. 5 (2010), 1083.
Romania; Bulgargaz of Bulgaria; MOL of Hungary; OMV of Austria, and RWE of Germany. The remaining sum would be borrowed from Europe’s major multilateral lenders—the World Bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)—which have promised to lend up to $5 billion needed to begin pipeline construction. But these commitments to fund Nabucco remain vague. They are still waiting to see if Nabucco attracts enough customers and receives sufficient gas commitments to make the project viable. It is something of a Catch-22.

It remains unclear where the gas to supply Nabucco would come from. While the EU energy commissioner announced in February 2011 that Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan agreed in principle to supply gas, it remains uncertain whether this will ever happen. Turkmenistan has vast amounts of natural gas: the first independent study of its natural gas reserves estimated at least 8 trillion cubic meters (tcm). This is more than the combined proven gas reserves in all of Western Europe. The prospect of getting gas from Turkmenistan remains highly uncertain, however. Turkmenistan has traditionally sold its gas to Russia (60-70 bcm per year), which then sold it to Western Europe at a much higher price. Turkmenistan has also contracted to sell gas to China.

The majority of the gas, at least initially, would have to come from Azerbaijan. While Azerbaijan’s president pledged to supply a “substantial amount of gas” to the proposed southern corridor pipelines, the agreement lacked in specifics. Moscow has

long courted Azerbaijan for its gas, and it is not clear if Azerbaijan would be able to supply enough gas to fulfill its commitment. Without gas from Azerbaijan Nabucco is a non-starter. The only likely source to feed Nabucco has been 16 bcm of gas from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz offshore field in the Caspian Sea, 6 bcm of which are already committed to Turkey, leaving 10 bcm.\textsuperscript{54} This is less than a third of Nabucco’s capacity. Iraqi Kurdistan’s long-term goal is to supply Nabucco with 20 bcm a year. To make that possible, however, Nabucco would have to build another pipeline, 550 kilometers long, to bring this gas across Turkey to the main pipeline. This would drive up Nabucco’s price even higher.\textsuperscript{55}

Even if Nabucco becomes operational, it will not come close to meeting Europe’s growing energy needs. Even when the pipeline is operating at full capacity, 31 bcm a year, it would supply a small portion of Europe’s total annual consumption of 500 bcm (and growing), and one-fifth of what Russia is able to export to Europe each year. By necessity, the bulk of Europe’s gas imports will continue to come from Russia.

Nabucco is one of several proposed pipeline projects in what is called the southern corridor. There are three smaller projects also under consideration: the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), White Stream, and the Interconnector-Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI). Europe might also need South Stream, examined below, a controversial joint enterprise between Gazprom and Italy’s ENI to meet is growing consumption. TAP, backed by Statoil of Norway, E.ON of Germany, and EGL of Switzerland, would run


520-kilometers from Greece to Italy via Albania. Its price tag is 1.6 billion euros. The ITGI pipeline is to run from Turkey, across Greece to Italy, would have an annual capacity of 12 bcm, and is estimated to cost 2.5 billion euros. The consortium is made up of Edison of Italy, Depa of Greece, and Botas, the Turkish company that is also a partner of the Nabucco consortium.

After a decade of planning and development, it is perhaps unlikely Nabucco will be abandoned altogether. It would constitute a major blow to the EU—not only would it be a lost opportunity to diversify its energy supplies, but also a major loss of prestige and influence. Even if it is built, as Europe’s gas consumption continues to increase, Nabucco’s 31 bcm a year will have a diminishing impact on reducing Europe’s dependence on Russian gas.

Despite so many challenges, Nabucco’s advocates remain optimistic. Nabucco also maintains a formidable public relations team. Joschka Fischer, Germany’s former foreign minister, signed a one-year contract in June 2009 to become a political and diplomatic adviser to RWE and OMV, two members of the Nabucco consortium. This meant that Fischer and Gerhard Schröder, the former German chancellor, would be working for competing pipeline projects.

South Stream

Russia has aggressively tried to derail Nabucco by introducing its own new pipeline project to bring Caspian and Central Asian gas to Europe. The project, a joint venture between Gazprom and the Italian energy company Eni, would directly compete with Nabucco for supplies and customers. The pipeline, called South Stream, is planned
to run 900 kilometers (560 miles) and would take gas from the Caspian and Central Asia under the Black Sea and into Bulgaria. From there one spur would move north through Romania and Hungary, eventually terminating in Austria. A second spur would cross the Balkan peninsula, and bring gas to Italy. South Stream is now planned to carry 64 bcm of gas per year, twice Nabucco’s total.

Russia has pursued South Stream for two main reasons. It would give Gazprom even more access to markets in southeastern Europe—the EU repeatedly stating that it wanted to diversify its sources to reduce its dependency on Russian gas. Gazprom has taken advantage of the disarray over Nabuco by consolidating its presence in the region, concluding bilateral energy agreements with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Serbia, among others. Italy signed onto South Stream because it feared finding itself last in line to receive Russian gas, and because of persisting doubts about Nabuco’s viability. South Stream would make Nabucco unprofitable, and thus commercially unviable, by tapping into the same sources of supply in Central Asia. South Stream would largely follow the same route as Nabucco, with the crucial difference that South Stream would be built, maintained, and operated by Gazprom—and by extension the Kremlin.

Besides making Nabucco unviable, the other principal motivation of South Stream is to completely bypass Ukraine and other transit countries Russia views as troublesome and unreliable. Underwater pipelines such as South Stream and Nord Stream would reduce dependence on the transit countries by bypassing them altogether. Following the 2006 and 2009 price disputes, Russia’s desire to bypass Ukraine altogether has increased. Russia has no way of shutting off the gas to Ukraine without affecting all of its downstream European customers. Ukraine earns $2 billion per year on transit fees,
but will decrease once South Stream and Nord Stream are in place. With Nord Stream and South Stream in place, Ukraine would be isolated and its strategic importance would diminish.\textsuperscript{56}

One country that will benefit from both Nabucco and South Stream is Turkey. Turkey aims to take advantage of its strategic position at the crossroads of Europe and Central Asia to become an indispensable component of Europe’s energy security. There are concerns that Turkey, which would become a major transit country under the Nabucco plan, could become a greedy middleman. As David Buchan notes, “Fears that Turkey wants to be an arbitrageur—like Ukraine with Russian gas, or Russia with Turkmen gas—buying gas from the east cheap and selling it on to the west dear.”\textsuperscript{57}

Like Nabucco, South Stream makes little sense economically. South Stream was conceived in the early part of the last decade, when energy prices were high and demand in Europe was growing. Big profits were widely expected to compensate for the big initial investment. Estimates of the cost to complete South Stream vary. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who questioned the sensibility of the project, told potential investors that the final cost could be in excess of 20 billion euros ($29 billion). This would make South Stream the most expensive energy infrastructure project in history. There are still questions about how Russia would find the gas to supply South Stream. Russia has never shown where the 64 bcm would come from or who the buyers would be.

Nabucco’s backers see South Stream as years behind their pipeline. They also claim that the final cost of South Stream will be double the cost of Nabucco, which is

\begin{footnotes}
\item[57] Buchan, \textit{Energy and Climate Change}, 106.
\end{footnotes}
entirely onshore. Due to Nord Stream’s ballooning cost, examined below, the hugely expensive South Stream may have to be cancelled altogether. If Russia does provide the financing for South Stream, it is likely that it would be at the expense of some of Russia’s other major infrastructure projects and investments, such as developing the huge Shtokman and Yamal gas fields.

Nord Stream

The other major new Russian-backed pipeline in Europe is Nord Stream. Nord Stream will directly connect Russia and Germany via a 1,200-kilometer pipeline under the Baltic Sea, bypassing Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and other traditional transit countries. It will run from Vyborg, near St. Petersburg, to Greifswald, on Germany’s Baltic coast. It is the first direct energy link between Russia and Germany. The original plan suggested the possibility of having spurs going to Scandinavia and Britain off the main pipeline to Germany, but these did not come to pass. Schröder and Putin signed a pipeline deal in September 2005, two weeks before Schröder was defeated in parliamentary elections. Two weeks after leaving office, Schröder became chairman of the Gazprom subsidiary Northern European Gas Pipeline Company (and earning over $300,000 per year), effectively putting him on Gazprom’s payroll.

