

## TIES THAT BLIND:

WILL GERMANY AND JAPAN RELY  
TOO MUCH ON THE UNITED STATES?

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PREVENTING GREAT power war is one of the main reasons for keeping up U.S. alliances with NATO and Japan after the end of the cold war. Alliance advocates argue that the alliances promote peace in two ways. The U.S. commitment helps deter Russia or China, in case either becomes aggressive, from challenging American allies. The alliances also restrain Germany and Japan from acquiring the military power and assertiveness characteristic of such wealthy states. By holding a security umbrella over them, the United States persuades Germany and Japan to remain what have been called "civilian powers" or "trading states," that is, states with significantly smaller militaries and more passive foreign policies, relative to their wealth, than typical great powers. This benefits international stability, the argument goes, because military and especially nuclear self-help by Germany and Japan would antagonize their neighbors and plunge their respective regions into destabilizing security competitions.

These justifications for maintaining the alliances appear in briefs for the leading alternative U.S. grand strategies proposed for the post-cold war era. The strategy of selective engagement aims primarily at reducing the likelihood of great power war by maintaining U.S. alliances in Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The best arguments for selective engagement are Robert J. Art, "A Defensible Defense: America's Grand Strategy After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 4 (spring 1991): 23–30; and Art, "Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO," *Political Science*

Advocates of the grand strategies of primacy or collective security also bank on this effect, though they see the alliances as vehicles for the added goals of maximizing U.S. influence, or halting smaller interstate and civil conflicts. Only those favoring U.S. disengagement—the fourth alternative grand strategy—have questioned the benefits of the alliances for great power peace. While disengagers contend that keeping peace among other great powers is not necessarily a vital U.S. interest, they also argue that the allies' power potential and defensive advantages minimize the dangers of a U.S. withdrawal.<sup>2</sup>

This paper raises a different problem in the alliances-cause-peace argument. Realist balance-of-power theory suggests that the end of the cold war and the spread of nuclear weapons have quietly eroded U.S. incentives to go to war to defend its allies or their interests. In future regional disputes that did not threaten vital U.S. interests, U.S. leaders would be hard pressed to justify risking major, not to mention nuclear, war. The United States might decide not to support an ally in such a crisis, even at significant reputational cost.

The erosion of the U.S. commitment would be dangerous if Germany and Japan placed too much faith in U.S. protection. Over-reliance increases the likelihood of deterrence failure, should potential regional adversaries take a more cynical view of the U.S. commitment. Over-reliance also increases the danger of crisis escalation once U.S. unreliability is suddenly exposed. Faced with the prospect of war or coercion without U.S. support, Japan or Germany would abandon their civilian power policies and engage in crash military—including nuclear—build-ups. Power shifts, however, are more dangerous in foul weather than in fair. Windows of military opportunity for their rivals would swing open with clear evidence of U.S. disengagement, and begin to close again as the abandoned ally starts to rearm. The build-ups and instability that alliance advocates worry would follow alliance dissolution in periods of

*Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (spring 1996): 1–40; Charles L. Glaser, "Future Security Arrangements for Europe: Why NATO is Still Best," in ed. George W. Downs, *Collective Security Beyond the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 217–59; and Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (spring 1999): 49–80. Official examples include James A. Baker III, "America in Asia," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 5 (winter 1991/92): 1–18; Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July/August 1995): 90–102.

2. Ted Galen Carpenter, *Beyond NATO: Staying Out of Europe's Wars* (Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, 1994); Eric A. Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home, America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation," *International Security* 21, no. 4 (spring 1997): 5–48; Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22, no. 1 (summer 1997): 86–124. For a critical overview of the four grand strategies, and their representation in actual policy, see Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (winter 1996/97): 5–53.

international calm would be far more dangerous if an alliance crack-up coincided with a regional crisis.

The different strands of this argument are not new, but they are brought together here for the first time to better understand how the alliances promote great power peace. The idea that the U.S. alliance commitments borne out of the cold war have become hollow is inferred from realist alliance theory.<sup>3</sup> Several realist theorists have argued that the days of NATO are numbered, though without going so far as to question openly U.S. fidelity in a future challenge.<sup>4</sup> The idea that further great power nuclearization will occur, and will be especially dangerous, during or immediately after a crisis, also has been raised before. John Mearsheimer argued that just such "unmanaged proliferation" is likely to occur eventually in Europe because antinuclear publics and jealous nuclear powers will oppose the "well managed" nuclearization of Germany until a serious crisis erupts.<sup>5</sup>

The more general idea that alliances can breed complacency and over-reliance among its members can be found in realist critiques of collective security systems.<sup>6</sup> Ironically, realist theory predicts that states avoid security over-reliance like the plague, and are thus unlikely to be lulled into a false sense of security by hollow alliance promises. A recent spate of nonrealist analyses of German and Japanese antimilitarism, however, provide a plausible basis for predicting their over-reliance on U.S. security promises. This literature argues that historical memory of disaster in the Second World War, U.S. socialization and constitution drafting in the early postwar period, and a prolonged period

3. Key recent studies of realist alliance theory include Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); and Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (spring 1988): 275-316; Jack Snyder and Thomas J. Christensen, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks," *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (spring 1990): 137-68; Thomas J. Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (winter 1997): 65-97; Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

4. Stephen M. Walt, "The Precarious Partnership: America and Europe in a New Era," in *Atlantic Security: Contending Visions*, ed. Charles A. Kupchan (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 5-44; John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of America's Continental Commitment," in *No End to Alliance: The United States and Western Europe*, ed. Geir Lundestad (London: Macmillan, 1998), 221-42.

5. John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (summer 1990): 37-40.

6. For examples, see Richard K. Betts, "Systems for Peace or Causes of War? Collective Security, Arms Control, and the New Europe," in *America's Strategy in a Changing World*, ed. Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 18; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (winter 1994/95): 49; Glaser, "Future Security Arrangements for Europe," 236. Stephen Walt implies this could occur in NATO as well: "the danger is that NATO will be dead before anyone notices, and we will only discover the corpse the moment we want it to rise and respond" (Walt, "The Ties that Fray: Why Europe and America Are Drifting Apart," *National Interest*, no. 54 [winter 1998/99]: 11).

of superpower protection and politically weak militaries, have left a deep antimilitarist imprint on the institutions and political cultures of both nations.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps because of the fundamental theoretical divide between realists and culturalists, the implications of civilian power antimilitarism for alliance politics and the future of great power peace have been largely overlooked. Logically, however, antimilitarist institutions and cultures should cause complacency about national security. Neither creeping threats nor alliance decay will stimulate realistic self-help policies by civilian powers. Cultural and institutional barriers to militarization, however, are overridden and overhauled when warning signals are strong. Thus, a severe crisis would tear away the antimilitarist veil, and combined with U.S. abandonment would probably lead to proliferation soon after a severe crisis.

If the implicit erosion of a formal commitment might not register on civilian powers' radar, a U.S. formal withdrawal from its alliances with Germany (or all of NATO) and Japan would represent a medium-strength signal that would be difficult to ignore. This suggests that the U.S. alliances may diminish the likelihood of great power crises, while increasing the danger of a crisis that occurs anyway. Alliance dissolution in a period of calm might raise the risks of deterrence failure or regional security competitions in the near term, but would reduce the likelihood of unmanaged proliferation ten or twenty years down the road.

This is not in itself a telling indictment of the alliances. Our ability to predict how civilian powers would respond to different environmental changes is limited by weak theories of institutional and cultural change, and by the historical novelty of civilian powers. The unpredictable particulars of future great power rivalry and intra-alliance relations also influence the probability of over-reliance. For the immediate future, moreover, Germany and Japan face no real military threats. Finally, the consequences of catastrophic alliance failure are not as bad for the United States as for Germany and Japan. From

7. Though the term institutions is often used broadly to include organizations and social beliefs, I use it here to refer more narrowly to the relative power of state bureaucracies and to constitutional constraints on executive and legislative action. Recent analyses of the civilian powers include Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Sun-Ki Chai, "Entrenching the Yoshida Defense Doctrine: Three Techniques for Institutionalization," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (summer 1997): 389-412; Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy After Unification* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

the U.S. standpoint, even if the alliances entailed significant risks of war among other great powers, these might still be outweighed by other alliance benefits.

Should German or Japanese security environments worsen in the more distant future, the problem of over-reliance would become more critical. To make this case, I first explain why the U.S. commitment has become brittle, and then examine the civilian powers' predispositions to over-rely on it should new threats arise. I then discuss the dangers caused by over-reliance, and the implications for U.S. grand strategy.

#### U.S. ALLIANCE LOYALTY

FEW SCHOLARS, analysts, or politicians have seriously considered the possibility that the United States might withdraw from its alliances under pressure. It follows logically, however, from the leading realist theories of alliance behavior—balance of power theory and its more nuanced kin, balance of threat theory. Both theories hold that states will sacrifice blood and treasure to defend each other in proportion to the magnitude of common security threat. Alliances may serve other joint goals besides security, like arms control or collective military intervention to defend economic or humanitarian interests. A common threat, however, is needed to motivate the kind of sacrifice and risk entailed in major power war. When alliances serving mainly second-order goals are challenged by a great power clash, abandonment becomes a real possibility.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States no longer shares a common enemy with its allies in Europe and Asia. For a sole superpower, moreover, alliances and a reputation for upholding commitments are dispensable. Being a superpower, however, cannot protect the U.S. homeland from nuclear attack, and this provides a strong incentive to avoid conflicts with other nuclear-armed powers. The U.S. alliances with Germany and Japan serve several second-order goals, but since they no longer serve their original purpose they have become hollowed out and brittle. Domestic political and psychological factors also are unlikely to inflate foreign threats enough, or bind the United States to fellow democracies enough, to motivate going to war.

#### BALANCING AGAINST WHOM?

The leading realist theories of alliances stress two factors in determining states' willingness to defend each other: the magnitude of shared security concerns

and the costs entailed in meeting them. Balance of power theory contends that alliances form against any preponderant power, while balance of threat theory adds geographic proximity, offensive military forces, and perceived aggressive intent as additional factors. The more powerful or threatening the enemy, the more likely states will join together to block its rise, and the greater the costs they will shoulder to defend each other. Conversely, ample security leads states to shirk the burdens of defending others. States have held back historically from joining alliances, or passed the buck to allies, when the defeat of others did not pose a serious danger to them, especially if the costs of collective defense were expected to be high.<sup>8</sup>

The United States has been no exception to this pattern during its tenure as a great power. Surrounded by weak states and large oceans, the United States emulated the "splendid isolation" of Britain, another off-shore power, for much of its history. It fought for and allied with other great powers only when a single nation threatened to achieve hegemony in Europe or Asia. The United States avoided joining the First World War until April 1917, when Germany was on the verge of defeating the Triple Entente. The United States did not return to the continent until Germany once again was on the threshold of European hegemony. Even then, the United States effort was limited to supplying war materiel to Britain, until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and Hitler declared war. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States formed peacetime alliances with West European nations and Japan to prevent their conquest by a massive—if exhausted and backward—Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup>

With the disappearance of the Soviet Union and no other potential superpowers on the horizon, the United States has little to fear from would-be Eurasian hegemonies for the foreseeable future. The United States is the world's sole superpower, with an unrivaled combination of economic resources, advanced technology, and military capabilities.<sup>10</sup> China, Russia, France, and Britain each have robust nuclear deterrents, virtually precluding their conquest or domination by others. Japan, Germany, France, Britain, and Russia are all democracies, and—assuming they stay that way—domestically impeded from absorbing other modern nations.<sup>11</sup> If democratic peace theory is correct, they

8. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*; Snyder and Christensen, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks"; Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe"; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*.

