# Exploitative Friendships:
# How Opportunistic Junior Allies Exploit or Entrap Their Patron

By

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## Introduction

What explains variation in junior alliance partners' behavior toward their patron? Some try to rapidly augment their military capabilities (e.g. Saudi Arabia), while others deliberately keep their defense spending small for decades (e.g. Japan). Some make substantial troop contributions to their patron's military operations (e.g. South Korea), whereas others stay indifferent or even pursue rapprochement with a potential adversary (e.g. Germany). As such, there exists empirical variation in their attitudes toward their patron both with respect to their military expenditures and their propensity of alliance coordination.

This variation is also observed across time. In the first decade after the Cold War ended, there was a roughly linear relationship between U.S. allies' military expenditures and their alliance coordination efforts. The higher their defense spending as percentage of GDP, the more troop contributions and other coordination the allies tended to offer. In the next two decades, however, we have seen a rapid decline in the number of those allies both pursuing fast capability growth and coordinating well: many allies of this type subsequently decreased their military expenditures; others keeping sizable military budgets are now more reluctant to coordinate with the United States.

What is driving their differences across regions and across time? And what do their differences mean for a patron's entrapment risks? These questions have been understudied partly because the alliance literature largely focuses on great power politics with the implicit assumption that junior allies have limited autonomy or agency due to their vulnerability to a patron's abandonment threats.[1] However, history shows that junior allies sometimes exerted substantial influences over U.S. foreign policy, as Robert Keohane's seminal work suggests.[2] In fact, most junior allies do not face existential security threats and therefore do exercise considerable autonomy vis-à-vis their patron – enjoying some wiggle room to choose their preferred level of resources to extract for national security from their overall economic capacity. This literature gap has consequences for U.S. foreign policy. The insufficient understanding of junior allies' behavior appears to be the primary cause of current disagreements between two opposing views, "deep engagement" and "restraint." Supporters of "restraint" argue that U.S. alliance commitments might drag the United States into an unnecessary and costly war.[3] Those of "deep engagement," on the other hand, claim that "patrons can ward against moral hazard" and control risks.[4]

This study proposes a new framework for understanding differences among junior allies. Measured by their capability buildup and coordination efforts — the two most contentious and yet core issues of alliance management— their alliance behavior can be categorized into four different, mutually exclusive types, as they can take one of the two opposing approaches to each of the core

[1] For examples of scholarly work making this assumption, see James D. Morrow, "The Strategic Setting of Choices: Signaling, Commitment, and Negotiation in International Relations," in *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, ed. David A. Lake and Robert Powell (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77–114; G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, First Edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011); Victor D. Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016).
[2] Robert O. Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," *Foreign Policy*, no. 2 (1971): 161–82.
[3] For more on arguments for restraint, see Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, 1 edition (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015).
[4] For more on arguments on deep engagement, see Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America," *International Security* 37, no. 3 (Winter 2012): 7–51.

issues – i.e. 1) fast versus slow military buildup; 2) close versus reluctant coordination with their senior partner. These types are: 1) slow military buildup and reluctant coordination; 2) slow military buildup and close coordination; 3) fast military buildup and close coordination; 4) fast buildup and reluctant coordination), and I call them Cheap-rider, Vulnerable Entangler, Skillful Collaborator, and Autonomous Powerbuilder, respectively. Of the four types, the *Vulnerable Entangler* creates particularly high alliance entrapment risks for their patron for reasons discussed later in this article.

This article argues that the origin of these differences traces back to alignment of security interests between patron and ally (i.e. whether they have shared adversaries), the effect of which on their behavior is conditioned by two intervening variables: a junior partner's "revisionist" goal – i.e., a goal of changing the local distribution of power and goods by force; and shift in the local balance of power. When alliance partners' security interests are strongly aligned (i.e. they see the same opponents as threats to their own security), junior allies are likely to Cheap-ride and have their big partner take care of the threats, unless they are revisionist with a plan to use force. Unlike their status-quo counterparts, revisionist allies should take a Skillful Collaborator approach in order to increase their chance of getting a patron's operational assistance. When the partners' security interests are only weakly aligned (i.e. a patron does not see an ally's primary adversary as threat to its own security), allies are likely to be Autonomous Powerbuilders because they have to be prepared to fend off potential aggressions on their own. However, this Autonomous Powerbuilder approach is not feasible when allies with security interests only weakly aligned are facing a shifting local balance of power in favor of their adversaries: their pursuit of greater military capabilities relative to their adversaries would be hampered by a security dilemma, as their opponents' capabilities grow faster. As a result, they may be left with a Vulnerable Entangler approach, which aims to ensure that their patron stays attentive to their security environment

precisely because of their vulnerability. Vulnerable Entangler allies may calculate that their chance of survival is almost entirely contingent on a patron's help, regardless of their own capabilities relative to their adversaries.