Nord Stream perhaps best represents Russia’s ambition to operate bilaterally with its European customers and of pursuing a divide-and-rule strategy—and of European countries pursuing their own national interests rather than collective European interests. Nord Stream would have an initial capacity of 27.5 bcm per year, half of which would be dedicated to Germany. Eventually the pipeline will ship up to 55 bcm of gas per year,
about one-tenth of Europe’s total demand. Nord Stream will reduce Russia’s reliance on Ukraine and Belarus as transit countries, making it possible for Russia to raise prices on these countries with little impunity.

Nord Stream has faced a number of logistical and other difficulties. The cost of the project ballooned to more than 7.4 billion euros, nearly double the initial estimate of 4 billion euros when the initial agreement was signed in October 2005. Originally scheduled to operate at full capacity in 2015, that now seems doubtful, mainly due to Russia’s stagnant gas production. Construction on the pipeline finally began in April 2010, and the first of two pipelines is expected to be finished in 2011. The first of the two pipelines will supply about 27 bcm per year, roughly a third of Germany’s annual gas demand. Moreover, with Russia’s declining output and rising domestic demand, it is not clear how Russia will come up with the 55 bcm for Nord Stream’s projected annual throughput.

Originally conceived as a bilateral project between Russia and Germany, Nord Stream has since become a broader European venture with the addition of Dutch and French shareholders. The initial Nord Stream stakeholders included Gazprom, with a 51 percent share, and BASF (through its subsidiary Wintershall) and E.ON (through its subsidiary Ruhrgas) of Germany splitting the remaining 49 percent. Gazprom stipulated that any new entrant to the consortium would be included only by reducing the share the two German energy companies held. This would leave Gazprom with a permanent majority.

Gasunie of the Netherlands joined the consortium in December 2008, acquiring a 9 percent stake, leaving BASF and E.ON at 20 percent each. On March 1, 2010, GDF
Suez signed a memorandum of understanding with Gazprom to acquire a 9 percent stake in the project, which would leave BASF and E.ON with a 15.5 percent stake each. With the new entrants, Gazprom’s control becomes even more commanding.

Nord Stream has been hugely contentious in Europe. A number of Central and Eastern European leaders have voiced opposition to the project. Former Polish Prime Minister Radek Sikorski described Nord Stream as the energy equivalent of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that divided Central Europe into separate German and Soviet spheres of influence. Russia insists the project is purely commercial, not strategic. In response to Nord Stream, Poland has called for an EU energy agreement similar to Article 5, the NATO Treaty’s mutual defense clause—that EU countries will come to each other’s aid in the event of an energy crisis. France and Germany have shown no inclination to support such an agreement. Not only do they fear the project will expose them to greater peril in terms of energy security; they also do not want to lose lucrative transit fees for Russian gas headed to Western Europe. The European Commission has given its support for the Nord Stream project since it would increase the diversity of Europe’s supply routes, which remains one of the guiding strategic principles of European energy security.


Britain

Britain is the largest producer of oil in the EU and, after the Netherlands, the second-largest producer of natural gas. Consuming 86.5 bcm of gas in 2009, or 2.9 percent of the world’s total, Britain is also one of the EU’s biggest gas users. For years Britain was a net exporter of both oil and gas, but became a net importer of gas in 2004 and of oil in 2005. Since its peak in the 1990s, British natural gas production has steadily declined, as discoveries of new natural gas reserves have not kept pace with the depletion of existing fields. As Britain’s own supplies diminish it has had to rethink its own energy security. As gas fields in the North Sea are depleted, a greater portion of its gas will have to come from non-EU suppliers, including Russia.

Britain supports Nabucco but has not made it a priority. If threat perceptions or economic incentives guided British strategy, its objective might be different. If Britain was simply pursuing its economic interests, we might expect Britain to take an even more equivocal stand on Nabucco, fearing that the project might antagonize Moscow. Since the end of the Cold War, Britain has sought to cultivate a closer economic and political relationship with Russia, which represents a huge market for potential British investment and trade. At the same time, there have been a number of occasions over the past decade when the two countries have clashed. If threat perceptions guided British strategy, we might expect British officials to be greater champions of Nabucco and other southern corridor pipelines to reduce Europe’s dependency on Russian gas.


Instead, Britain has agreed in principle with the American view that Europe needs to reduce its dependency on Russian gas, but fears getting entrapped in costly pipeline projects that will do little to reduce Europe’s, let alone Britain’s, import dependency. Recognizing Britain will import more Russian gas in the years ahead, British officials are careful not to antagonize Moscow.

**Threat Perceptions**

There are good reasons why Britain might start to worry about its energy security, especially if its dependence on Russian gas steadily increases. While Britain does not view Russia as an immediate threat to its political or economic interests, diplomatic tension has flared between London and Moscow over the past decade. Threat perceptions thus do not provide a convincing rationale for British reluctance to push Nabucco forward. Based on Britain’s desire to limit its dependence on Russia, we would expect London to more strongly Nabucco and other pipelines that circumvent Russia.

Britain’s domestic gas production from the North Sea is expected to continue to decline, making it necessary that Britain secure outside supplies. Britain had 290 bcm of proved natural gas reserves in 2009. Since Britain is one of the biggest natural gas consumer in Europe, however, its reserve-to-production ration (R/P) was low, at only 4.9 years. Its peak productivity in the last decade came in 2000, when it produced 108.4 bcm of gas, and has steadily declined. In 2009 Britain suffered its largest year-on-year decline in natural gas production in the past 30 years. It produced 59 bcm of natural gas that year, which represented a 16 percent drop compared to the previous year, and the

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62 A country’s reserve-to-production ratio is the amount of gas consumed in the previous year divided by total reserves.
lowest level since 1993.\textsuperscript{63} This decline is likely to continue or even accelerate, and by the end of this decade Britain could be importing 80 percent of the natural gas it consumes.

British officials are leery about increasing Britain’s import dependency on Russia. Historically, Anglo-Russian relations have been characterized by both alliance and rivalry, sometimes simultaneously. They were on the same side in their attempt to halt Napoleon’s bid for hegemony. In the “Great Game” over Central Asia, Britain sought to stop Russian penetration into British India. The two fought a brief war in the Crimea in the middle of the nineteenth century—after 1815 the only war between European great powers in the nineteenth century. They fought together against Imperial Germany in World War I, but a period of estrangement set in once again following the 1917 Revolution. Relations deteriorated until 1941, when the specter of Nazi hegemony in Europe drew Russia and Britain into alliance once again. Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, wartime partnership deteriorated quickly. Already by 1946 Churchill had declared an “iron curtain” across Europe.

Britain’s approach to Russia has always been based on pragmatism. Margaret Thatcher in 1985 was the first Western leader to declare that Gorbachev, the new Soviet leader, was “someone we can do business with.” Yeltsin, upon becoming president of the Russian Federation, knew to reach out to Britain first regarding the difficulties associated with the transition to a market-oriented economy, appealing to British and other Western leaders to ease Russia’s crippling foreign debt.

Despite increasing financial and economic interdependence since the end of the Cold War, Anglo-Russian relations have also been marked by a number of high-profile

\textsuperscript{63} This drop is partly due to the global economic recession.
tensions in recent years. British courts in November 2003 granted political asylum to Akhmed Zakaev, a man Russia considers a Chechen separatist. Britain has also granted asylum to Boris Berezovsky, a man Moscow views as a rogue oligarch. In 2006, the Kremlin accused four staff members in the British embassy in Moscow of spying.64

The November 2006 poisoning in London of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former KGB officer and high-profile Kremlin critic, led to one of the most serious diplomatic fallouts between the two countries since the end of the Cold War. Litvinenko was poisoned with polonium 201, a highly radioactive and toxic isotope. British authorities accused Andrei Lugovoi, another former KGB official, of murdering Litvinenko. Russia refused to extradite Lugovoi, who had returned to Moscow, claiming that its constitution did not permit the extradition of its citizens. In retaliation, Britain expelled four Russian officials from the Russian embassy in London; the Kremlin reciprocated by ordering four British diplomats to leave Moscow.65

Despite Britain’s commitment to the full liberalization of its own and Europe’s energy sectors, Gazprom’s rumored interest in Centrica, the owner of British Gas, which supplies more than half of British homes, unsettled a number of British officials. Prime Minister Tony Blair initially said that the British government would not intervene if Gazprom sought to acquire a stake in Centrica. He expressed the reservations many in Britain felt, however, when he later said, “With Gazprom there are questions about politics as well as economics.” As more British government officials raised objections, Gazprom dropped any plans it had to make a bid. Alexei Miller, Gazprom’s chief

executive, issued a pointed rebuttal, claiming that objections to Gazprom’s proposed bid for Centrica were discriminatory. In a meeting with European ambassadors, Miller stated that Gazprom would turn to Asia if it felt unwelcome in Europe. Alexander Medvedev, at the time the deputy chief executive officer of Gazprom, said that Gazprom would like to supply approximately 20 percent of the British gas market by 2015.66

Domestic Politics and Burden Sharing

Domestic politics or economic interests also play a weak rationale for British strategy. If anything, there were lucrative business deals for British industry by forging a closer partnership with Russia. Especially with the dwindling gas supply in the North Sea, British energy companies would have welcomed partnerships with Russian firms.