9. Mearsheimer, "Future of America's Continental Commitment"; Mark S. Sheetz, "America's Grand Design for Postwar European Security," *Security Studies* 8, no. 4 (summer 1999): 1–43.

10. William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (summer 1999): 5–41.

11. National resistance to foreign domination can be suppressed only by ruthless police states; see Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

are unlikely to fight each other at all.<sup>12</sup> Even if, however, China were to absorb Japan, Russia to conquer Germany, or Europe to unify politically, this would still not create the kind of Eurasian behemoth so feared during the First World War, the Second World War, and the cold war. At worst, such regional hegemonies would return the international system to bipolarity, and only at this point would threat require renewed U.S. balancing. It seems reasonable to conclude that, as Robert Jervis has put it, "few imaginable disputes [in the post-cold war era] will engage vital U.S. interests."<sup>13</sup>

This will be particularly true for conflict not involving naked aggression, which telegraphs the kind of hegemonic ambitions that could pose a future threat to U.S. security. Wars have often started over issues where legitimate demands and the status quo were less cut-and-dried, and this seems the most plausible path to future war. U.S. interest in fighting for an ally diminishes to the extent that the ally bears some responsibility for a conflict, even if only by standing up for important security or economic interests.

Balance-of-power/threat theory has come under fire recently for its failure to explain the upkeep and expansion of the alliances after the end of the cold war.<sup>14</sup> The theory, however, does not hold that balancing is the *only* possible function of military alliances, only the most important one, and the only one for which states will make great sacrifices. Alliances can serve less vital purposes besides collective defense, ends that may justify the costs of institutional maintenance short of actually going to war. U.S. alliances in Europe and Asia serve several other interests, including great power peace, trade,

12. Recent evaluations of democratic peace theory include Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Politics: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996); and Miriam Fendius Elman, ed., *Paths to Peace?* (Cambridge: BCSIA Press, 1997).

13. Robert Jervis, "What Do We Want to Deter and How Do We Deter It?" in *Turning Point: The Gulf War and U.S. Military Strategy*, ed. L. Benjamin Ederington and Michael J. Mazar (Boulder: Westview, 1994), 130.

14. Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf, "Neorealism, Neoliberal Institutionalism, and the Future of NATO," *Security Studies* 3, no. 1 (autumn 1993): 3-43; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO," in ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 317-56; Robert B. McCalla, "NATO's Persistence After the Cold War," *International Organization* 50, no. 3 (summer 1996): 445-75. Realists of a classical or offensive bent hypothesize that states' interests abroad grow with their relative power. See Fareed Zakaria's recent restatement of classical realism, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), and the critique by Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Realism and America's Rise: A Review Essay," *International Security* 23, no. 2 (fall 1998): 157-82. This would imply that a sole superpower would see interests everywhere. The spread of nuclear weapons, however, has undermined this classical realist logic.

nonproliferation, U.S. primacy, and humanitarian intervention. Thus, balance of power/threat theory is not strongly contradicted by the maintenance of the alliances. It would predict, however, that while second-order interests might warrant keeping the alliances going in fair weather, they provide a weak foundation for alliance loyalty should the going get rough.

If the positive incentives for going to war on behalf of other states are small, the spread of weapons of mass destruction makes the risks potentially vast. Mutual assured destruction compels states to handle each other cautiously.<sup>15</sup> What kind of U.S. interests abroad, one must ask, are vital enough to justify taking real risks of nuclear detonations over U.S. bases, troops, or cities? U.S. military superiority and geographical distance can limit American casualties in many imaginable conventional wars, although the American public has become highly sensitive to small numbers of casualties.<sup>16</sup> Short of an improbable scientific breakthrough on antimissile defenses, however, even preponderant powers cannot protect forward-deployed forces or their homeland from determined nuclear attackers. Many observers have started to argue that nuclear proliferation discourages "Western involvement in local conflicts, thereby hastening Western disengagement from the security arrangements in many parts of the world."<sup>17</sup> While few have gone so far as to question U.S. commitments to Japan and NATO, doing so would only be to follow the nuclear revolution theory to its logical conclusion.

If U.S. officials could be confident of avoiding nuclear escalation, or prevailing in a regional crisis against another nuclear-armed state, they might still stand up for allies. After all, during the cold war the superpowers rattled sabres over Berlin and Cuba, and China and the Soviet Union skirmished in the late 1960s, undeterred by the possibility of nuclear escalation. A mutual fear of nuclear escalation, and the particular dangers and political costs of

15. McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988); Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Kenneth N. Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (September 1990): 731-46; Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), chap. 8. John Lewis Gaddis, Philip Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 12.

16. John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Modern War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989); Edward N. Luttwak, "A Post-Heroic Military Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (July/August 1996): 33-44; James Burk, "Public Support for Peacekeeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing the Casualties Hypothesis," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 1 (spring 1999): 53-78.

17. Lawrence Freedman, "Great Powers, Vital Interests and Nuclear Weapons," *Survival* 36, no. 4 (winter 1994/95): 47. See also Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 1 (January/February 1998): 26-41, esp. 41.

nuclear first use, allow room for conflict at lower levels of violence.<sup>18</sup> Nonnuclear states even attacked the positions of nuclear ones in the Korean War, the 1973 Middle East War, and the Falklands War. The superpowers would not have invested nearly so much in military forces, alliances, and Third World interventions had they believed that nuclear weapons made war impossible. All this suggests that the United States might not be paralyzed by nuclear fear when it comes to defending allies.

Nuclear powers and their vital interests, however, have been handled very gingerly. Some of the superpowers' cold war competition can be chalked up to the novelty of the nuclear era. While some observers immediately realized that nuclear weapons had revolutionized diplomacy and warfare, most underestimated the potency of nuclear fear, thought that military superiority still mattered, and worried or hoped that all-out war could still be won.<sup>19</sup> As the nuclear age progressed, however, the accumulated experience of diplomacy among nuclear-armed states has resulted in a greater awareness of nuclear perils, diminishing the perceived importance of allies—and by extension the incentives to fight for them.<sup>20</sup>

Military superiority, which the United States enjoys in spades, does not win nuclear brinkmanship contests. Interest and resolve are more critical factors, and those with less at stake face strong incentives to avoid such contests altogether. In most regional crises the outcome will matter less to the United States than for local powers. Defenders of the status quo usually have more to lose than do challengers, and this would favor U.S. willingness to take nuclear risks on behalf of allies.<sup>21</sup> Conflicts, however, often erupt when the status quo is ambiguous.<sup>22</sup> In light of U.S. security self-sufficiency, U.S. officials might reasonably decide not to gamble on winning the next contest of "chicken" that comes along.

18. This effect, the stability-instability paradox, is analyzed in Glenn H. Snyder, "The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror," in *Balance of Power*, ed. Paul Seabury (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), 184–202; Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), chap. 9; Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, 19–22.

19. Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, chap. 2; Van Evera, *Causes of War*, 178.

20. On nuclear learning, see Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (summer 1987): 371–402. For a thoughtful discussion of nuclear deterrence and alliances, see Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances in a Multipolar and Multinuclear World" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, 2–5 September 1999).

21. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), chaps. 2–3; Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, chap. 1.

22. Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1987), 133–44; Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, 32–33.

#### PROMOTING GREAT POWER PEACE

The lack of a balance of power motivation for the United States may explain why maintaining great power peace has become the most common justification given for keeping up U.S. alliances after the end of the cold war. The alliances cause peace by deterring attacks on allies while preventing them from starting dangerous security competitions. In essence, the logic is the same as that embodied in Lord Ismay's famous quip about NATO, that it served to "keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down," only now there is less emphasis on the Russians. I will argue below that the alliances may have some dangerous pitfalls that dilute their peace-causing effects. Even assuming, however, that the alliances do promote great power peace, and that this benefit justifies a continued U.S. investment in keeping the alliances going, it is not at all clear that this gives the United States strong incentives to follow through on its alliance commitments.

There is no well-established theory or body of evidence demonstrating that alliances in general cause peace.<sup>23</sup> Historically, alliances have been devices for aggregating power in the pursuit of common interests, not for maintaining peace per se. When status quo states aggregate power for defensive purposes only, however, they bolster deterrence against external attack without necessarily emboldening each other. Collective security theory extends this idea to relations among allies, adding that collective security regimes dampen security competitions while enhancing deterrence.<sup>24</sup> The argument that U.S. alliances promote peace, articulated most clearly by advocates of a U.S. grand strategy of selective engagement, draws on both of these ideas.<sup>25</sup>

The need for additional deterrence is predicated on the possibility of a residual or reemergent threat from China or Russia combined with the inability of the allies to provide adequately for their own security. Experts on Chinese

23. Jack S. Levy, "Alliance Formation and War Behavior: An Analysis of the Great Powers, 1495–1975," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25, no. 4 (December 1981): 581–613; Alastair Smith, "Alliance Formation and War," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (December 1995): 405–25; Douglas M. Gibler and John A. Vasquez, "Uncovering the Dangerous Alliances, 1495–1980," *International Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (December 1998): 785–807.

24. See Downs, *Collective Security Beyond the Cold War* and the literature cited therein.

25. On Europe, see Art, "Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO"; Glaser, "Future Security Arrangements for Europe"; John S. Duffield, "NATO's Functions after the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no. 5 (winter 1994): 763–88; and Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier," *Foreign Policy*, no. 54 (spring 1984): 64–82. On Asia, see Nye, "Case for Deep Engagement"; Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, "The End of the Alliance?: Dilemmas in the U.S.-Japan Relations," in *United States-Japan Relations and International Institutions After the Cold War*, ed. Peter Gourevitch, Takashi Inoguchi, and Courtney Purrington (La Jolla, Calif.: UCSD Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, 1995), chap. 1; Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance."

and Russian foreign policy disagree about the nature of the threat each power poses, but rising power and nationalism in the former and economic havoc in the latter have raised fears of future adventurism. By promising the use of its overwhelming power, the United States increases the risks and costs of attacks on its allies in Europe and East Asia. The commitment entailed by formal alliances, the difficulty of forming new alliances, and the force multipliers resulting from combined planning, basing, and training give the alliances greater deterrent effectiveness than the alternative of the United States being a nonallied, off-shore balancer.

The alliances dampen security competitions because powers like Russia and China prefer to face U.S. arms than German or Japanese ones. For reasons of history and geography, the United States is still seen as more benign than these former aggressors. This makes the alliances doubly reassuring. They not only substitute a benign state's military power for that of suspect states, but they also make the latter dependent on the former, reducing fears that their limited forces will be used aggressively. If the United States withdrew, Germany and Japan would engage in build-ups causing insecurity, arms races, competitions over bases and sea lanes, and spirals of hostility in their respective regions.<sup>26</sup> Not all arms races are dangerous, and the most feared German and Japanese (and South Korean) response to a U.S. withdrawal, nuclearization, would be stabilizing once these states had acquired secure second-strike capabilities.<sup>27</sup> Signs that Germany or Japan was embarking on a nuclear weapons program—such as withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty—or substantially enlarging conventional forces would, however, raise incentives for preventive war.