Puzzling here is why rational leaders, while neither building capabilities nor sharing adversaries with their patron, would gamble on a patron's military intervention, especially if they face superior adversaries. Looking into empirical examples of this dangerous entangling type, such as Taiwan, Japan, and Baltic NATO allies, reveals that this approach requires some extra efforts, in addition to assiduous coordination, to increase a patron's expected costs of reneging on prior promises. For example, they could become the goose laying the golden egg and create a "techno-tripwire" by deepening a patron's dependence on their advanced technologies (e.g. Taiwan's chip industry) or by collecting crucial intelligence that no other country could provide. They could also raise a patron's domestic costs of reneging by appealing to domestic constituents via influential opinion leaders (e.g. lobbying). They could also strengthen military ties to other allies of the same patron in order to signal that their patron's failure to come to their rescue would affect the level of trust in its more important allies in the same region (e.g. Taiwan's growing ties to Tokyo; Baltic states' ties to the U.K. and France). Finally, they could also threaten their nuclear breakout and a resulting proliferation cascade in their region (e.g. Japan's fuel cycle capabilities).

As the first-ever attempt to explain this junior ally variation across time and space, this study contributes to the literature by providing a qualification for Glenn Snyder's "Alliance Security Dilemma" argument. Snyder famously hypothesizes that alliance partners are facing two kinds of fear often inversely proportional to each other: the fear of abandonment – i.e. the partner might abrogate its commitment – and the fear of entrapment – i.e. one might get dragged into an unnecessary or undesirable war due to prior commitments. To reduce the risk of entrapment, one

should dissociate oneself from the ally, argues Snyder.[5] This article will demonstrate, however, that in the context of asymmetric alliances (i.e. alliances between great powers and weak allies) with those facing growing security threats, a patron may face a higher, rather than lower, risk of entrapment when distancing itself from a desperate *Vulnerable Entangler*.

This study speaks to the current foreign policy debate by explaining what a patron could do to influence its allies' behavior, and it helps to predict the implications of potential changes in U.S. security commitments. The United States still maintains a policy of strategic ambiguity over Taiwan, mainly for political reasons of not enraging Beijing, while prominent opinion leaders now call for an end to this ambiguous policy.[6] What would be the cost and benefit of ending strategic ambiguity from the U.S. standpoint? Does the ambiguity improve or worsen stability across the Taiwan Straits? This article addresses these questions, using the framework it proposes.

The remainder of this article is divided into six sections. The first section summarizes the current scholarly understanding of alliance behavior. The second section will provide a typology of four different types of alliance behavior – the dependent variable of this study. The third section will offer the main argument on the origins of the variation and causal pathways. The fourth section will discuss the argument's scope conditions, major limitations, and external validity. The fifth section will present an illustrative case from the U.S.-Taiwanese alliance (1953-1979). The article will conclude with implications of *Vulnerable Entangler* allies for a patron's alliance management.

## I. The Existing Literature and Its Limitations

[5] Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 04 (July 1984): 461–95, https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183.
[6] Richard Haass and David Sacks, "American Support for Taiwan Must Be Unambiguous," September 2, 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/american-support-taiwan-must-be-unambiguous.

The existing alliance literature pays limited attention to junior partners' *de facto* behavior toward their great power patron. In studying alliances, mainstream IR scholars largely focus on the causes of alliance formation or the effects of alliance contracts on peace and stability.[7] Besides, they tend to discount junior allies' influence on great power politics. They see security alliances as a tool of capability aggregation and therefore assume that states with greater material capabilities should be able to impose their preferences on weaker partners.[8] As such, major studies of alliance politics have focused on alliance decisions made by great powers.[9] Exceptions to this

[7] For studies on the causes of alliance formation, see, among others, Stephen M Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).; Douglas M. Gibler, "The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 3 (2008): 426–54, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002707310003.; Mark J.C. Crescenzi et al., "Reliability, Reputation, and Alliance Formation," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2012): 259274, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00711.x. For studies on the effect of alliances on the likelihood of international conflicts, see Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War*, 1 edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003).; David H. Bearce, Kristen M. Flanagan, and Katharine M. Floros, "Alliances, Internal Information, and Military Conflict among Member-States," *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 595–625.; Brett Ashley Leeds and Michaela Mattes, "Alliance Politics during the Cold War: Aberration, New World Order, or Continuation of History?," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 183–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/07388940701473054.; Thomas J. Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011).; Jesse C. Johnson and Brett Ashley Leeds, "Defense Pacts: A Prescription for Peace?," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, no. 1 (2011): 45–65.; Brett V. Benson, *Constructing International Security: Alliances, Deterrence, and Moral Hazard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[8] For instance, Kenneth Waltz highlights the importance of relative military capabilities as the central determinant of intra-alliance power politics, and suggests that the rigidity of alignment in a bipolar world during the Cold War gave superpowers flexibility; although concessions to allies were sometimes made, each superpower controlled so much of its respective alliance's capabilities that it could act unilaterally without fearing a shortfall of resources. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 170.