Like Thatcher and her early outreach to Gorbachev, Blair was among the first Western leaders to take a closer look at Putin. Seeking to integrate Russia economically and politically more firmly in Europe, Blair encouraged George W. Bush to give Russia a greater role in NATO. Blair delivered the same verdict of Putin that Thatcher gave of Gorbachev, namely, that he was a man the West could do business with.

Putin realized that if he were to be successful in restoring Russia as a great power, he would have to attract significant foreign investment and further integrate Russia into the global economy. This would require maintaining cordial relations with the West, and Blair seemed like the logical first person to turn to. Not only was Britain the most open suitor of Russian business, London also served as a bridge between Europe and the United States.

Economic ties between Britain and Russia have never been stronger than they are today. In a historic four-day visit to London in June 2003, Blair and Putin declared they had moved past their differences over Iraq and announced new cooperation in the energy sector. They signed a bilateral agreement on the construction of the planned gas pipeline from Russia to Germany (though British officials vetoed an extension of the pipeline directly to Britain, as Russian officials initially proposed). The British energy giant BP signed a $14 billion joint venture with the Russian oil corporation TNK. With this deal, Britain became the leading foreign investor in Russia. Total British energy investments in Russia topped $17 billion in 2003 alone. The visit also raised Blair’s stature and established himself as the crucial intermediary between the United States and Russia.

The deal symbolized the increasing financial interdependence between the two countries. More than 20 Russian corporations, with a combined market capitalization of around $625 billion, are now listed on the London Stock Exchange. In contrast, only five Russian corporations are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, where the standards of disclosure are higher compared to London. London is also a major center for Russian corporate bonds, with the amount sold more than tripling since 2003. Bilateral trade between Britain and Russia has nearly tripled since 2000.

Free riding holds a compelling rationale for why Britain has not contributed more political capital or financing for Nabucco. British officials would prefer other countries taking on the costs of building these pipelines. But while free riding provides a convincing rationale for why Britain has not contributed substantial resources for

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building the pipeline, it does not explain why it has sought to maintain a balanced relationship between the United States and Russia.

**Alliance Security Dilemma**

British officials were confronted with a situation in which they sought to distance themselves from the more confrontational American approach toward Russia without jeopardizing its own relationship with Moscow. Although Britain can for now supply its energy needs without importing much gas, this is set to change in the near future. Russia will become a more importance source of energy for Britain in the future.

Britain’s two major fears have been getting entrapped in an expensive pipeline project that would do little to ensure its energy security, but also being too indifferent that it would jeopardize its relationship with Washington.

**France**

Of all European countries, France perhaps has the most reason to feel secure when it comes to natural gas. Though it relies exclusively on imports to meet its gas needs, France is less dependent on natural gas than most European countries, consuming about half of what Britain consumes and almost as little as the Netherlands. The French gas supply is also well diversified. France imports natural gas from no less than fifteen countries and from a variety of routes, thus minimizing its dependence on Russia or any other supplier. Each of France’s four main suppliers—Norway, Russia, the Netherlands, and Algeria—supply between 14 and 31 percent of total French imports. France receives 31 percent of its imports from Russia, 25 percent from Algeria, 28 percent from Norway,
and 14 percent from the Netherlands. The rest comes from a mix of European pipelines and from non-European liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Despite ideological and political differences, France and Russia have a long history of viewing each other as crucial for their own security and interests. France remembers that it was saved in two world wars by its alliance with France. As French President François Mitterand wrote to Gorbachev in 1985, “I grew up with history, and I learned that since the sixteenth century, France and Russia have almost continuously been allies and friends.” France and Russia also share the feeling that, as former superpowers (France under Napoleon and Russia during the Soviet period), they no longer have the control and influence they once took for granted.

During the Cold War, de Gaulle sought to impress upon Khrushchev France’s importance to Russia, but was never able to fully persuade the Soviet leader. By defining Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, de Gaulle consciously placed Russia, and its fate, within Europe. Such diplomatic gestures always made the Americans uneasy. Both de Gaulle and Mitterand—and other French political leaders—kept open the diplomatic option to Russia as a kind of counterbalance if and when Washington became too overbearing.

France has not been a major advocate of Nabucco, though it did try to join its consortium (but was blocked by Turkey after the French Parliament formally recognized as genocide the killing of Armenians from 1915 to 1919). In the context of energy security and Europe-Russia relations, France mainly fears a rapprochement between Germany and Russia. To forestall a Russo-German special relationship dominating Europe (rather than the traditional French-German tandem), France joined the Nord
Stream consortium and has attempted to cultivate its own special relationship with Moscow.

**Threat Perceptions**

Threat perceptions, either of maintaining its energy security or its relationship with Russia, fail to explain French strategy. France is not dependent on Russia or any other country for its energy security. And rather than seeing Russia as a potential threat, France has long sought to build a solid political relationship with Moscow.

Two contrasting views of the Paris-Moscow relationship exist in France. Some see a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis as the potential basis for a multipolar system. Others see a closer relationship with Russia as potentially damaging to France’s relationship with other European countries, especially those in Eastern Europe. Some French officials fear the relationship would be too imbalanced, with Moscow the primary beneficiary.

Chirac viewed Russia as a strategic partner and vital to his vision, in the words of Thomas Gomart, “of not just a multilateral world, where decisions are shared, but a multipolar world, where power is shared.” Though Chirac and Putin did not at first have a close relationship, Chirac enthusiastically cultivated Russian cooperation and support on a number of issues. A Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis emerged in opposition to the Iraq war. In addition to serving as a helpful balance to American preponderance, many French officials believed a closer partnership with Russia would have the added benefit of serving as a potential counterweight to Germany, especially in light of the increasingly close ties between Berlin and Moscow. Though Sarkozy has been more willing than his

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predecessor to criticize Russia, he has continued to cultivate a close political relationship with Moscow. This serves to remind French voters that French foreign policy under Sarkozy is not beholden to Washington.

France produces basically no natural gas itself (or coal or oil). But since natural gas constitutes a small portion of its total energy needs, its dependence does not produce vulnerability. France consumed 42.6 bcm of gas in 2009, only 1.4 percent of the world total. Of this, 8.2 bcm came from Russia. Of much greater importance in France’s energy policy is nuclear power, which provides 77 percent of France’s electricity. France has 58 operating nuclear reactors, after the United States the highest number in the world. Nuclear power is the main reason France is able to generate half its own energy.

The decision to pursue a coherent and consistent energy policy based on nuclear power emerged in the 1970s. Following the energy crises of that decade, France sought to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels. Paris has achieved a high level of energy security through this policy, and has limited its vulnerability more than other European countries have been able to. Developing nuclear power also has an added economic benefit. Nuclear technology and expertise is a major French export.

Domestic Politics

The political relationship between France and Russia is not based on an extensive economic foundation. Russia does more trade with Belarus, South Korea, and Japan than

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69 “BP Statistical Review of World Energy.”

it does with France. Russia accounts for a tiny fraction of French exports—around 0.9 percent.

France, like Germany, is a major oil and gas importer and maintains big national energy companies. As Buchan notes, “A national champion strategy is not illogical as a deliberate attempt to create domestic market power to offset a foreign supplier’s market power (such as that of Gazprom).” France and Germany both claim it is necessary to have big, vertically integrated national energy champions to be able to negotiate with companies like Gazprom on an equal basis, as well as to plan and finance long-distance pipelines that can cost billions of dollars. Compared to the British energy market, there is much greater market power concentration in France.