Assuming for the moment that the selective engagers are right that the alliances promote peace, is this a compelling reason for the United States to fight wars far from its borders and narrow security interests? Some respond affirmatively on the grounds that the United States would likely be dragged into foreign wars even if it tried to stay out of them. One reason for this might be domino or bandwagoning theory, which predicts that regional powers will fail to balance aggressors on their own, so aggression will eventually

26. For a recent discussion of the dynamics of insecurity spirals, see Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics* 44, no. 4 (July 1992): 497–538.

27. George W. Downs, "Arms Races and War," in *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Tetlock, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 73–109, esp. 76–84; and the sources cited in n. 15.

snowball.<sup>28</sup> Another reason is that U.S. officials might anticipate that economic or moral pressures to enter the war, or inadvertent escalation, would be hard to withstand.<sup>29</sup> The history of U.S. entry into two world wars that it initially sought to avoid seems to provide evidence for this view.

U.S. involvement in foreign wars, however, is not inevitable. Historically, war has not been contagious.<sup>30</sup> States rarely have made real sacrifices on behalf of alliances aimed at peace rather than at common enemies.<sup>31</sup> War spreads mainly when it endangers the established hierarchy of power, as happened in the two world wars. It is unlikely—because of nuclear deterrence and U.S. supremacy—that a future war among great powers would generate a threat to the United States comparable to Nazi Germany or the postwar Soviet Union. Even if it did, that would not preclude a renewed containment alliance, which would protect U.S. security without having to fight a war.

There is another problem with the idea that a love of peace generates alliance loyalty. Loyalty cannot keep the peace, it can only restore it. Once a serious dispute has already erupted among other powers, general deterrence has already failed and security competitions are probably imminent. Once war itself has broken out, the strategy of peace-through-alliances will have already failed. America's actually joining in the fray could not reverse that fact, nor would it necessarily shorten the war.

#### TRADE, NONPROLIFERATION, PRIMACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Maintaining U.S. trade, which now equals a quarter of GDP, is the next most common justification for the alliances after great power peace. In most analyses, peace is an intervening variable linking alliances to trade; trade depends on peace and stability, which in turn depend on the alliances. The

28. Robert Jervis, "Domino Beliefs and Strategic Behavior," in *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland*, ed. Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20–50.

29. Barry Posen for similar reasons argues that U.S. leaders should and would fight to reverse nuclear armed power's aggression against nonnuclear states, even when the victim is not a U.S. ally. Threatening retaliation against nuclear use, limiting war aims to reversing the aggression, and avoiding attacks on the state's nuclear capabilities would hold down the risks of nuclear escalation. Posen argues that, if Iraq had had nuclear weapons in 1990, the Bush administration might have been receptive to these recommendations and gone ahead with the Gulf War. See his "U.S. Security Policy in a Nuclear-Armed World, Or: What if Iraq Had Had Nuclear Weapons?" *Security Studies* 6, no. 3 (spring 1997): 1–31.

30. Edward D. Mansfield, *Power, Trade, and War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 43–46.

31. Paul W. Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, ed. Klaus Knorr (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1976), 227–62; Patricia A. Weitsman, "Intimate Enemies: The Politics of Peacetime Alliances," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (autumn 1997): 156–92.



relevant question here is not whether peace causes trade, but whether alliance loyalty does. Even the claim that peace causes trade is problematic, however.

Historically, world trade has fallen by an average of only four percent during major power wars, and has recovered quickly after the end of hostilities.<sup>32</sup> The logic linking peace and trade is also less iron clad than selective engagers claim. The most commonly heard argument is that insecurity and military competition heighten sensitivity to the distribution of trade benefits, and hence diminish economic cooperation among potential adversaries.<sup>33</sup> Although security competition dampened East-West trade during the cold war, it seems to have bolstered trade among allies. More importantly, alliances and arms races do not appear to correlate with trade flows in multipolar systems.<sup>34</sup> Another argument is that the prevalence of war increases autarky seeking. This effect, however, would be limited by nuclear deterrence, which reduces the importance of wealth and autarky for territorial security, and thus diminishes the effects of insecurity on trade policies.<sup>35</sup> A third reason that peace is held to be good for trade is that war interrupts trade among belligerents, who sometimes also attack each other's commerce with neutral nations. Neutrals, however, and even off-shore balancers can often profit from others' wars, as did the United States in both world wars, by exporting goods and capital to belligerents for both fighting and rebuilding.<sup>36</sup>

Four percent of trade is a significant loss of income, though probably not one that many states would shed blood for. Even assuming that peace had a clear positive impact on trade, however, that would not mean that fighting for an ally would as well. Once the alliance has been tested, insecurity and competition already will have endangered or dashed the peace dividend.<sup>37</sup>

32. Mansfield, *Power, Trade, and War*, 174–75.

33. For the argument that security concerns lead to trade conflict over relative gains, see Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). Robert Art uses this argument to support the economic benefits of U.S. alliances in "A Defensible Defense," 30–42.

34. Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Joanne Gowa and Edward D. Mansfield, "Power Politics and International Trade," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (June 1993): 408–20; and Peter Liberman, "Trading with the Enemy: Security and Relative Economic Gains," *International Security* 21, no. 1 (summer 1996): 147–75.

35. Peter Liberman, "The Offense-Defense Balance, Interdependence, and War," *Security Studies* 9, no. 1 (fall 1999): 59–91.

36. Eugene Gholz and Daryl G. Press, "The Effects of Wars on Neutral Countries: Why It Doesn't Pay to Keep the Peace," *Security Studies* 10, no. 4 (forthcoming, summer 2001). Finding little impact on bilateral trade among belligerents during and after several wars are Katherine Barbieri and Jack S. Levy, "Sleeping with the Enemy: The Impact of War on Trade," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, no. 4 (July 1999): 463–79.

37. I am thankful to Eugene Gholz for discussion of this point.

Joining the fray might alter the outcome, but it would not necessarily restore peace and its economic benefits any more quickly than standing aside.

Slowing proliferation is another objective of the alliances. Most observers expect that U.S. allies would go nuclear should the United States disengage. The nuclearization of Germany, Japan, and South Korea would engender fears in their nonnuclear neighbors, like Poland and North Korea, leading these states to follow suit. Nuclear dangers increase when the proliferation bow wave reaches poorer and less politically stable states, which lack the resources, technology, or civilian control over their militaries to develop survivable, reliable, and controllable nuclear forces.<sup>38</sup> The United States has an interest in opposing proliferation, because of the risks of preventive, preemptive, or inadvertent war they entail, and because the spread of nuclear weapons reduces U.S. primacy and influence.

Is slowing proliferation worth fighting a major war? Except in the case of North Korea, the United States has not threatened using force to keep states out of the nuclear club. Moreover, it is not clear that U.S. loyalty in the event of a war would prevent allies from going ahead and acquiring nuclear weapons anyway. A serious conflict with a nuclear power would probably lead a U.S. ally to reconsider its nonnuclear status. Once a serious conflict has arisen, therefore, the alliances' capacity to stem proliferation will already have been undermined.

Maximizing U.S. relative power, as a means to promote U.S. influence and global stability, is another goal of U.S. alliances.<sup>39</sup> Primacy advocates are centrally concerned about the nuclear proliferation problem just mentioned. A nuclear-armed Germany or Japan would not quite rival the United States, but would leap ahead of the other middle powers. Further nuclear spread would also limit the United States' ability to throw its weight around the globe. Primacy advocates would also like to avert a politically unified Europe, which would rival the United States in power, and some see NATO as a means to that end. A further advantage of the alliances for primacy lies in the ability of

38. Scott D. Sagan's contribution to Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: Norton, 1995). For more optimistic views, see Waltz's contributions to that volume, as well as David J. Karl, "Proliferation Pessimism and Emerging Nuclear Powers," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (winter 1996/97): 95–103; Jordan Seng, "Less Is More: Command and Control Advantages of Minor Nuclear States," *Security Studies* 6, no. 4 (summer 1997): 50–92.

39. Prominent examples include "Excerpts from Pentagon's Plan: Prevent Re-Emergence of a New Rival," *New York Times*, 8 March 1992, 14; Samuel P. Huntington, "Why International Primacy Matters," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (spring 1993): 68–83; Zalmay Khalilzad, "Losing the Moment? The United States and the World After the Cold War," *Washington Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (spring 1995): 87–107; Joshua Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership: A Challenge to Neo-isolationism* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1996).

overseas bases to enhance the global reach of U.S. power, especially when the bases are subsidized by host nations.<sup>40</sup>

While the alliances' primacy benefits might justify maintaining the alliances in peacetime, it is less clear that they would justify going to war. Primacy is a luxury, not a necessity, to U.S. security and prosperity.<sup>41</sup> The United States has not exactly welcomed the budding of European security integration, but its acceptance suggests that primacy is not a vital interest after all. The limitations of alliance loyalty for dampening proliferation have already been mentioned—the outbreak of crisis or war might lead to proliferation regardless of U.S. loyalty. Likewise, crisis or war could prompt increased European security unification no matter how the United States responds. As was the case with peace, trade, and proliferation, U.S. loyalty in a crisis or war would not do much to sustain the alliances' peacetime benefits, which makes it all the less likely.

A final reason for maintaining the alliances is to facilitate the collective military defense of shared but second-order security, economic, or humanitarian interests. Having alliances in place facilitated—though may not have been necessary for—the creation of the coalition that reversed Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf. Similarly, NATO has provided a political framework and military structure for checking Serbian ambitions and atrocities in the Balkans. Official arguments for NATO enlargement were couched largely in terms of such functions. U.S. Senator Richard Lugar even remarked that NATO should start operating “out of area” or go “out of business.”<sup>42</sup> When national interests are small, allied cost sharing is needed to obtain public support for intervention. By definition, however, future harvests of small national interests will not inspire states to fight major wars.

#### THE “GLUE” OF FORMAL ALLIANCE COMMITMENTS

Even if narrowly defined national security interests do not justify going to war for allies, perhaps alliance commitments are binding for other reasons. Leaving an ally in the lurch besmirches a state's reputation for reliability, and hence the credibility of subsequent commitments. In democracies, elected officials may fear punishment at the polls for abrogating commitments long sanctioned by

40. See, for example, Robert E. Harkavy, “The United States Coping Without Bases in Europe,” in *Europe After an American Withdrawal: Economic and Military Issues*, ed. Jane M. O. Sharp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 456–85.

41. Wohlforth, “Stability of a Unipolar World.”

42. Recent emphasis on collective security also may reflect tactful consideration for Russian anxieties about enlargement. David S. Yost, “The New NATO and Collective Security,” *Survival* 40, no. 2 (summer 1998): 135–60, esp. 138–39. For Lugar's statement, see Stephen S. Rosenfeld, “NATO's Last Chance,” *Washington Post*, 2 July 1993, A19.

constitutional procedures and public opinion. Officials and publics alike also may feel moral obligations to defend other nations, particularly to partners in democratic security communities.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately, the binding nature of alliance promises is not well understood. Historian Geoffrey Blainey, after studying all international wars since 1700, observes that “some alliances, on the outbreak of war, had no more force than a flapping sheet of paper.”<sup>44</sup> More systematic analyses have found historical failure rates of 13–28 percent.<sup>45</sup> Further research is needed to clarify the historical frequency and causes of alliance loyalty and abandonment. International relations theories developed on related phenomena, however, do not present a compelling case for expecting loyalty.