[9] For studies on intra-alliance political dynamics with a focus on great power strategies, see Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 137–68.; Brett Ashley Leeds, "Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties," *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (2003): 801–27.; Timothy W. Crawford, "Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics," *International Security* 35, no. 4 (2011): 155–89, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00036.; Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "To Coerce or Reward? Theorizing Wedge Strategies in Alliance Politics," *Security Studies* 22, no. 3 (July 2013): 498–531, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.816121.; Michael Beckley, "The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of U.S. Defense Pacts," *International Security* 39, no. 4 (April 2015): 7–48, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00197. ; Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper, "To Arm or to Ally? The Patron's Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances," *International Security* 41, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 90–139, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00250. ; Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "Binding Strategies in Alliance Politics: The Soviet-Japanese-US Diplomatic Tug of War in the Mid-1950s," *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (March 1, 2018): 108–20.

include Robert Keohane's 1971 article titled "Big Influence of Small Allies,"[10] which offered U.S.-focused hypotheses for how and why allied governments can exercise outsized influence over U.S. foreign policy, but it fell short of providing a generalizable theory on allied behavior. Recent scholars have begun to pay more attention to allied choices and behavior.[11] But there has been no systematic analysis of what determines allied capability buildups and coordination efforts in the context of asymmetric alliances. If nothing directly addresses it, what predictions could one extrapolate from major theories of international relations?

First, balance of threat theory suggests that security partners should become more willing to coordinate with one another or more likely to augment their own capabilities when security threats loom greater.[12] However, it does not explain why sometimes heightened security threats only affect a state's propensity for external balancing (to coordinate with other states) but not for internal balancing (its capability buildup) as a strategy to cope with threats. Fears of entrapment and abandonment may be another determinant: he argues that alliance partners typically face the two kinds of fear often inversely proportional to each other; often reducing one of these fears incurs the cost of heightening the other.[13] This argument was developed based on great power-only

[10] Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies." Other studies on the influence of small allies include: Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "Alliance Strategy: U.S. - Small Allies Relationships.," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 3 (2): 202–16.; Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).; Christopher Darnton, "Asymmetry and Agenda-Setting in US-Latin American Relations: Rethinking the Origins of the Alliance for Progress," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012): 55–92.

[11] See, for example, Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia," *International Security* 45, no. 2 (2020): 7–50, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00389. Jasen J. Castillo and Alexander B. Downes, "Loyalty, Hedging, or Exit: How Weaker Alliance Partners Respond to the Rise of New Threats," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 0, no. 0 (July 30, 2020): 1–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1797690. Iain D. Henry, "What Allies Want: Reconsidering Loyalty, Reliability, and Alliance Interdependence," *International Security* 44, no. 4 (2020): 45–83, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00375.

[12] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 32.

[13] Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 461–95. The risk of abandonment may be eased by increasing one's support or tightening one's ties to the ally, but this closer relationship heightens the risk of entrapment in the ally's conflicts with its opponent. Conversely, reducing the risk of entrapment by dissociating oneself from the ally may provoke it to abandon the alliance and seek an alternative. However, Snyder fails to provide clear-cut evidence for leaders' fear of entrapment in any of the European cases

alliances, with the assumption that partners' capabilities are comparable enough that one's approach – engaging more or less – certainly impacts the other's war fighting, and this often does not hold in asymmetric alliances.

For scholars in the constructivist tradition, ideology and identity are the major determinants of state behavior, of which alliance behavior is a subset. Alliance contracts have only symbolic meanings as an *outcome* of intersubjective social identities and norms that *already* shape each member's behavior and generally help constrain a stronger partner.[14] Along the same lines, Mark Haas argues that security partners sharing the same ideology behave less opportunistically toward each other and that their alliances "are likely to long outlive the power-political threat" as was the case for Austria, Prussia, and Russia after the Napoleonic Wars and for the NATO alliance after the Cold War.[15] However, their limitation is clear: constructivists have yet to explain both why sharing the same ideology sometimes has divisive effects as was the case for the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s as well as why states embracing different cultural identities often maintain a long-lasting alliance relationship, as evidenced by U.S.-Japan relations.

For rationalists, on the other hand, alliance behavior is a function of various institutional designs and collective action.[16] Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser argue that the "larger"

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examined in his book. In fact, tightening one's ties to the ally could also help gain more influence over the ally's decision-making to keep its reckless behavior in check and prevent entrapment.