The French domestic energy market is dominated by two corporate giants, Electricité de France (EDF) and, following a government-orchestrated merger in September 2007 between Gaz de France (GDF) and Suez, GDF Suez. The merger of Gaz de France and Suez created Europe’s largest buyer and seller of natural gas; GDF Suez also emerged as Europe’s biggest natural gas distributor. Even before the merger, GDF controlled 90 percent of the French gas market, plus most of the storage and transmission infrastructure. The deal “reinforced France’s position as a major player in European and global energy markets.” The French government played a prominent role brokering the merger, claiming it would transform the energy landscape in Europe. Prime Minister François Fillon, in an op-ed article in Le Figaro, said, the merger was a “strategic operation,” and that it would create a stronger negotiating position with other countries.

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71 Buchan, Energy and Climate Change, 16.

The French government’s direct and indirect stake in GDF Suez approached 40 percent, making it by far the biggest shareholder. By being the dominant shareholder, the government is well-positioned to influence the company’s strategy.

GDF and Gazprom have been long-time partners. In addition to the stake in Nord Stream, at a summit in November 2009 French and Russian leaders discussed the possibility of GDF joining Gazprom and Italy’s Eni in the South Stream consortium. The giant French oil company Total signed a deal with Gazprom to develop the Shtokman gas field, located in the Arctic, and holds a 25 percent stake in the joint venture.

Gazprom chose Total from a large group of suitors to develop Shtokman, a giant offshore gas field in the Arctic. Total won the contract despite being considered the least likely winner. The reason this happened was because of politics. As the Economist noted, “The decision fits with the Kremlin’s tactic of striking bilateral energy deals within European countries and converting their national energy companies into fervent lobbyists for Moscow’s commercial and political interests.” With strategic partnerships with companies like Total and by extension the French government, Gazprom now has powerful supporters in the EU.

France also hopes to recover some lost ground as one of the world’s major arms exporters. France agreed to sell Russia up to four Mistral class assault ships, which can carry helicopters and tanks, at up to $750 million each. The deal would be the biggest sale of military equipment from a NATO member to Russia. The sale sparked criticism from Washington as well as fear and mistrust from a number of Eastern Europe countries that continue to have difficult relationships with Russia. To assuage these concerns,

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Sarkozy has said that the ships would not include sophisticated technology. He has also said that Russia cannot be treated as both an ally and as an enemy.\textsuperscript{74} The Mistral deal is France’s version of Nord Stream.\textsuperscript{75} As one of the most pro-American French presidents in recent memory, Sarkozy has the ability to cultivate close ties with Russia while also maintaining the trans-Atlantic partnership.

\textit{Alliance Security Dilemma}

Without a stake in the Nord Stream pipeline project, France would have been faced with the unwelcome prospect of relying on a German broker for Russian gas. Losing out on a potentially lucrative commercial deal with Russia could affect the Franco-German rivalry for economic and political influence in Europe. The competition for resources takes precedence over considerations of European unity.

France realizes a closer political relationship between Germany and Russia is nearly inevitable. The two countries are drawn together by geography and economics. Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, needs raw materials Russia can provide. Russia holds the world’s largest gas reserves and has a huge potential export market for German companies and economy for investment. German exports to Russia are four times those of France to Russia.

France’s main fear has thus been German abandonment. France has sought to prevent this by pursuing its own special relationship with Russia as a counterweight to


growing German influence in Europe. France has also pursued a strategy of bandwagoning, whereby GDF Suez acquired a stake in the Nord Stream pipeline. Not only does it give the French government some influence over the project, it also diminishes the stake the two German companies have in the project.

Germany

Of all the countries in Europe, Germany has had one of the closest but also one of the most tumultuous relationships with Russia. As Europe’s two world-size powers for much of the twentieth century, historically they have had a complicated relationship. This relationship has been defined by centuries of mutual infatuation punctuated by wildly destructive wars, usually at the expense of the lands situated between them. While there are now dense and growing business ties linking the two countries, their shared history also includes the memory of the devastation wrought by World War II.

The special relationship between Germany and Russia goes back well over a century. German settlers settled the Volga plain in the eighteenth century. West Germany’s Ostpolitik in the 1970s sought improved relations with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. This period also saw the construction of the first natural gas pipelines linking Russia and Western Europe, including Germany, despite objections from the United States. The use of economic ties to improve political relations is a main element in Germany’s approach to Russia today. In a key German Foreign Ministry strategy paper in


2006, Germany’s strategy toward Russia was based on a strategy of “Annäherung durch Verflechtung,” or “rapprochement through economic interlocking.”

The Russo-German relationship has emerged as arguably Europe’s most important bilateral relationship. Germany is Europe’s largest importer of natural gas and is Russia’s largest market for natural gas exports, followed by Italy and Ukraine. Germany relies on Russia for nearly 40 percent of its natural gas and 30 percent of its crude oil. Moreover, Germany’s dependence on Russian natural gas is growing, as it moves away from oil and coal, which are among the dirtiest fossil fuels, to natural gas, which is among the cleanest. The partnership is based not only on massive amounts of Russian gas imports, but also a surge in trade, investment, and technology transfers over the past two decades.

While Germany has long professed EU solidarity on energy, it has not hesitated to pursue its own interests. This is characterized most clearly by the Nord Steam pipeline project, which Poland, the Baltic countries, and others view as a threat to their own energy security.

Threat Perceptions

Bismarck’s insight that both Germany and Russia prospered when they were close and suffered when they were in conflict has reappeared and generated a renewed desire for closer partnership both in Berlin and Moscow. As Henry Kissinger has said, “Many in Germany identify national disasters with the abandonment of Bismarck’s legacy of always keeping open a diplomatic option to Russia.”

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momentum since the chaotic 1990s, the traditional temptation of forging a special relationship with Russia has reappeared in Berlin. Russia’s reemergence has also coincided with the rise in Germany’s relative power, and a reexamination of Germany’s role in Europe.\textsuperscript{79}

Energy security reappeared in Germany’s energy policy in the mid-2000s. Germany’s dependence on natural gas imports was increasing. As John Duffield notes:

With regard to Russia, Germany faces two distinct, and somewhat contradictory, challenges. On the one hand, there is the risk, however remote, that Russia might seek to use German dependence to apply political pressure or seek political advantage. On the other hand, there is the danger that Russia will be unable to fulfill its contractual obligations. The principal Russian gas fields are in decline, whereas development has only recently begun on promising, but often difficult, new fields, such as Shtokman in the Barents Sea.\textsuperscript{80}

The German government sees concerns that Russia will someday use its energy resources for political blackmail to be exaggerated. Germany has never experienced difficulties with Russian deliveries (even during the Cold War) and sees no reason why Moscow would try to exploit Germany’s increasing dependence on Russian gas. As discussed above, the relationship is defined my mutual dependence rather than asymmetric dependence. Russia also has few other viable customers for its gas at the moment. While China may be an important customer in the future, the entire Russian gas network is designed to ship gas east to west. A pipeline network to ship Russian gas to China would take years if not decades to build and tens of billions of dollars. The

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{79}{Angela E. Stent, “Berlin's Russia Challenge,” \textit{The National Interest}, no. 88 (2007).}
\footnotetext{80}{Duffield, ”Germany and Energy Security in the 2000s,” 4290.}
\end{footnotes}
German government also believes that Russia will be able to continue to meet its supply obligations, even if it means Russia must buy more gas from third-parties, such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and other countries in the Caspian region.\textsuperscript{81}

\textit{Domestic Politics}

Like France, Germany’s natural gas market is well diversified. Germany relies on imports for approximately 83 percent of its natural gas needs. It receives 45 percent of its imports from Russia, 25 percent from Norway, and 23 percent from the Netherlands, with the remaining 7 percent a mix of European pipelines and from non-European LNG.\textsuperscript{82} In 2009, Germany had proved gas reserves of 0.08 tcm, with a reserve-to-production ratio of 6.4 years. Germany consumed in 2009 78.0 bcm, 2.6 percent of the world total.