The reputational costs of withdrawing under pressure are generally considered strong incentives for loyalty. Abandoning an ally in a pinch, the theory of interconnected commitments goes, hurts a state's ability to make credible commitments in the future, even when these are made to defend core interests.<sup>46</sup> Withdrawing forces deployed abroad under pressure would damage a state's reputation even more gravely. Thus formal alliances can commit a state to costly actions it would not otherwise perform on the basis of its immediate material interests.

There has been some recent research on how states view each other's reputations, but little on how much they worry about their own.<sup>47</sup> Some

43. International legal norms are another possible factor. In *When Trust Breaks Down: Alliance Norms in World Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), Charles W. Kegley and Gregory A. Raymond have argued that prevailing alliance loyalty norms affect the prevalence of war, but do not examine whether they influence alliance loyalty in practice.

44. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1988), 229.

45. Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies* (New York: Wiley, 1973), chap. 2; Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G. Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, “Re-evaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 5 (October 2000): 686–699. Examining a longer period, I found higher abandonment rates, but mainly by small states. Peter Liberman, “Alliance Loyalty, Abandonment, and Betrayal” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 1–4 September 2000).

46. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, chap. 2; Paul K. Huth, “Reputations and Deterrence: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment,” *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (autumn 1997): 372–99. For a broader range of arguments on the effects of security institutions, see John S. Duffield, *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste Wallender, eds., *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Mearsheimer, “False Promise.”

47. Scholars disagree over whether reputations are stained by backing down in crises. Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Ted Hopf, *Peripheral Visions: Deterrence Theory and American Foreign Policy in the Third World, 1965–1990* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Dale C. Copeland, “Do



scholars have argued on the one hand that the nuclear revolution encourages states to demonstrate resolve, because reputations for toughness help nuclear-armed states prevail in brinkmanship contests.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the risks of nuclear war overshadow the uncertain reputational benefits of standing firm when the stakes are less than vital. The nuclear revolution does not change the fact that the fierceness with which a nation defends an ally is not a good predictor of how staunchly it will defend its own sovereignty and real estate.<sup>49</sup>

A more straightforward inference from the theory of interconnected commitments is that the value states place on loyalty reputations depends on how much they envisage needing allies and deterrence in the future. This suggests that highly secure and self-reliant states have less desire to cultivate their reputations. U.S. and Soviet leaders were willing to incur the risks and expense of cold war crises and arms races because they feared that acquiescence would signal weakness to a rival superpower.<sup>50</sup> A geographically removed, nuclear-armed, and unrivaled superpower—such as the United States today—is less likely to worry about its reputation for toughness.

Beyond the matter of self-interest, political leaders and their domestic constituencies also may feel morally constrained from renege on their promises.<sup>51</sup> Democracies may be more constant than nondemocracies, to the extent that electorates punish officials who renege on commitments.<sup>52</sup> Whether democratic leaders would face electoral punishment for abandoning allies would depend, however, on the circumstances; public opinion might be supportive if persuaded that an old commitment was deemed obsolete. Scholars have advanced realist, institutional, and normative reasons why democracies have a special affinity for, and loyalty to, each other. Historical evidence for this has been seen in the tendency of democracies to defend each other in crises, and the greater longevity of alliances among democracies,

Reputations Matter?" *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (autumn 1997): 33–71; and Huth, "Reputations and Deterrence."

48. Robert H. Johnson, "Exaggerating America's Stakes in Third World Conflicts," *International Security* 10, no. 3 (winter 1985/86): 32–68; Patrick M. Morgan, "Saving Face for the Sake of Deterrence," in *Psychology and Deterrence*, ed. Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 125–52.

49. Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, chap. 6.

50. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail*; Bundy, *Danger and Survival*; and Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

51. Glenn H. Snyder argues that both strategic and moral factors matter, but the evidence he provides—officials' statements about loyalty reputations and moral duties from pre-First World War Europe—is suggestive at best, because their policies were also consistent with more immediate security interests. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 313–14 and 350–64.

52. James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (September 1994): 577–92; William Edward Rapp, "Theory of Democratic Alliance Reliability: A Study of Alliance Commitments, 1816–1980" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1996).

although democracies appear no more likely to ally with each other than with nondemocracies.<sup>53</sup> This research, however, has not yet shown democratic mutual affinity and loyalty has a strong independent effect on alliance loyalty in the absence of compelling security incentives. Reasons of geography and security can explain why democracies have joined together against fascist and communist regimes so often in the twentieth century.<sup>54</sup>

#### OTHER DOMESTIC SOURCES OF U.S. LOYALTY

National factors may affect a state's alliance behavior in other ways besides democratic affinity. At least one observer has argued that U.S. officials saw alliance commitments as more sacrosanct than did other countries during the cold war.<sup>55</sup> More commonly noticed by historians and political scientists were exaggerated domino worries, which might explain the firmness of U.S. alliance commitments. A brief review of the leading explanations for U.S. "domino myths" shows, however, that they were caused by factors unique to the cold war. It is possible that exaggerated beliefs about falling dominos and the sanctity of U.S. commitments survive today from cultural and bureaucratic inertia. They are not likely, however, to withstand the critical reevaluation that would be forced by the prospect of a major war.

The leading explanation for domino myths is based on the theory that officials expect recent history to repeat itself. In the case of the United States, the traumatic experience of the Second World War led postwar leaders to see subsequent local conflicts as potential Munichs that, if appeased or ignored, would lead to a Third World War.<sup>56</sup> Another theory, advanced by Charles

53. Paul K. Huth, "Major Power Intervention in International Crises, 1918–1988," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 6 (December 1998): 744–70; Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, "Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations," *International Organization* 50, no. 1 (winter 1996): 109–39; and Michael W. Simon and Erik Gartzke, "Political System Similarity and the Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 4 (December 1996): 617–36. Realist factors are stressed by Huth, "Major Power Intervention," 750, 763–65; and Walt, *Origins of Alliances*. Gaubatz ("Democratic States") favors institutional explanations, while a normative identity argument is developed in Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity."

54. Mearsheimer, "False Promise," 37–47; Stephen M. Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," *Survival* 39, no. 1 (spring 1997): 168–70.

55. Franklin B. Weinstein, "The Concept of Commitment in International Relations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 1 (March 1969): 39–56.

56. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 217–87; Yuen Foon Khong, *Analogies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). There do not appear to be clear differences in public or elite attitudes about the use of force corresponding to the Second World War, Korea, and Vietnam generations, according to Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 156–66. This, however, may reflect the common lessons learned from history, including Vietnam, by all three generations.

Kupchan, is that new and sudden threats—such as the Soviet nuclear test and Communist victory in China in 1949—engender hypervigilant strategic beliefs. Jack Snyder has argued that tacit logrolling between American political coalitions—“Europe-first internationalists” and “Asia-first nationalists”—in the early postwar years resulted in the spread of domino myths. According to Thomas Christiansen, U.S. officials whipped up domino hysteria early in the cold war to scare a reluctant American public into paying for unprecedented levels of peacetime military power. Historian Frank Ninkovich argues that U.S. domino fears were a deeper response to twentieth century social upheavals (fascism and communism) and total war, leading to a Wilsonian obsession with U.S. credibility and world order becoming embedded in U.S. political culture.<sup>57</sup>

All these factors have ebbed since the cold war. The generation that fought the Second World War and then built the postwar security structure has largely departed from office. The new cohort's traumatic international experience was the Vietnam War, which despite defeat did not visibly result in more aggression elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> The panic of 1949 is long gone, and the disappearance of a superpower adversary has removed strategic incentives for U.S. officials to exaggerate subsidiary threats. The early postwar polarization between Europe- and Asia-firsters noted by Snyder also vanished long ago from the U.S. political landscape. Ninkovich admits that it took the shock of the Second World War for Wilsonianism to dominate U.S. foreign policy, and cold war threat levels to sustain it; he thinks that U.S. foreign policy has since subsided into “normal internationalism.”<sup>59</sup> Another political culture argument, that U.S. political culture favors ideological crusades on behalf of democracy, would be less bound by cold war conditions. U.S. isolationism in the 1930s, the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, and cold war support for noncommunist dictators, however, suggest the limits of this theory.<sup>60</sup>

A final domestic political source of U.S. alliance enthusiasm after the cold war is the inertial overhang of a half-century of responsibility for European

and Asian security. Certainly, the alliances feed an array of officials, journalists, policy analysts, and academics, all of whom have dedicated their careers to U.S. international leadership on one issue or another. The armed services and military industries have a particularly strong stake in large military budgets, and the alliances that remain central justifications for them.<sup>61</sup> U.S. foreign-policy elites, and perhaps the public as well, have internalized assumptions about dominos, global responsibility, and the sanctity of U.S. commitments, despite the disappearance of their original sources.

While bureaucratic interest and unexamined assumptions might continue to exercise influence on U.S. foreign policy in periods of calm, a serious crisis would expose them to new scrutiny. Dramatic and obvious, but not incremental or subtle, developments provoke change in deeply held beliefs. Public opinion responds to salient events like crises and wars, if not to international changes that do not make the headlines.<sup>62</sup> Regardless of whether the foreign-policy establishment tilts toward honoring U.S. alliance commitments, an American president's focus would also be riveted on national interests and the electoral consequences of embroiling the United States in an unessential war. Crises and security threats generally lead civilian officials to audit and revise their security policies, even if that means overruling powerful organizational interests.<sup>63</sup>

#### EVIDENCE OF ALLIANCE VITALITY

My argument for the hollow core of U.S. alliances is based on my assessment of relevant international relations theories (balance of power theory and the nuclear revolution), rather than specific evidence from U.S. post-cold war behavior or public opinion. There have been no actual tests of U.S. alliance loyalty in the post-cold war period (or during the cold war, for that matter).

57. Charles A. Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 418–85; Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 255–304; Thomas J. Christiansen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Frank A. Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Mary N. Hampton, *The Wilsonian Impulse: U.S. Foreign Policy, the Alliance, and German Unification* (Westport, Conn. Praeger, 1996).

58. Walt, “Precarious Partnership,” 34.

59. Ninkovich, *Wilsonian Century*, conclusion.

60. Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); and Tony Smith, *The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

61. This point is made by Walt, “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse,” 166. The U.S. military's interests in and influence on U.S. post-cold war grand strategy is discussed in Posen and Ross, “Competing Visions,” esp. 44–53; and Sharon K. Weiner, “The Politics of Resource Allocation in the Post-Cold War Pentagon,” *Security Studies* 5, no. 4 (summer 1996), 125–42. NATO expansion, which offered more demanding missions without any more resources, was opposed by the U.S. military and Defense Department, according to James M. Goldgeier, “NATO Expansion: The Anatomy of a Decision,” *Washington Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (winter 1998): 85–102.

62. Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), chaps. 5, 6, 8. Making similar arguments for political culture Harry Eckstein, “A Cultivist Theory of Political Change,” *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 3 (September 1988): 789–804; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 12–19 and 209.