Germany’s commercial interests in Russia have political implications. Germany is an export-dependent economy, which affects German foreign policy in two ways: Germany needs reliable access to resources, and it must find markets for the goods that it produces. Germany’s business community is thus in favor of maintaining a close relationship with Russia. German economic trade with Russia goes back centuries. Siemens has been operating in Russia for more than 150 years. Even during the Cold War Germany and the Soviet Union maintained commercial relations.\textsuperscript{83}

In addition to its booming bilateral energy trade, Russia has vast natural resources that Germany seeks to develop, and Germany has capital, manufacturing expertise, and

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{82} See also "Germany: Country Analysis Briefs," (Energy Information Administration, 2006).

engineering skills Russia needs. As the *Financial Times* states, “These transfers are at the heart of a grand bargain whereby Russia obtains the technology it needs to make its outdated industry more competitive, in exchange for Germany’s mighty exporters gaining unrestricted access to a market of 140 million people.”

Nonetheless, German investment in Russia and bilateral trade is a small fraction compared to German investment and trade with other countries.

The merger of E.ON and Ruhrgas created a single “national champion” that was large enough to compete with companies like Gazprom. E.ON Ruhrgas, Germany’s largest energy firm and perhaps the only outside shareholder that Gazprom treats with any respect, owns 6.5 percent of Gazprom. The two chief executives sit on each other’s board. The partnership is highly profitable for both countries. As Edward Lucas notes, “E.ON provides extensive technical assistance to Gazprom in modernizing that country’s rickety compressors and leaky pipelines. Gazprom provides cheap and reliable gas supplies.”

Former chancellor Gerhard Schröder was reliably pro-Russian, even calling Putin a “flawless democrat.” Schröder and his wife adopted a three-year-old Russian girl and invited Putin to celebrate with him on the chancellor’s sixtieth birthday. Putin reciprocated Schröder’s infatuation, calling Germany “Russia’s leading partner in Europe and the world.” It is natural that Putin would feel more comfortable with Germany than many other European countries. He lived in Dresden for several years during his KGB career and speaks fluent German.

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84 Ibid.

Alliance Security Dilemma

Germany plays a pivotal role in the West’s relationship with Russia. Germany has become not only an important trade partner for Russia, but in many respects Russia’s foremost advocate in the West. Binding Russia, and before that the Soviet Union, has been a goal of every German government since at least the 1970s. This created apprehension in Washington at times, especially Germany’s dependence on Russian natural gas. During the Cold War, Ruhrgas kept Soviet natural gas imports to no more than 30 percent of total West German consumption to dampen American fears about its energy dependence on the Soviet Union.

Germany will not take the lead in the EU to build Nabucco or the other southern corridor pipelines. Germany’s aloofness toward Nabucco, as well as its enthusiasm for the Nord Stream pipeline project, is not a product of threat perceptions (bandwagoning with Russia), domestic politics or economic interests, or concerns about burden sharing. Instead, German strategy toward Russia is best explained by fear of becoming entrapped by what Berlin views as an unnecessarily aggressive American approach toward Russia.

Many of Germany’s EU neighbors have claimed that what is good for Germany is not necessarily good for Europe. While Germany views Nord Stream as vital for its own energy security, many of Germany’s neighbors, including the Baltic countries and Poland, view the pipeline as a potential source of threat. A study by Sweden’s Defense Research Agency found that Nord Stream would divide the EU and increase Europe’s

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overall energy dependence on Russia.\textsuperscript{87} This contracted Schröder’s own assurances that the Nord Stream pipeline would make Europe safer and its energy imports more secure.

Nord Stream is expected to be the cornerstone of the German-Russian special relationship. Both countries expect to win big with the new pipeline. For many years, Russia has wanted to reduce its dependence on Belarus and Ukraine as transit countries. With the pipeline in place, Germany will ensure its access to Russian natural gas without having to worry about disputes between Russian and transit countries. Germany will also assume a special role in Europe’s energy markets when Nord Stream is completed. No longer simply a consumer of natural gas, Germany would become a major distributor of gas throughout the rest of Europe.

**Stalling**

Despite opportunities to coordinate their energy policies and pressure from the United States to collectively reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian energy, Britain, France, and Germany have largely followed independent, self-interested, and at times competing strategies toward Russia on energy security. Though some of the first steps toward European integration occurred in energy markets—coal in 1951 and nuclear energy in 1957—similar cooperation in the natural gas market has not been similarly forthcoming.

European governments face a situation in which they seek to avoid jeopardizing their bilateral economic and political relationships with Russia while simultaneously

placating the United States as it continues to press them to diversify Europe’s energy
supplies and routes. European countries have thus played a balancing act between
American entrapment and Russian abandonment. These two risks tend to be inversely
related: the more European countries signal their support for—or, even more, take steps
to reduce their dependency on Russian energy—the greater the danger they could lose out
to other countries on lucrative energy and trade deals with Russia. In the near future
European governments will not only be competing among themselves for energy and
other commercial deals, but increasingly with China and other energy-hungry countries in
Asia. Russia thus represents both a dilemma and an enormous opportunity for Europe.

European governments’ stalling has taken two forms: foot dragging and free
riding. On the one hand, European governments have slow played Nabucco and the other
proposed southern corridor pipeline projects. Italy and Germany have dragged their feet
on Nabucco, not wanting to antagonize Moscow and disrupt their own lucrative
commercial deals with Moscow. France, whose energy security is relatively secure
given its nuclear power program and diversified natural gas supplies, has seen little incentive to
change the status quo, especially if it damages its own bilateral relationship with Russia.
That leaves Britain as the major supporter of Nabucco among Europe’s major powers.
Getting Nabucco up and running is far less salient for Britain than it is for countries in
Eastern Europe that have been subject to supply disruptions in recent years. This could
change as Britain’s indigenous production of natural gas continues to decrease and it
becomes more dependent on imports to meet its consumption needs. Nonetheless, while
giving diplomatic support for the pipelines when necessary, Britain, France, and
Germany have largely avoided taking concrete steps toward making these pipelines a reality.

This foot dragging has infuriated newer EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe that are heavily dependent on Russian gas. Some accused the bigger EU member states of sacrificing the interests of countries in the east for their own relationship with Russia. These countries lack the economic and political clout to develop Nabucco themselves.

A second motivation has been free riding. No European government would oppose Nabucco becoming reality. At the same time, they hope that other countries will foot the bill for Nabucco and other pipeline projects. In this way they could diversify their suppliers and have someone else pay for it.

The difference between European government’s stalling when it comes to reducing Europe’s collective dependence on Russian gas and pursuing their own political, corporate, and strategic interests is the relative swiftness of Nord Stream’s development. Despite being proposed several years after Nabucco, construction on Nord Stream has already begun. The first of two pipelines will soon be operational, and Russian gas will be shipping directly to Western Europe. Energy also demonstrates the political nature of pipeline projects. Angela Merkel was cool about the idea of Nabucco, but then expressed her support after the EU gave its support for Nord Stream.

The reason why a stalling strategy has been effective is because Britain, France, and Germany interpret the alliance security dilemma largely equivalently. All feared getting entrapped in energy disputes or pipeline projects that might antagonize Russia. Not even Britain shared the depth of U.S. concern over Europe’s energy dependence.
Nabucco is still a pipe dream for many. The cost of Nabucco has risen dramatically, and it has been beset by a number of difficulties, from logistical delays, lack of political will, and disputes over the project’s financing. For some, Nabucco captures the indecisiveness of the EU. Political will and resolve will not overcome commercial inviability.

Summary

This chapter has examined the independent and at times competing strategies Britain, France, and Germany have taken toward Russia, especially regarding energy security. Despite the European integration project beginning by integrating two energy industries—coal and nuclear energy—similar steps toward integrating Europe’s disparate natural gas sectors has not occurred.

Rather than absence of threat perceptions, lack of domestic politics and economic interests, or limited concerns over burden sharing, non-cooperation largely results from different interpretations of the alliance security dilemma. Each country feared entrapment in projects not vital to their interests, and which might antagonize Russia and jeopardize their own bilateral relationships. The failure to invest in costly pipeline projects (distinct from rhetorical or diplomatic support for such projects) that could reduce Europe’s collective dependence on Russian gas is partly explained by countries trying to free ride and shift the financial burden onto other states.

This chapter also shows that the alliance security dilemma operates among Britain, France, and Germany. Not only do they react to the United States, but also to
each other. France was wary of German abandonment, especially leading to a German-Russian partnership that would come at French expense.

This chapter also showed a second strategy medium powers can take to reduce the risk of abandonment or entrapment: stalling. Stalling is a strategy of strategic noncompliance. While Britain, France, and Germany did not pursue America’s ambition to develop energy pipeline projects that would bypass Russia completely, they were careful not to renounce them completely.

This case shows the weakness of neorealist, institutionalist, and constructivist perspectives in explaining the different approaches Britain, France, and Germany take toward ensuring their energy security. Despite its preponderance and applying diplomatic pressure since the 1970s, the United States has been unsuccessful in reducing its European allies’ dependence on Russian gas. In fact, with the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline between Russia and Germany, Europe’s dependence will only increase.

There currently are no institutions specifically designed to help EU countries coordinate their energy policies and ensure their energy security. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier explored the absence of any such institutions in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, arguing that energy security must be organized in a cooperative way, globally and in Europe. Steinmeier proposed creating an institution similar to the OSCE that could build mutual understanding and trust and overcome Europe’s dysfunctional energy markets.88

This case also shows the absence of norms of consultation, coordination, or policy codetermination in Europe on energy security. On the contrary, national governments

have pursued their own political, economic, and strategic interests, both in relation to Russia and to energy security. Even a country like Germany, which generally is perhaps the biggest advocate of greater integration in Europe, has pursued its own bilateral relationship with Russia, even in the face of criticism from its neighbors. Technology will affect how European countries’ secure their energy needs in the future and will thus affect their political relationships with Russia. One of the biggest technological breakthroughs in recent years has been the United States’ ability to produce and export large quantities of shale gas. As LNG from the United States and the Middle East becomes cheaper, it will help reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian gas. These developments have also led to the creation for the first time of a natural gas spot market, where prices are often lower than the price of gas in European energy companies’ long-term contracts with Gazprom.  

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

This dissertation began by noting that policy differences between the United States and many of its traditional allies are likely to increase in the years ahead. With the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a historically unprecedented period of American preeminence, the interests, priorities, and threat perceptions of the United States and some of its key allies are likely to diverge with greater frequency and possibly greater intensity.

I also noted a paradox facing European countries: as cooperation and even integration in different policy areas has consolidated and even expanded in the past two decades, including into areas at the core of state sovereignty such as monetary policy, sharp and at times protracted disagreements on major security issues remain a recurrent and seemingly permanent feature of European politics. A major reason for these policy disagreements, I have argued, stems from the alliance security dilemma. Different interpretations of the risks and costs produced by potential allied abandonment or entrapment lead states to adopt different security strategies, which at times conflict with those of their allies.

This concluding chapter reviews the questions and issues raised earlier in the dissertation and presents this study’s main findings. Additionally, it evaluates the possibility of greater foreign policy and security cooperation among European countries, and the effects of the alliance security dilemma on American strategy.
This chapter is organized as follows. First, it reviews how the alliance security dilemma operates differently in unipolar international systems compared to bipolar and multipolar systems. Second, it assesses and evaluates the different hypotheses put forward in Chapter 2 that purport to explain alliance cohesion and discord. Third, it considers ways to expand the scope of the analysis, including incorporating different substantive issues, such as economic crises, and additional countries, especially non-European U.S. allies. Fourth, it examines the impact of the alliance security dilemma on Europe’s ability to establish a more coherent foreign, security, and defense policy. Lastly, it analyzes why policy differences with traditional allies will be a regular occurrence for the United States in the future, and how the United States can respond to this challenge.

**The Alliance Security Dilemma under Unipolarity**

We know from theory and history that the alliance security dilemma operates differently under bipolarity than it does under multipolarity.¹ This dissertation shows that the alliance security dilemma under unipolarity has certain properties and operates with its own unique characteristics, which serve to distinguish it from its dynamics in multipolar and bipolar systems. Establishing how and why the alliance security dilemma under unipolarity is theoretically and historically unique has been one of the main goals of this dissertation.

In multipolar systems, the alliance and adversary games are deeply intertwined and are of roughly equal importance. States must fear threats to their security from other states as well as the risk of allied abandonment or entrapment, which could have serious consequences for their own security. The alliance security dilemma in a bipolar system,

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¹ For a review, see Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics."
while serious, is less severe because the structure of the international system makes abandonment less likely—de-alignment or realignment to the other side are not credible policy options—though fears of entrapment continue to shape states’ calculations.²

As a result, the alliance security dilemma makes alliances in multipolar systems more stable (i.e., there is less policy divergence among allies) because states fear defection, but makes alliances in bipolar systems less stable (i.e., there is more policy divergence). Because a mutual threat precludes abandonment (a kind of defection) and guarantees ultimate alliance cohesion, independent and even contradictory approaches, even toward the adversary, are regular features under bipolarity. One of the reasons political disagreements during the Cold War were so frequent, though without leading to the dissolution of the alliance altogether, was because of the absence of structural pressures toward their resolution. Policy disagreements appeared on a regular basis because policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic knew that these disagreements would not jeopardize the existence of the trans-Atlantic alliance.

In the post-Cold War era, these structural pressures holding the alliance together no longer exist. There is no longer a unifying threat akin to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. NATO’s persistence is therefore somewhat anomalous. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO persists, albeit in very different form compared to the Cold War. It has even expanded its membership, in the process promoting democracy and stability in countries once part of the Soviet orbit. Rather than a military alliance whose sole purpose is to guarantee the defense of its members, NATO today is a fully entrenched international organization that increasingly operates far from the alliance’s

² Ibid., 485.
original geographic center in Europe and the North Atlantic. It conducts missions that extend well beyond providing for the mutual defense of its members, such as peacekeeping and nation building. Institutional and organizational factors thus make it more likely NATO will continue to exist long into the future. The 2003 Iraq war showed NATO’s robustness. The alliance survived arguably the most serious trans-Atlantic crisis in its history with little damage to its long-term viability, despite the fears of policymakers and the prognostications of many pundits at the time.

Similar to multipolar systems, the alliance and adversary games are roughly coequal under unipolarity. Compared to multipolar systems, however, there is a greater risk (though less potential cost) of abandonment. While an ally’s abandonment in a multipolar setting could put one’s security in immediate peril, the costs of an ally’s abandonment generally are not as severe under unipolarity. That is particularly true today, when European countries face no serious external threats to their security. The United States continues to provide a unilateral security guarantee, and Russia is more interested in consolidating its economic rather than its military presence across Europe. Nevertheless, full abandonment is unlikely because of the institutional forces that contribute to NATO’s persistence described above as well as non-structural elements such as similarities on both sides of the Atlantic in the areas of political culture and domestic political system, memories of a shared struggle and shared sacrifice during the Cold War, and a vast array of mutual interests. It is inconceivable that Europe and America should start to view each other as strategic rivals.

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3 It is likely the American unilateral security guarantee would persist even with the dissolution of NATO. It is inconceivable the United States would stand aside if Europe were attacked.
The risk of entrapment under unipolarity, as this dissertation has shown, runs high. There are no structural constraints—such as that posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War—to limit American power or to discipline its actions. Unipolarity invites unilateralism for the hegemon—and, as the Iraq War demonstrated, at times carelessness and impetuousness. European allies can successfully avoid becoming entrapped in conflict situations they view as tangential to their core interests, but their dissociation carries political costs and vulnerabilities of its own—including greater American dissociation from Europe and more frequent unilateralism.

Policy differences can thus be a frequent occurrence in a unipolar system for a number of reasons. First, there are likely to be more differences among allies over core security interests. The unipole defines its interests in global terms, whereas even major European powers such as Britain, France, and Germany remain essentially regional powers with predominantly regional interests. Second, in the post-Cold War world NATO has been tasked to take on more responsibilities and to conduct difficult combat and post-combat operations. While NATO was not called on to do much during the Cold War unless its members were attacked, since the end of the Cold War NATO has conducted operations from the Balkans to Afghanistan. These missions tend to be situations in which consensus has been difficult to achieve and maintain. In addition to increasing NATO-led missions, there are of course many security challenges where the United States and its European allies are deeply involved but not through NATO, such as the three cases examined in this dissertation. Third, the vast disparity in power encourages the United States to privilege military responses whereas European countries in general prefer to pursue more “civilian” aspects of national power, including economic
trade, foreign aid, and development. Differences over how power should be used may also encourage unilateralism and inhibit compromise.