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

Other kinds of alliance behavior, notably NATO expansion and the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, would seem to indicate that both alliances are alive and kicking. Public support for maintaining or increasing the U.S. commitment to NATO stands at 68 percent, several points higher than in 1990.<sup>64</sup> These alliance investments, however, have been far cheaper than going to war. They can be explained by the second-order alliance interests described above, which might not be a good guide to U.S. behavior when high costs are involved. Stephen Walt, attributing NATO persistence to an even flimsier basis of organizational inertia, calls it the "Dorian Gray alliance... appearing youthful and robust as it grows older—but becoming ever more infirm."<sup>65</sup>

Public opinion surveys on how the United States should respond to various conflict scenarios provide mixed evidence on U.S. reliability. In recent surveys, 44 percent of the public and 58 percent of leaders say that defending American allies' security should be a "very important goal." The public, if not the elites, is divided about whether Western Europe is a U.S. vital interest, with 54 percent (91 percent of leaders) saying they would favor defending Western Europe from a Russian invasion. Only 46 percent of the public would favor sending troops to defend Japan in the event of a North Korean attack, while using U.S. troops to defend other allies, South Korea or Poland, would be supported only by 30 percent of the public, and 74 percent and 58 percent of leaders, respectively.<sup>66</sup> Mass opinion is likely to have a strong independent effect on policy when the issues are relatively clear and elite opinion is divided.<sup>67</sup> The public's evident lack of enthusiasm for defending South Korea and Poland suggests that it does not view U.S. treaty commitments as sacrosanct. Moreover, responses about invasions may not reflect likely reactions to smaller-scale conflicts, such as a potential Sino-Japanese fight over the Senkaku Islands. Finally, peacetime survey data may not reflect how the public or leaders would react in a serious crisis, with the prospect of a shooting war at hand.

64. John E. Reilly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1999* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), 25–26.

65. Walt, "Ties that Fray," 11.

66. John E. Reilly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1995* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1995), 35; Reilly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1999*, 16, 2–26; and "Americans Mixed about Saving Japan if North Korea Attacks," *Kyodo News Service*, 25 October 1999. See also Alvin Richman, "American Support for International Involvement: General and Specific Components of Post-Cold War Changes," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (summer 1996): 305–21; Holsti, *Public Opinion*; Shoon Kathleen Murray, *Anchors against Change: American Opinion Leaders' Beliefs After the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

67. John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

#### OVER-RELIANCE BY CIVILIAN POWERS

EVEN IF U.S. alliance commitments have weakened, and the possibility of abandonment is a real one, there may still be little harm in keeping the alliances going anyway. Even a modicum of deterrence and reassurance could still make the alliances a worthy investment in future peace. The potential for over-reliance by the civilian powers on brittle U.S. security guarantees, however, raises problems with this line of argument. Much recent analysis of security policymaking in Germany and Japan has argued that institutional and cultural barriers obstruct military self-help in both states. Politically weak military institutions and antimilitary social norms, this literature contends, cause the civilian powers to reject the use of force, to oppose increasing their own military forces, to forswear nuclear weapons, and to seek U.S. protection and leadership. This literature does not claim that culture and institutions are immutable, but rather that they bias and delay policies until dramatic events compel politicians and societies to reevaluate their realism and utility.

A likely consequence is that civilian powers are unlikely to react to mounting threats or alliance decay until a full-blown crisis erupts. If the United States withdrew its security guarantees from Germany or Japan under pressure, they would be vulnerable to bullying. Attempts to play military catch-up would not be taken lightly by regional adversaries. Evaluating the impact of the alliances on peace thus requires predicting how allies and their potential adversaries would respond to the hollowing out and sudden withdrawal of alliance commitments.

Cultural and institutional factors may have a greater effect on security policy in Germany and Japan than in the United States, because they have spent so many years in dependent roles. My argument, however, does not depend on this assumption, and I have pointed out the possible role of culture and institutions in prolonging U.S. alliance enthusiasm. In the United States and the civilian powers, security incentives will ultimately override cultural and institutional obstacles, especially when illuminated by serious crises. Realism predicts long-run balancing tendencies better than the details of how states balance, and allows that domestic factors might bias or delay responses to international change.<sup>68</sup> The problem is that delayed responses, on the part of

68. Realists sometimes argue that domestic factors or showy institutionalization leads states to over-rely on weak alliances or collective security regimes; for example, Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," 167. The inconsistency in realist critiques of collective security is pointed out by Charles Kupchan, "The Case for Collective Security," in Downs, *Collective Security Beyond the Cold War*, 60–63.

the United States as well as the civilian powers, are likely to be more dangerous in foul weather than in fair.

The case for cultural and institutional antimilitarism is plausible, but not proven. German and Japanese restraint has been made possible, even expedient, by credible superpower protection during the cold war, and a lack of real threats since then. It is still too early to judge with much confidence which of these explanations is correct. The evidence for the cultural-institutional explanation, however, is sufficient to raise serious concerns about the possibility of German and Japanese over-reliance should real threats emerge. My goal in this section is to identify the cultural and institutional factors described in the antimilitarism literature that could lead Germany and Japan to rely excessively on fading U.S. commitments. I first explain the logic of how cultural and institutional constraints could delay responses to weakened alliances and emerging threats, and then review the evidence that Germany and Japan do indeed have potent antimilitary cultures and institutions.

#### ANTIMILITARY CULTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

Analyses of German and Japanese antimilitarism have focused on domestic barriers to the acquisition and use of military power. The same attitudes and institutions that cause these barriers, however, would also tend to give states rosy assessments of alliance loyalty and of emerging threats. Research on public opinion and bureaucratic politics also lends support to a "lagged balancing" hypothesis.

In societies with strong antimilitary cultures, the public and political elites disapprove of military institutions, military spending, and the use of force. Psychological consistency should lead citizens and political leaders socialized in these views to overlook or downplay international threats, and to exaggerate the protection provided by allies and international regimes.<sup>69</sup> Political leaders generally share the prevailing culture, not only by being educated in it, but also because true believers have an edge in election campaigning. Since antimilitarist societies limit the political independence and influence of their military establishments, they also constrain the military's ability to shape policy and public opinion.

There are two kinds of institutional constraints on security policy in antimilitary states: constitutional and bureaucratic. Constitutional restrictions on the acquisition and use of force allow legislative or popular minorities to

block even those military build-ups supported by popular majorities. Constitutions can be interpreted loosely (as in the case of Japan), but only as much as judiciaries allow.

Bureaucratic constraints on self-help exist when the armed services and security agencies are politically weak. Organizations vary in their resources for promoting their own interests, expertise, and recommendations in national decisionmaking, and for disseminating their values and beliefs in the society at large.<sup>70</sup> As the organizations most directly responsible for national security, armed services are normally the bureaucratic actors most concerned about foreign threats and most in favor of military preparedness. Military officers generally see international politics as a Hobbesian state of nature, are therefore pessimistic about the reliability of treaties and allies, and are nationalist rather than internationalist in outlook.<sup>71</sup> Civilian defense agencies, since they share the same overall national security mission as military organizations and work closely with military officers, are likely to share these orientations, although less strongly since they are led by political appointees and heavily staffed by civilians with more diverse beliefs and values.

Since military organizations are the bureaucratic actors most concerned about foreign threats, suspicious of relying on others, and insistent on military preparedness, states with politically hobbled militaries will be less likely to perceive threats, more likely to trust allies and treaties, and militarily less powerful. Although the responsibility for assessing allies' loyalty is generally assigned to civilian diplomatic bureaus, the muting of militaries' Hobbesian arguments should make civilian powers more trusting of alliances and collective security systems than normal great powers. Finally, politically marginalized militaries will have difficulty shaping social values and beliefs, reinforcing the political culture that restricts their institutional power.

As noted earlier, cultures and institutions do not bar change, but they can delay it until a crisis compels reevaluation. Even scholars stressing the importance of culture and institutions admit that they are overridden and revamped when events clearly demonstrate their obsolescence. This is consistent with the broad research finding that American "public opinion changes coincided with specific events and conditions, especially wars,

70. Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1974), pt. 1.

71. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 59-79; Van Evera, "Primed for Peace," 204-6; Bengt Abrahamsson, "Military Professionalization and Estimates on the Probability of War," in *Military Profession and Military Regimes: Commitments and Conflicts*, ed. Jacques van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 35-51.

69. On psychological consistency in general, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 117-202.

international crises, or the state of the economy."<sup>72</sup> Realism predicts that alliances reduce self-help, but only by levels rationally justified by a credible commitment of military assistance.<sup>73</sup> Realists, however, commonly acknowledge that cultural and institutional factors can introduce a bias or temporal lag in security policy, particularly when the international environment does not provide clear warnings or signposts for policy.<sup>74</sup> The question, then, is not whether institutions and cultures bias behavior, but how strongly they do so.

Factors shortening leaders' time horizons might further hinder civilian powers from responding quickly to newly emerging threats. Short time horizons bias states against policies with high front-end costs, even when necessary to achieve net gains over the long run. The arguments for the deterrent and stabilizing benefits of the alliances, if correct, suggest that German or Japanese remilitarization would entail significant short-term costs. Their military build-ups would spark regional spirals and endanger U.S. ties (since one of the main U.S. incentives for maintaining the alliances is preventing just such moves). These costs would be much more immediate than the comparatively abstract benefits of insurance against future abandonment, nuclear blackmail, and unmanaged proliferation.

The civilian powers have relatively brief time horizons typical of democratic states (as well as unstable authoritarian ones). Electorates are more sensitive to immediate than to future problems, and blame current troubles on sitting officials. Officials thus face strong incentives to ensure that their policies appear successful to the electorate by the time of the next election. This explains why democracies are less likely to fight wars as elections approach, and dislike "shock therapy" economic reforms.<sup>75</sup> Electoral politics could

72. Page and Shapiro, *Rational Public*, 332.

73. To the extent that security guarantees can be trusted, they encourage states to divert more resources from defense to domestic uses than they would have done on their own. Disengagers use this argument to criticize the alliances' contribution to deterrence. Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky, "Come Home, America," 15–25; Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing," 117–18. The tendency of power-balancing states to aid vulnerable—but strategically important—states more than self-reliant ones also provides incentives for self-limitation. Protector states (like the United States) seeking to maintain primacy or limit regional arms races may also make their commitments conditional upon allied self-limitation.

74. Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (summer 1998): 141–70, esp. 166–67; Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*.

75. Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, *Elections and War: The Electoral Incentive in the Democratic Politics of War and Peace* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), chap. 4; cf. Barbara Geddes, "Challenging the Conventional Wisdom," in *Economic Reform and Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 59–73.

similarly forestall costly transitions from alliance dependence to self-help in civilian powers, even without the obstacle of antimilitarist cultures or institutions.

If powerful enough, antimilitarist cultures and institutions, combined with short time horizons, could lead to over-reliance should the security environment worsen. These hypotheses are difficult to test, due to the historical rarity of antimilitarist states. One near case of antimilitarism is interwar Britain, which balanced too little and too late against Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Widespread British revulsion against war and an exaggerated popular faith in the League of Nations constrained British rearmament in the 1920s and 1930s. A Treasury with unprecedented power over military budgets and planning was an institutional obstacle, one echoed in postwar Japan. Interwar Britain, however, is not a clear case, since rearmament faced other obstacles besides antimilitarism. A chronically feeble economy, which helps explain the Treasury's authority over security policy, limited resources for rearmament. The British armed services also failed to anticipate German innovations in tank warfare, leading them to underestimate the German offensive capability unleashed in the May–June 1940 blitzkrieg against France.<sup>76</sup>

#### ANTIMILITARISM IN GERMANY AND JAPAN

Postwar Germany and Japan display antimilitarist cultures and institutions unparalleled for states with such latent power. The key question for their future behavior, however, is whether these features have a strong independent effect on German and Japanese security policy, or whether they amount to window dressing on realistic security policies. A comfy seat in a superpower's stroller may have made antimilitarism a realistic option for U.S. allies during the cold war. It would not be surprising, however, if German and Japanese legs were a little stiff after a fifty year ride.