While disagreements between the United States and Europe and between European governments themselves have arisen from a variety of proximate causes, such as ideological inflexibility, domestic politics, and political vulnerability, the alliance could still slowly disintegrate in the years ahead. Rather than a product of the unipolar nature of the international system, NATO is a legacy of an earlier, very different period of world politics. It is not structurally foreordained, as it was during the Cold War. Alliances in a unipolar system are more fragile; if policy differences become too serious, the continued existence of the alliance could be at stake. While NATO has lasted longer than many expected, and it faces no imminent demise, its continued existence depends on whether policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic view it as necessary to their political and security interests.

Another motivation of this dissertation has been to understand empirically why countries similarly situated will interpret the alliance security dilemma differently—and thus pursue different state strategies. Building on neoclassical realism, I have argued that countries interpret the alliance security dilemma differently based on the level of dependence they feel toward their allies. High levels of dependence lead to greater fears of abandonment, whereas lower levels of dependence correlate with higher fears of entrapment. The evidence largely bears this proposition out. Britain, the country that feels the greatest level of dependence on the United States due to the perceived special relationship between the two countries, was more likely than France or Germany to fear American abandonment. This was especially true during the Iraq crisis. France, which
feels a lower level of dependence on the United States, largely feared entrapment—in a war to force regime change in Iraq or a military response against Iran’s nuclear facilities.

**Assessment of Hypotheses**

I began this dissertation by outlining four hypotheses that purport to explain alliance cohesion and discord. In this section I briefly evaluate their explanatory power in the context of the three case studies under investigation. The evidence provided in this dissertation has shown that, in certain situations, how a country interprets the alliance security dilemma is a major determinant of alliance cohesion and discord. Symmetrical interpretations of the alliance security dilemma lead to policy convergence, whereas asymmetrical interpretations lead to policy discord.

Each of the competing hypotheses offers some useful insights for why allies may agree on some policy issues but disagree on others. None ultimately offers a better explanation of the variation in alliance cohesion and discord compared to how these countries interpret the alliance security dilemma. The aim of this dissertation has not been to suggest that this model can explain all aspects of alliance dynamics or alliance management, or to suggest that alternate explanations provide no helpful insights to these questions. In real life, each of these explanations holds some causal weight. Instead, I have sought to evaluate the relative importance of different variables and causal explanations on alliance cohesion and discord.

*Threat Perceptions*
Threat perceptions were not a major determinant of alliance cohesion and discord in the three case studies I analyze in this dissertation. This hypothesis states that when two or more countries perceive a mutual threat, these countries will tend to cooperate to neutralize the threat, deter it, coerce it, or aggregate their resources to defeat it in a conflict situation. Absent a shared threat, states are less likely to take the costly steps necessary to cooperate.

While British, French, or German core national interests—territorial integrity or political survival—were never at stake in the cases I examine in this dissertation, there were threats to their regional interests, interests in regional stability, and broader political and economic interests in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, or the post-Soviet empire. If core national interests were truly at stake, threat perceptions would likely have played a much larger role in states’ calculations. Nonetheless, the evidence in this dissertation suggests that when important but not vital interests are at stake, alliance cohesion and discord are not primarily determined by threat perceptions.

Many British and French policymakers, for example, largely shared an assessment of Iraq’s WMD capability. Chapter 4 showed that many British officials were skeptical of the claims of the Bush administration regarding Saddam’s WMD capabilities, though Prime Minister Tony Blair largely shared the American assessment. The chapter also showed that French participation in an invasion of Iraq could have been possible if weapons inspectors were given longer to work, if Saddam’s non-compliance continued, and if an invasion was authorized by the Security Council. The major reason for their policy divergence, especially between January and March 2003, was British fears of
American abandonment and French fears of entrapment in a rushed and potentially highly destabilizing war.

Likewise, the main motivation behind the E3’s cooperation on nuclear diplomacy toward Iran was not based on the actual threat Iran posed to their security or vital interests, but rather a desire to avoid getting entrapped and suffering the fallout from an American military campaign designed to destroy Iran’s nuclear weapons capability.

**Domestic Politics and Economic Interests**

There was also little evidence that domestic politics or economic interests played a major role in shaping states’ incentives to cooperate with allies or dissociate themselves from allies’ policies. Even in situations in which public opinion was highly salient, and defying public opinion carried significant political risk, political leaders were willing to assume that risk—such as when British Prime Minister Tony Blair defied domestic public opinion in deciding to support the Bush administration’s policy of disarmament and regime change in Iraq in 2003. Public opinion was not always salient across all the cases, however, even when the geopolitical stakes were high.

Nor were economic interests a major determinant of alliance cohesion or discord in the cases I analyzed. Governments played the lead role, even when lucrative economic interests were at stake. Though energy companies pressed their governments to conclude investments and other economic arrangements with Russian energy companies, governments’ political interests took precedence. European governments pressed corporations to reduce or even stop doing business with Iran. With a population of 80 million, significant hydrocarbon resources, and the need for Western expertise and
technology to develop its economy, Iran represents an enormous and potentially very lucrative market for European corporations. European governments determined it was preferable to put collective pressure on Iran rather than to defect and pursue bilateral economic deals. Alliance cohesion or discord was thus not primarily a function of domestic politics or economic incentives.

**Burden Sharing**

While collective action dynamics or concerns over burden sharing were not a major determinant of alliance cohesion or discord, it did affect states’ willingness to contribute resources to certain policies. For example, while Britain, France, and Germany in principle support diversification of energy supplies and transit routes, all were unwilling to assume the cost of building expensive pipeline networks. They all tried to pass the buck on developing, financing, and building new transmission and storage infrastructure. As Chapter 5 indicated, while there was consensus on negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program, the E3 was not tasked to do much beyond impose economic sanctions and trade embargoes. Had they been required to do adopt more coercive measures that raised the political stakes, we might expect to see more examples of buckpassing. And as Chapter 4 presented, though Germany opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq, in the end Berlin provided important logistical help for the U.S. invasion, which even surpassed the level of contribution from some of the “official” members of the war coalition.

**Alliance Security Dilemma**
The alliance security dilemma offered the most convincing rationale for policy differences among Britain, France, and Germany in the three security issues examined in this dissertation. Shared interpretations of the alliance security dilemma were more likely to lead to cooperation, whereas asymmetrical interpretations were more likely to lead to policy differences.

The chapter on Russia presents the difficulty of drawing stark conclusions, however. Britain, France, and Germany did not fear abandonment or entrapment in this case as severely as they did in the other two cases. This was partly because they were not pressed by the United States or another country to make costly, binding commitments, and the consequences of their non-compliance (of American pressure to diversify Europe’s gas supplies and routes) was less severe compared, for example, if the United States conducted a preventive military campaign against Iran.

Because none had strong fears of abandonment or entrapment, and because the United States did not press hard on them to reduce Europe’s collective dependency on Russian gas, they were able to adopt a strategy of what I called “stalling.” That is, they provided just enough rhetorical and diplomatic support to diversify Europe’s energy imports, especially reducing Europe’s dependence on Russian gas, without taking politically or economically costly steps toward achieving this goal.

While different interpretations of the alliance security dilemma provides a convincing rationale for variation in alliance cohesion and discord, no theory can explain everything. My own neoclassical realist model of alliance dynamics has a number of limitations. How to measure a country’s dependence on another can be difficult to measure. Even if countries have a general tendency toward fearing abandonment or
fearing entrapment, this can be difficult to operationalize, as the Russia case study illustrates. Fears of abandonment or entrapment may also manifest themselves to different degrees in specific security crises or challenges. This is why case studies and process tracing are so important to establish causal effect.

Neorealism, Institutionalism, and Constructivism

This dissertation also showed the limits of neorealism, institutionalism, and constructivism in explaining variation in cooperation and discord among allies. While all three theoretical perspectives offer compelling rationales for alliance cohesion or discord in general, explaining variation is more difficult.

Neorealism would expect the United States, as the dominant military and economic power in the alliance, to dictate its preferences and interests to other alliance members. Through a combination of inducements and threats, the United States would be able to ensure its allies’ compliance and cooperation with its preferred strategies. As seen throughout this dissertation, however, the United States often lacked the will and the capacity to ensure compliance from its allies. Moreover, allies have a number of strategies that allow them to dissociate themselves from U.S. policy options. As this dissertation shows, these strategies, which I call preemption and stalling, can be surprisingly effective.