Cultural and institutional studies trace the origins of German and Japanese antimilitarism to the catastrophic failures of their nationalism and militarism in the Second World War, combined with the early postwar coercion, socialization, and constitution drafting by the U.S. occupation authorities and dependent national elites.<sup>77</sup> Institutional constraints limited their militaries'

76. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences of British External Policy, 1865–1980* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), chaps. 5–6.

77. For more general theoretical discussions of the effects of historical memory and socialization, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 217–87; G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (summer 1990): 283–315.

ability to mobilize public and elite support for preferred policies and for more policy-making influence. Antimilitarism was nourished and reified by the unprecedented degree and duration of peace and prosperity in the postwar era.

The military establishments of Germany and Japan are politically weakened in different ways. In Japan, security policy is formulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and—until the 1990s—within that ministry's U.S.-oriented North American Affairs bureau.<sup>78</sup> The civilian Japanese Defense Agency, though charged with defending Japan against direct attack, lacks ministerial status and primary responsibility for security policy. Illustrative of the Japanese Defense Agency's weakness is the fact that its personnel were not permitted to report to the cabinet during the Gulf crisis, for fear that military thinking would distort cabinet decision making.<sup>79</sup> The Japanese Defense Agency, moreover, is heavily colonized by outside ministries, with a budget bureau controlled by the Ministry of Finance and a procurement bureau controlled by the Ministry for International Trade. Four of the top eleven posts are reserved for officials from outside ministries, as are a significant share of midlevel posts.<sup>80</sup> Japanese officials' ability to read their security environment realistically also is hampered by the focus of Japanese intelligence assets on economic matters and reliance on the United States for military intelligence.<sup>81</sup>

The Japanese uniformed military is even weaker politically. Officers of the Self Defense Forces rarely participate in high-level government deliberations, and "tight restraints lead to military silence on all major matters of security policy, including its adequacy and realism."<sup>82</sup> A leaked contingency plan for a possible war on the Korean peninsula triggered a scandal and a thirteen-year ban on military contingency planning.<sup>83</sup> Bitter interservice rivalry, due at least in part to the lack of joint staff opportunities and centralization, further limits military influence on security policy.<sup>84</sup>

78. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 104.

79. Thomas U. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Antimilitarism," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (spring 1993): 146.

80. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 105–6.

81. A declassified 1987 CIA study estimated that 80 percent of Japanese intelligence assets were directed at economic intelligence in the United States and Europe. Cited in Martin S. Alexander, "Introduction," in *Knowing Your Friends: Intelligence Inside Alliances and Coalitions From 1914 to the Cold War*, ed. Martin S. Alexander (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 13. In 1998, however, Japanese officials announced plans to develop reconnaissance satellites to reduce dependence on the United States.

82. Davis B. Bobrow, "Military Security Policy," in *Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad*, ed. R. Kent Weaver and Bert A. Rockman (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1993), 434.

83. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 105–6, 194.

84. Bobrow notes that relations are more cooperative between U.S. and Japanese sister services than among the Japanese services. "Military Security Policy," 434.

The Japanese constitution imposes legal constraints on the size and political influence of the Japanese defense establishment. Article 9 states that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes" and hence will never maintain "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential."<sup>85</sup> This provision has been interpreted to allow quite substantial rearmament for homeland self-defense, but not offensive force-projection capabilities. Repeated legal suits challenging the constitutionality of the Self Defense Forces, though unsuccessful, have nevertheless provided a legal check on their growth and assertiveness. Constitutional revision, moreover, requires a two-thirds majority in both houses and majority support in a public referendum.<sup>86</sup>

The Japanese public's antimilitary attitudes were remarkably strong during the cold war, and remain so after. The Japanese military was discredited by, and blamed for, the catastrophe of the Pacific War. Early postwar governmental propaganda campaigns portrayed the new Japan as a "merchant nation" and the Self Defence Forces as an organization primarily designed to deal with internal disorder, natural disasters, and U.S. demands for burden sharing.<sup>87</sup> Yoshida Shigeru, who as prime minister played a leading role in defining Japanese security norms in the early 1950s, later came to regret the extent of his success and the resulting lack of "reality" in Japanese security policy.<sup>88</sup>

The Japanese public has remained highly skeptical about military power in general and of the Self Defence Forces in particular.<sup>89</sup> Support for increasing military expenditures declined over time from 24 percent in 1969 to a record low of 6 percent in 1993, recovering to 11 percent in 2000, a level still exceeded by the support for cutting military spending. In 1997, the public still rejected the idea of elevating the Japanese Defense Agency to a ministry by a margin of two to one.<sup>90</sup> Public support for an independent defense (that is,

85. Chai, "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 396.

86. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 118–21; Chai, "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 395–99.

87. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum," 134–36, 140, and 144–45; Chai, "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 404–5.

88. Chai "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 409.

89. Only 38 percent (in 1972) believed that military power is a very (6 percent) or somewhat (32 percent) effective way to defend Japan. Berger, "Unsheathe the Sword?" 183. In 1984, of those Japanese unconcerned about the possibility of war, only 3 percent credited the SDF, compared to 28 percent crediting the U.S. alliance and 31 percent crediting the Constitution. Bobrow, "Japan in the World," 597. See also Glenn D. Hook, *Militarization and Demilitarization in Contemporary Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), chap. 5.

90. Chai "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 403; "30 percent in Gov't Poll Say Japan May Be Involved in War," *Kyodo News Service*, 13 May 2000; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September



without the Mutual Security Treaty) declined from the late 1960s to 1994 from twelve to 4 percent.<sup>91</sup> Large majorities believe (66 percent in 1997) the United States would defend Japan from attack and think (81 percent, 63 percent strongly so, in 1991) that Japan should never acquire nuclear weapons.<sup>92</sup> Eighty percent (in 1984) opposed offering any military resistance at all to an invasion.<sup>93</sup>

An area of notable change in attitudes is on revision of the pacifist constitution. Occasional efforts by Japanese officials during the cold war to broach the subject of revising Article 9 typically resulted in successful public and press demands for their forced resignations. Support for revising the constitution to allow regular armed forces fell from 37 percent in 1955 to 13 percent in 1991.<sup>94</sup> Support for constitutional change, however, has increased to 60 percent following the Gulf War and a North Korean missile launch over Japan. In addition, a majority—if not the requisite two-thirds—of Diet members apparently favor change and parliamentary committees were recently established to debate the matter.<sup>95</sup>

The German military establishment is also politically weak, but in different ways. Unlike in Japan, the civilian defense bureaucracy has ministerial rank, and is not penetrated so deeply by other German ministries and agencies. Germany, however, lacks a general staff with command over its three services, an arrangement established early in the cold war to placate other nations' fears about German remilitarization. It is NATO that directs German military planning and maintains operational command in the event of war.<sup>96</sup>

As in Japan, German foreign-policy elites think of their nation as a peaceful trading state, and eschew realist conceptions of security autonomy or balances

1997 survey, Japan Public Opinion Location Library, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut (JPOLL).

91. Everett Carl Ladd and Karlyn H. Bowman, *Public Opinion in America and Japan: How We See Each Other and Ourselves* (Washington, D.C., and Storrs, Conn.: American Enterprise Institute and Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, 1996), 34; Thomas U. Berger, "Unsheathing the Sword?" *World Affairs* 158, no. 4 (spring 1996): 182.

92. Yomiuri Shimbun, September 1997, and U.S. Information Agency, June 1991 surveys, both from JPOLL. See also "Furor in Japan as Military Official Advocates Nuclear Weapons," *New York Times*, 21 October 1999, A7.

93. Davis B. Bobrow, "Japan in the World: Opinion from Defeat to Success," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 4 (December 1989): 597; Ladd and Bowman, *Public Opinion*, 37–38; Chai, "Entrenching the Yoshida Defense Doctrine," 392–93; Hook, *Militarization and Demilitarization*, 121.

94. Chai "Entrenching the Yoshida Doctrine," 403; Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 116–21.

95. "Public Interest in Constitutional Change Rising," *The Daily Yomiuri*, 3 May 2000, 16; "52% of Newly Elected Favor Constitution Revision," *Asahi News Service*, 27 June 2000.

96. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 72, 155–65, and 229; Thomas-Durrell Young, "German National Command Structures After Unification: A New German General Staff?" *Armed Forces and Society* 22, no. 3 (spring 1996): 379–400.

of power. Historical memory of war guilt and military catastrophe is much stronger in Germany than in Japan, and German political leaders often publicly refer to it.<sup>97</sup> A widespread elite consensus, backed by public opinion, opposes Germany's acquiring nuclear weapons or using military force outside of multilateral contexts. Recent polls indicate that only 29 percent of the German public feel Germany should play a leading role in European security affairs, and only 54 percent favor the use of military force together with allies to defend German interests.<sup>98</sup> Only 25 percent would support using the Bundeswehr to defend Poland against a Russian attack, and only 14 percent would defend the Ukraine. The German public would rather leave war to the Americans, and a large majority sees NATO as essential for German security.<sup>99</sup> German optimism about U.S. reliability is suggested by the assessment that "nowhere in the mainstream German public debate are there to be found the highly skeptical views of the value of collective security arrangements that are commonplace in other Western nations, such as Britain, France and—above all—the United States."<sup>100</sup>

The civilian power literature argues that German and Japanese post-cold war behavior shows how entrenched their antimilitarism has become. It is true that, despite significant systemic change, Germany and Japan have steadfastly maintained smaller militaries and more passive foreign policies, relative to their power potential, than typical great powers. They spend only 1.5 percent of GNP on defense, compared to 3 percent in France and Britain, 3.4 percent in the United States, and roughly 5.7 percent in China and Russia.<sup>101</sup> Both lack nuclear arsenals, and both renewed their commitments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely at its 1995 Review Conference. Germany has more than halved its armed forces at the end of the cold war, going below cuts

97. Thomas Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," *German Politics and Society* 14, no. 2 (summer 1996): 36–53.

98. Gunther Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," *Mershon International Studies Review* 40, supp. 1 (April 1996): 19–21 and 26.

99. Ronald D. Asmus, *Germany's Geopolitical Maturation: Public Opinion and Security Policy in 1994*, RAND Report MR-608-FNF/OSD/A/AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1995), 18, 45; Wolfgang F. Schlör, *German Security Policy*, Adelphi Paper 277 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], 1993), 14.

100. Thomas U. Berger, "The Past in the Present: Historical Memory and German National Security Policy," *German Politics* 6, no. 1 (April 1997): 55.

101. Figures for 1997 from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1998/99* (London: IISS, 1998), with Japan's spending rate adjusted for its different accounting practices; cf. Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, "Mercantile Realism and Japanese Foreign Policy," in *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War*, ed. Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 210 n. 15.

required by reunification agreements.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, both Japan and Germany have large militaries; 1.5 percent of the second and third largest economies in the world is not exactly chicken feed. Both states also have large military industries and nuclear energy and science complexes easily adapted to nuclear weapons production.<sup>103</sup>

Both states have taken small steps to relax stringent restrictions on force projection. Germany recently permitted the Bundeswehr to engage in multilateral combat missions, and German bombers flew missions in the 1999 Kosovo war. Japan recently allowed its troops to participate, unarmed, in UN peacekeeping and accepted greater military responsibilities in the U.S.-Japan alliance in 1997.<sup>104</sup> These changes, however, have been limited explicitly to multilateral operations, in keeping with these states' commitments to cooperative foreign and security policies, and were requested by the United States. Finally, neither state shows any sign of restiveness within the confines of U.S. dominated alliances. On the contrary, Germany agreed to NATO expansion in 1997 and Japan agreed in 1995 to a twenty-year extension of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty.

Overall, and despite recent signs of declining pacifism in Japan, the evidence seems to indicate that Germany and Japan still have unusually antimilitary attitudes and politically weak militaries. The influence these factors hold over security policy, however, is less clear. U.S. determination to contain the Soviet Union during the cold war made it strategically rational for the allies to rely on U.S. protection. Realists contend that the public dislike of, and institutional limits on, the military in Germany and Japan were simply the flotsam and jetsam of more powerful structural tides.<sup>105</sup> Since the end of the cold war, German and Japanese security environments have not worsened, even assuming that the U.S. commitment has weakened. Russia is a military and economic basket case, and China still lacks adequate military technology and

102. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 148–55; Gunther Hellmann, "The Sirens of Power and German Foreign Policy: Who is Listening?" *German Politics* 6, no. 2 (August 1997): 32–33.

103. On Japan's nuclear capabilities and intentions, see *Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security*, ed. Selig S. Harrison (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), pt. 1. On German interest in a nuclear deterrent, see Mark Hibbs, "Tomorrow, a Eurobomb?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 52, no. 1 (January/February 1996): 16–23.

104. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, chaps. 7 and 8; Markovitz and Reich, *German Predicament*, 137–49; Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 125–28; *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999).

105. Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Arise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (spring 1993): 5–51; Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (fall 1993): 44–79.

naval power to start throwing its weight around East Asia.<sup>106</sup> Prolonged economic recessions in both Germany and Japan, and the costs of reunification in the former, have limited the resources available for increasing military spending during the post-cold war decade.<sup>107</sup> While the more cut-throat versions of realism predict a rapid normalization of German and Japanese power after the end of the cold war, their actual behavior has not been markedly inconsistent with "contingent" or "defensive" realism.<sup>108</sup>

Cultural-institutional analyses do not conclude that German and Japanese antimilitarism is irrevocable. They typically doubt that German and Japanese self-restraint would survive alliance dissolution or paralysis in an international crisis. Thomas Berger for instance predicts that German security policy will evolve only marginally unless Germany experiences "a major shock" such as "a stark failure of the extended deterrence system or a steady dissolution of Germany's alliance structures." For Japan, "if a serious threat to Japan's security arose without the insulation of the Mutual Security Treaty...the Japanese government would be compelled to consider a dramatic expansion of Japan's military capabilities."<sup>109</sup>

The ambiguity of the evidence makes it hard to predict the probable reactions of civilian powers to international change. So does the lack of well-tested theories of antimilitarist culture and institutions. As ambiguous as the evidence is, however, the cultural-institutional argument is plausible enough to take seriously. There are sufficient grounds at a minimum for concern that Germany or Japan might not take prompt, compensating self-help measures in response to the decaying credibility of U.S. security guarantees.

106. Avery Goldstein, "Great Expectations: Interpreting China's Arrival," *International Security* 22, no. 3 (winter 1997/98): 36–73; Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (spring 1998): 83–134.

107. For a summary of German resource constraints, see Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 55–59.

108. Charles L. Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (winter 1994/95): 50–90; Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War," in Kapstein and Mastanduno, *Unipolar Politics*, 138–81; Goldstein, "Great Expectations"; Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (spring 1999): 81–118 and Christopher P. Twomey, "Japan, a Circumscribed Balancer: Building on Defensive Realism to Make Predictions about East Asian Security," *Security Studies* 9, no. 4 (summer 2000): 167–205.

109. Berger, "Past in the Present," 56; "From Sword to Chrysanthemum," 148, cf. 120. See also his "Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan," in Katzenstein, *Culture of National Security*, 326–29. In *Cultures of Antimilitarism* (209–10) Berger predicts that it would take the combination of alliance disintegration and reemergence of a threat to cause a rapid shift in attitudes. For a similar prediction, see Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 244.

## THE ALLIANCES AND PEACE

IF U.S. RELIABILITY has declined significantly, and if German or Japanese antimilitarism prevents them from recognizing this or responding appropriately, then the alliances are not the unqualified boon for great power peace so commonly supposed. Regional adversaries that see accurately that the U.S. commitment has become frayed might not be deterred as effectively by an unreliable protectorate as by a self-sufficient great power. If challenged and abandoned, a civilian power could still beat a peaceful retreat, but hasty catch-up efforts would be dangerous coming on the heels of the crisis.

Despite their present weakness, China and Russia are the powers that security analysts worry most about, due to their nuclear capabilities, potential for heightened nationalism, regional territorial and nationalist interests, and—only in the case of China—rapid economic growth. Most analyses of Chinese and Russian foreign policies characterize them as generally realist, with a slightly nationalistic and belligerent edge.<sup>110</sup> They are thus more likely than the civilian powers to be skeptical about rusty U.S. alliance promises. No convincing evidence of such skepticism has surfaced as of yet, however, besides a much quoted remark by a high-ranking Chinese general. Told by a Clinton administration official that the United States would reply militarily to an attack on Taiwan, he reportedly replied:

No, you won't. We've watched you in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia, and you don't have the will....

In the 1950s, you three times threatened nuclear strikes on China, and you could do that because we couldn't hit back. Now we can. So you are not going to threaten us again because, in the end, you care a lot more about Los Angeles than Taipei.<sup>111</sup>

Of course, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia are not exactly leading strategic or economic interests of the United States. It would be very odd for the Chinese to infer U.S. behavior toward Taiwan, much less Japan, from its half-hearted

110. On China, see Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik"; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Realism(s) and Chinese Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Period," in Kapstein and Mastanduno, *Unipolar Politics*, 261–318; David Shambaugh, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," *International Security* 24, no. 3 (winter 1999/2000): 52–79; and David Shambaugh and Richard H. Yang, ed., *China's Military in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). On Russia, see Renée de Nevers, *Russia's Strategic Renovation*, Adelphi Paper no. 289 (London: IISS, 1994); Roy Allison, "Military Factors in Foreign Policy," in Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison, and Margot Light, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 230–85; S. Neil MacFarlane, "Realism and Russian Strategy after the Collapse of the USSR," in Kapstein and Mastanduno, *Unipolar Politics*, 218–60.

111. Quoted in Barton Gellman, "U.S. and China Nearly Came to Blows in 1996," *Washington Post*, 23 June 1998.

interventions in these human rights disasters. On the other hand, these interventions did not risk nuclear escalation, as would any serious conflict with China. Chinese complaints about recent U.S.-Japanese military planning and Russian pique at NATO expansion suggest a certain degree of perceived credibility of the U.S. commitment.<sup>112</sup>

It is hard to imagine a scenario in which China or Russia would be highly motivated to attack a U.S. ally. Germany and Japan's military capabilities alone would pose a formidable challenge in any conventional war, and even a frayed U.S. nuclear umbrella poses great risks to any challenger. If, however, the argument that the alliances are still needed for deterrence (as opposed to reassurance) is to be taken seriously, then it is necessary to assume that China or Russia could increase their military power and start throwing their weight around. If either state perceived U.S. vital interests to be minimal, they could gamble on splitting the alliance.

In such situations independent great powers might be able to deter more effectively than a civilian power reliant on weak security guarantees. This is a similar argument to the criticism of collective security regimes, that they undermine deterrence if members rely too heavily on the regime for their security.<sup>113</sup> While these critiques neglect to explain why states would become gullible, antimilitarist cultures and institutions could theoretically have this effect.

Deterrence failure would not automatically lead to great power war. Antimilitarist states' aversion to the use of force and awareness of their dependence would likely lead them to shrink from conflict without total U.S. support, rather than standing firm recklessly.<sup>114</sup> The immediate result is likely to be bullying and appeasement rather than war.

Such a fiasco, however, would likely shock them into scrambling to provide independently for their own defense. If Germany or Japan shed its "civilian" mantle, then the security competitions bottled up by the alliances would erupt with a vengeance.

Germany and Japan are the wealthiest nations in Europe and Asia, so major military build-ups would allow them to surpass easily their neighbors' power.

112. Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese Apprehensions about Revitalization of the U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 4 (April 1997): 383–402; Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance," 58–64; and J. L. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

113. See, for examples, Betts, "Systems for Peace or Causes of War?" 18; Mearsheimer, "False Promise," 49; Glaser, "Future Security Arrangements for Europe," 236.

114. This possibility is briefly raised in Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky, "Come Home, America," 16, but they worry about the United States being dragged into the war unwillingly rather than abandonment.

The selective engagers' argument for the alliances rests in large part on the dangers of such power shifts, which give declining states an incentive to take greater war risks or start preventive wars outright.<sup>115</sup> War is seen as more likely and diplomatic settlements become less durable and common, since rising powers try to overturn concessions made while they were weaker. War would seem likely, not only from the power shift but also because of the recent or ongoing dispute that sparked it. Hostility over the underlying political conflict would add to hostility arising from an arms race. The situation would be all the worse if the crisis that led the civilian power to renationalize was accompanied by public evidence of U.S. disengagement.

A power shift of particular concern would be German or Japanese nuclearization. As proponents of selective engagement point out, for Germany or Japan to go nuclear at any time would arouse suspicions in their neighborhoods. For them to go nuclear in response to demands or moves by a regional adversary, in a climate of crisis and hostility, would generate greater incentives for preventive attack. Possession of nuclear arsenals allows powers to view their own decline, or a rival's impending nuclearization, with some equanimity, and the political costs of starting a war are immense. These factors, however, do not preclude consideration of preventive war, as cold war history shows. Senior U.S. military advisers proposed preventive war against the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, and the Kennedy administration sounded out Moscow about preventive war against China in 1963. The Soviet leadership, having rebuffed this suggestion, later proposed it themselves to the Americans.<sup>116</sup> Unless Germany and Japan could keep fledgling nuclear programs totally secret, preventive attack would be a plausible path to great power war.

A direct attack on Germany or Japan would not be necessary to shock them into sudden proliferation. A rival's demands for disputed territories, or military

115. See the sources cited in n. 1 above. For arguments that geography mitigates these dangers in Asia, see Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky, "Come Home, America"; Ross, "Geography of the Peace"; and Jennifer M. Lind, "Correspondence: Spirals, Security, and Stability in East Asia," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (spring 2000): 190–95. Recent research on power shifts and war includes Van Evera, *Causes of War*, chap. 4; Jack S. Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics* 40, no. 1 (October 1987): 82–107. Arguing that preventive wars are rare is Richard Ned Lebow, "Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?" *International Security* 9, no. 1 (summer 1984): 147–86.