European countries belong to a number of overlapping and mutually reinforcing institutions, the most important of which are NATO and the EU. While institutions are useful for coordinating state behavior when states want to cooperate, institutions have little influence at resolving disputes or mitigating divergent policy interests. This was
evident throughout this dissertation. Institutions did little to resolve the sharpest, most protracted policy disputes, especially the fallout over the invasion of Iraq.

While many point to the emergence and consolidation of norms of policy consensus, consultation, and policy codetermination in Europe, including in foreign policy and security, these norms are routinely ignores or violated when it serves states’ interests. This happened routinely in the cases examined in this dissertation. Despite being one of the strongest advocates over the years for greater European integration, Germany has been perhaps the most enthusiastic country in Europe to conclude bilateral energy deals with Russia. Berlin has pursued a closer relationship with Moscow even as its neighbors have expressed deep reservations and even outright opposition, claiming that Moscow routinely threatens their own economic and security interests.

**Other Cases to Investigate**

While the goal of this dissertation was not to provide a general explanation of alliance cohesion and discord that will apply in all situations or for all alliance relationships, many of the insights and findings in this dissertation are likely to appear in additional security challenges or crises European countries have faced, in policy areas other than security and defense, and among countries not directly analyzed in this dissertation.

We could expand our list of security crises in which European countries were main protagonists. In this respect, the war in Bosnia in the 1990s would be particularly useful to study and compare. This case shares many of the features that characterized the three cases examined in this study: it was a major security crisis in the post-Cold War
period that European countries struggled to respond to. The United States played a crucial role in resolving the crisis, but only after three years of pressing its European allies to stop the bloodshed themselves and not getting directly involved. The model developed in this dissertation would be strengthened if we find the same factors in operation in the context of the fallout over the appropriate response to the Bosnian war, namely, policy disagreements among Britain, France, and Germany were the result of different interpretations of the alliance security dilemma rather than differences over threat perceptions, domestic politics and economic interests, and disagreements over burden sharing.

It would also be useful to examine a case in which non-security interests were primarily at stake, such as economic interests. States fear not simply military entrapment, but entrapment in a broader political, diplomatic, and economic sense as well. States’ fears of the risks and costs of economic abandonment and entrapment, and how this affects state behavior, remain under-studied. Several questions arise when contemplating such a situation: would the alliance security dilemma operate equivalently when economic rather than security interests are at stake? Since the gap separating the United States and its European allies in the economic realm is not as significant as in the military domain, we might question whether the alliance security dilemma would be as severe—European countries may assess the risks, costs, and credibility of economic abandonment or entrapment as somehow less pressing. Europe’s dependence on the United States is lower in the economic realm than it is in the military realm, and this may affect how they interpret the alliance security dilemma when economic interests are at stake.
It would also be useful to study U.S. allies outside Europe. America’s strategic partnerships with countries in East Asia, such as South Korea and Japan, could be interesting corollaries. But while these countries share certain similarities with U.S. allies in Europe, there are also clear differences. Most importantly, South Korea and Japan have had and continue to have a contentious, antagonistic relationship—contrary to the significant political and economic integration European countries have achieved. While the alliance security dilemma will be an important factor in alliance cohesion and discord for countries outside the trans-Atlantic alliance, it may not be the most important determinant.

Making European countries the primary focus of this dissertation is theoretically interesting and important. It is difficult to think of a group of countries outside Europe where intense, sustained disagreements over major security issues would seem retrograde or anachronistic. No other region has come close to achieving a similar degree of political and economic integration. This level of integration is what creates such an interesting theoretical and empirical puzzle, namely, why countries that have achieved substantial cooperation and even integration in other policy areas nonetheless continue to have sharp disagreements over major security issues.

**Toward a Common European Security Policy?**

In light of this dissertation’s main findings, what are the implications for European governments’ ambition to achieve greater cooperation in foreign and security policy? What are the implications for trans-Atlantic relations? So long as the United

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^{4} Note Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia."; Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism.*
States maintains its preponderant position in the international system, and European
countries feel different degrees of dependence on the United States for their political and
security interests, the alliance security dilemma will continue to be an obstacle to reach
consensus on foreign policy, security, and defense issues on a consistent basis.

Britain, for example, will not agree to strengthen Europe’s own security and
defense capabilities if doing so comes at the expense of its special relationship with
the United States. France will be unhappy with the permanent subordination of European
security and defense capabilities to purely trans-Atlantic ones, which they perceive as too
heavily dependent on the United States. Germany will situate itself somewhere in the
middle, pressing for more cooperation and even integration in security and defense so
long as it does not come at the expense of the trans-Atlantic relationships.5

The alliance security dilemma is a permanent feature of alliance relations, even
among partners as close as the United States and Europe. European countries will need
the will and the capacity to take greater responsibility for their own defense if they are to
reduce their dependence on the United States—one way to mitigate the risk of
abandonment and entrapment. This is unlikely to happen, however. European spending
on defense is a small portion of what the United States currently spends. The United
States will retain a margin of quantitative and qualitative military superiority for years to
come. Europe will thus continue to rely on American logistics capabilities, intelligence,
and transport. There is little indication that European governments or public would be
willing to make the sacrifices necessary to reduce the military gap with the United States.

5 For an analysis of some of these questions, see Jolyon Howorth, and John T. S. Keeler, ed., Defending
Europe: The EU, NATO, and the Quest for Autonomy (London: Palgrave, 2003). See also Jolyon Howorth,
Even if European countries were able to achieve a degree of strategic independence from the United States, they would still face an alliance security dilemma with each other. As Chapter 6 indicated, the purely intra-European alliance security dilemma at times trumps the trans-Atlantic alliance security dilemma. France’s main fear was seeing Germany emerge as an important energy broker for the rest of Europe and with a renewed economic and political partnership with Moscow. Despite over six decades of integration, European governments in certain situations and in certain policy areas continue to view each other as rivals as well as partners.

Unipolarity, the Alliance Security Dilemma, and American Foreign Policy

This final section briefly assesses implications for the United States and its foreign policy. There are likely to be more differences over interests, threat perceptions, global priorities, and the way in which power is used between the United States and its traditional European allies in the future. With the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat, it was inevitable that the two sides of the Atlantic would begin to chart different paths. Europe is no longer the most important region in geopolitical terms for the United States. America’s attention has increasingly shifted away from Europe to the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia. This trend will likely accelerate in the decades ahead. Nonetheless, the United States and its European allies continue to have a vast array of mutual interests, and it would take a radical revision in how the two sides of the Atlantic define their interests for a permanent schism to take place.
The United States will maintain its unprecedented margin of quantitative and qualitative superiority over all other states in the near future.\(^6\) Even if the United States eventually faces a period of relative decline over the course of the twenty-first century, American unipolarity will continue to define world politics for at least another two decades, and perhaps much longer. American allies will thus continue to struggle with how best to respond to American power—using both accommodative and confrontation strategies. As this dissertation showed, while America’s allies cannot force Washington to do something it does not want to do, there are a number of strategies that can constrain and limit American power. These strategies can mitigate the effects of the alliance security dilemma and can be surprisingly effective.

American policymakers will be preoccupied not only with emerging powers such as China and India and possibly Russia, and with security threats such as transnational terrorist groups and WMD, but also with the United States’ own relative decline. As America’s main strategic focus shifts from Europe to the Middle East and Asia, Europe will become less important for American strategy and its global objectives. Before that happens, the United States will need to understand how its vast power is both a great opportunity for shaping the world but also a potential liability.\(^7\) The United States is in a position to define the basic contours of world politics long after its period of preeminence.

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has passed.\textsuperscript{8} If managed effectively, the United States could secure its position for decades to come—long after the era of unipolarity has come to an end.

America’s relative decline could affect the trans-Atlantic alliance in several ways. The rise of countries such as China and Russia could lead to a renewal and a strengthening of the trans-Atlantic partnership. If China’s economic rise continues, and it begins to define its political interests more broadly, this could lead to a change in the structure of the international system. A reversion to bipolarity, with the United States and China the two poles, could lead to the United States and Europe defining their core objectives and security interests with greater coherence. The Atlantic alliance may thus be renewed—not because of norms of consultation or policy codetermination, domestic politics or economic interdependence, but by geopolitical necessity.


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