116. Marc Trachtenberg, "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949–1954," in his *History and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 100–52; Sagan and Waltz, *Spread of Nuclear Weapons*, 55–66, cf. 123–26; Karl, "Proliferation Pessimism," 95–103; William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, "A Chinese Puzzle," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (July/August 1997): 42–47. For a discussion of policy considerations, see Philip Zelikow, "Offensive Military Options," in *New Nuclear Nations: Consequences for U.S. Policy*, ed. Robert D. Blackwill and Albert Carnesale, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 162–95.

intervention in the region, might lead either to reevaluate its own security position. This would be particularly true if the ally expected a strong U.S. stand, but instead found the United States—worried about further committing itself to joining a conflict in which it has little at stake—to be distancing itself from the crisis. The most easily imaginable regional crises—Russian use of force against Ukraine or Baltic states, or Chinese moves against Taiwan or the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands—would not trigger U.S. alliance obligations, but might publicly reveal U.S. diffidence about its allies' security concerns.<sup>117</sup>

The impact of weak U.S. commitments on great power peace depends on the threshold at which Germany and Japan would respond to escalating external threats, as well as on how future conflicts develop. For either very high or very low thresholds, U.S. alliance policy would not affect over-reliance and its consequent dangers. If antimilitarism is so strong that a very high threat is required to stimulate a response (that is, the threat threshold is high), then even a well-managed alliance dissolution would not lead to German or Japanese self-reliance. If, on the other hand, antimilitarism is so weak that even small threats and a hollowing of U.S. alliance commitments would lead to commensurate balancing, then Germany and Japan will balance as needed whether the alliances are in place or not.

A trade-off arises, however, if the threat-response threshold falls between these two extremes. Suppose—as selective engagers do—that alliance dissolution in a period of calm is a clear enough signal for civilian powers to become more self-reliant. Suppose also—as the antimilitarism analysts' arguments imply—that the declining credibility of allied protection and the rising strength of neighboring powers would not reach Germany's or Japan's threshold for change. Then the alliances create a real dilemma. Dissolving them before a divisive crisis would start security competitions in motion, but maintaining them would lull Germany and Japan into a false sense of security, and make them wait until a crisis to go nuclear.

Just how a renewed great power rivalry will unfold would also matter. A series of small disputes with Russia or China would provide clearer warning signals of a worsening threat environment than military build-ups alone. Intra-alliance disputes—perhaps over burden-sharing or out-of-area operations—would give the civilian powers more advance warning about U.S. reliability. An alliance that maintained a deceptive, superficial vitality until the sudden

117. For discussions of conflict scenarios in the Pacific theater, see Kent E. Calder, *Asia's Deadly Triangle: How Arms, Energy and Growth Threaten to Destabilize Asia Pacific* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1996); Goldstein, "Great Expectations"; and Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance." On scenarios in Eastern Europe, see *Russia: A Return to Imperialism?* ed. Uri Ra'an and Kate Martin (New York: St. Martin's, 1996); Anatol Lieven, "Restraining NATO: Ukraine, Russia, and the West," *Washington Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (autumn 1997): 55–77.

emergence of a serious external challenge would be more likely to sustain civilian power over-reliance than one embroiled in squabbles.<sup>118</sup>

Regional geographic and diplomatic factors will also affect the dangers of U.S. withdrawal. While Germany and Japan have similar relationships with the United States, each has different regional advantages and liabilities. Seas separating Japan from Russia and China favor the defense in warfare, while the open plains of Central Europe are more favorable to the offense.<sup>119</sup> In Europe, though, it is more likely that other nuclear-armed powers would step into the breach caused by a sudden U.S. withdrawal. Britain and France have greater security and economic interests in Germany than does the United States. They might be able to deter a preventive attack on a Germany reaching for the nuclear option, or they might respond to the external threat and U.S. departure by creating a unified European nuclear deterrent. Japan has no comparable potential substitutes for the U.S. alliance.

#### POLICY DILEMMAS

TO SUMMARIZE briefly, there is considerable merit in the conventional wisdom that U.S. post-cold war alliances promote great power peace by adding to deterrence and dampening security competitions. Even if the alliances are stabilizing in the short term, however, they involve long-run risks of crash nuclearization and preventive war. It is more dangerous for alliances to collapse or become paralyzed under external pressure than for them to dissolve during periods of calm, if vulnerable members are over-reliant on others. Over-reliance is possible because civilian powers' antimilitarism could lead them to overestimate allied loyalty, to underestimate rising threats, and to balance inadequately until the danger levels already are too high.

Unfortunately, German and Japanese antimilitarism is too poorly understood to predict whether either state would respond realistically to greater Russian or Chinese power and aggressiveness. The potential dangers outlined here at the least justify further research into the sources and effects of antimilitarism and careful monitoring of German and Japanese reactions to new regional disturbances. They also suggest that alternatives to the status quo arrangement should be given more serious consideration, in Washington as well as in Berlin and Tokyo. Three possible options would be gradual

renationalization, transferring nuclear capabilities in a crisis, and—for Germany—strengthening the European security and defense identity.

In well-managed renationalization, the United States would carefully encourage Germany and Japan to acquire independent self-defense capabilities, including eventually nuclear weapons.<sup>120</sup> Given the current weakness of China and Russia and their relatively harmonious relations with Japan and Germany, this could occur slowly and incrementally, although nuclearization would involve crossing a clear threshold. Renationalization before a crisis demonstrated holes in the U.S. security umbrella would reduce the danger of preventive attacks on allies' new nuclear programs. Alliance dissolution, even before renationalization occurred, could still have a salutary effect if it prompted renationalization during a period of international calm, and thus avoided the worst over-reliance scenarios.

As selective engagers point out, moves toward renationalization or alliance dissolution would involve risks of starting regional security competitions. More research is necessary to weigh the trade-offs between these risks, and those of over-reliance and alliance crack-up. In the meantime, policymakers should consider the possibility—thus far ignored—that the alliances could turn out to be a mixed blessing for great power peace. Of course, more detailed analyses of the other alliance benefits (that is, for nonproliferation, collective intervention, etc.) than is possible here should also be part of any comprehensive assessment of alliance policy.

A second option would be to maintain the status quo, but prepare to transfer secure second strike capabilities to Germany and Japan in the event of a crisis. This would have the advantage of continuing to exploit the alliances' capacity to dampen security competitions for as long as possible. When a serious regional conflict nevertheless arose that U.S. policymakers concluded did not justify U.S. intervention, they could help the ally skip the dangerous proliferation transition, during which an incipient nuclear power lacks a survivable deterrent. The transfer of a few dozen cruise missiles or a ballistic missile submarine would provide a sufficient number of survivable and deliverable weapons to deter a preventive strike.

Security competitions would ensue, but these would have been inevitable anyway by the time a severe crisis and U.S. disengagement had occurred. The transfer would worsen relations between the United States and its erstwhile ally's foe, but the foe would be powerless to do anything about it. It could threaten to retaliate against the United States for the allied use of American-

118. Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," 167.

119. Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky, "Come Home, America," 17–25 and 30–32.

120. This option is proposed by Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," 37–40; Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky, "Come Home, America," 19.

made weapons, as President John F. Kennedy did against the Soviet Union during the Cuban missile crisis. Once the transfer was a fait accompli, however, there would be little incentive to attack past military suppliers opting to stay out of a regional war.

Of course, transferring nuclear weapons incurs high political costs. In addition to prompting proliferation reactions by other nonnuclear states, transferring weapons would blatantly violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as well as the SALT II and START treaties. There is precedence for U.S. nuclear weapons collaboration with Britain and France, including the sale of ballistic missile submarines to the former. This collaboration did not contravene the NPT, however, since both allies were already nuclear weapon states, and the strategic arms treaties specifically grandfathered prior U.S. arrangements. Congress could block or politicize transfer efforts by claiming authority over them on the basis of arms and nuclear export legislation.<sup>121</sup> These ramifications would, however, be secondary considerations compared with the risks of intervening in a regional conflict and the political costs of totally abandoning an ally.

Regional security alliances offer a third alternative solution to over-reliance problems, at least in Europe. Proximity and economic ties give France and Britain a greater stake in German security, compared with the United States. In a pinch they could fill a gap left by U.S. disengagement. They also could enhance deterrence, however, by developing a more cohesive and independent regional alliance as a substitute for NATO. A true European alliance would provide most of the deterrent and stabilizing benefits of NATO without leaving Germany dependent on a distant and disinterested power. Unfortunately, this is not an option for Japan, which has no obvious other allies that would leap to its aid in the event of a conflict with China or Russia.

Indeed, after decades of desultory efforts, the European Union has recently started developing an autonomous European defense capability. The Western European Union, an alliance of ten European Union members, was dormant throughout its existence, and the European Union has to date shown little cohesion or leadership in foreign and security policy.<sup>122</sup> In 1996, NATO

authorized the creation of combined joint task forces, which would allow "coalitions of the willing" to use NATO assets for crisis management and peacekeeping. Such operations would require the support but not the participation of the entire alliance, and could in principle be led by the European Union rather than NATO. As currently defined, however, combined joint task forces can be used only for limited operations, are heavily reliant on U.S. assets, and would be subject to a U.S. veto.<sup>123</sup> In December 1999, however, European Union members announced plans to create new security planning and decision-making institutions, which would command an independent rapid-reaction force of 60,000 troops. While the goal has been an out-of-area intervention capability rather than an independent collective defense capability, further security integration would help Germany to avoid the pitfalls of over-reliance.<sup>124</sup>

U.S. policymakers are unlikely to pursue actively any of these options. U.S. urges for primacy will militate against encouraging greater European military power, unity, and autonomy. Primacy and nonproliferation goals would be compromised by German and Japanese renationalization, however gradual. U.S. interests in greater allied contributions to U.S. or multilateral interventions, however, have softened U.S. opposition to a strengthened European Security and Defense Identity and increased U.S. pressure on Japan to provide more support for U.S. military operations. Waiting until a crisis and then handing over a few nuclear keys would maximize peace, nonproliferation, and U.S. primacy in the short run, but the handover itself would cause greater damage to the nonproliferation regime than gradual renationalization, and the political costs of this option would be high.

From the point of view of Berlin and Tokyo, renationalization would allow the greatest autonomy. Reliance on a transfer of nuclear assets in a crisis, like reliance on more direct U.S. military protection, would minimize regional security competitions but would leave both nations vulnerable to the whims of Washington.

Selective engagement remains the best U.S. policy for now. U.S. allies are unlikely to become over-reliant as long as they are not threatened by nuclear-armed powers, and this is likely to be the case at least for the next several years. Thus there is little sense in prematurely surrendering the stabilizing

121. Steven E. Miller, "Assistance to Newly Proliferating Nations," in Blackwill and Carnesale, *New Nuclear Nations*, 97–134, esp. 105–10.

122. John Gerard Ruggie, "Consolidating the European Pillar: The Key to NATO's Future," *Washington Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (winter 1997): 109–24; and Philip H. Gordon, "Does the WEU Have a Role?" *Washington Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (winter 1997): 125–40; Mary M. McKenzie and Peter H. Loedel, eds., *The Promise and Reality of European Security Cooperation* (Westport: Praeger, 1998); Carsten Tams, "The Functions of a European Security and Defence Identity and its Institutional Forms," in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, ed. Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste A. Wallander (New York:

Oxford University Press, 1999), 80–103; Jan Zielonka, *Explaining Euro-Paralysis: Why Europe Is Unable to Act in International Politics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

123. Charles Barry, "NATO's Combined Joint Task Forces in Theory and Practice," *Survival* 38, no. 1 (spring 1996): 81–97.

124. Elizabeth Pond, "Kosovo: Catalyst for Europe," *Washington Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (autumn 1999): 77–92; Philip H. Gordon, "Their Own Army? Making European Defense Work," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 4 (July/August 2000): 12–17.



effects of the alliances to solve a potential future problem. Early warning signs of any emerging dangers should, however, trigger a policy reevaluation, preferably before it is too late for the option of gradual renationalization. In the meantime, continued research on the severity of lag effects caused by cultural and institutional factors would be useful to better predict German and Japanese responses to future threats.