[14] Karl W. Deutsch, *Arms Control and Atlantic Alliance: Europe Faces Coming Policy Decisions*, First Edition, Ex-Library edition (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1967), 77. Thomas Risse-Kappen tested this proposition by examining the influence of European and Canadian allies on U.S. security decisions during the Korean war, the 1958-1963 nuclear test ban treaties and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. He finds that the liberal notions such as normative factors are more persuasive than realist calculations in explaining alliance cooperation outcomes. See Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton University Press, 1997). For other prominent constructivist arguments on alliance behavior, see Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425.; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).; Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).; John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia Univ Pr, 1993).

[15] Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789–1989* (Ithaca, N.Y.; Bristol: Cornell University Press, 2007), 29.

[16] There are numerous examples of research on alliances from rationalist or institutionalist perspectives, and due to space constraints I can only present some of them: James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to

members of an alliance – those that place a higher absolute value on the outcome of the alliance – are more likely to bear a disproportionate share of the burden, as any alliances between states produce a public good called "security," which noncontributors cannot feasibly be kept from consuming.[17] This logic of collective action problems can certainly apply to large multilateral alliances such as the NATO, but it cannot explain lingering burden-sharing problems even in many bilateral U.S. alliances, because collective action problems should not be a major issue within small groups. Rationalism's other limitations have to do with their focus on institutional designs. This can be a problem when, as is often the case, junior allies are unable to "institutionalize" clear-cut *de jure* security commitments from their patrons.[18] This should give them an incentive to change the terms of their alliance in their favor on a *de facto* basis, which the institutionalist approach may fail to capture.

Thus, there is a substantial lacuna in the literature with regard to the weaker party's behavior toward its more materially powerful partner on a *de facto* basis after the formation of an alliance. To fill this gap, I propose a theory of asymmetric alliances in the next section as a

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the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1991, 904–33.; Morrow, "The Strategic Setting of Choices: Signaling, Commitment, and Negotiation in International Relations."; Brett Ashley Leeds et al., "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944," *International Interactions* 28, no. 3 (July 2002): 237–60, https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620190047599.; Brett Ashley Leeds and Sezi Anac, "Alliance Institutionalization and Alliance Performance," *International Interactions* 31, no. 3 (July 2005): 183–202, https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620500294135.; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, With a New preface by the author edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005).; Lisa L. Martin, "Self-Binding," Harvard Magazine, September 1, 2004, http://harvardmagazine.com/2004/09/self-binding.html.; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999), chap. 2.; David A. Lake, "Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations," *International Organization* 50, no. 1 (1996): 1–33.; David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 2009., 2009).; Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (July 2011): 350–77.;

[17] Olson Mancur and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1966, 267–68.

[18] Michaela Mattes, "Reputation, Symmetry, and Alliance Design," *International Organization* 66, no. 4 (October 2012): 679–707, https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081831200029X. According to G. John Ikenberry, "institutional binding" restrains powerful actors, and "security alliances are the most important and potentially far-reaching form of binding," since alliances create binding treaties that allow states to keep a hand in the security policy of their partners. See G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 41.

framework for understanding the origins of differences in the behavior of junior allies toward their patron.

## II. Typology of Four Types of Alliance Behavior

The behavior of junior allies differs primarily with respect to two core management issues of alliances – the speed of capability growth and the degree of coordination with a patron. Unlike wartime alliances, which aim to balance against adversary forces collectively primarily on a temporary basis when internal balancing was not fast enough, states in peacetime asymmetric alliances can choose between internal and external balancing or can do both.

Regarding internal balancing, allies augment their military capabilities at different rates for various reasons, some of which are relational – to help reduce their dependence on their patron or strengthen their negotiating position. Conversely, allies may choose to grow more dependent on their patron by making defense budgets shrink or by changing their force structure.

As for external balancing, allies significantly vary in terms of their operational and defense industrial cooperation with their patron. Some allies regularly send troops to participate in their patron's military operations even in remote regions.[19] They can choose to purchase weapons equipment exclusively from their patron's defense industry or do so from other great powers. Other allies often refuse operational cooperation and keep a patron at arm's length.

These two dimensions of asymmetric alliance relationship are not systematically correlated with each other. That is, an ally's preferred coordination posture does not automatically predict its

[19] During the Vietnam War, for example, none of the NATO allies helped U.S. forces in operations in Indochina, while the Republic of Korea did send as many as 300,000 troops in total to Vietnam, making the ROK Army the second largest after the U.S. in Vietnam.

speed for capability buildups, and vice versa, and there are two reasons for their independence from each other. First, capital-intensive weapons systems acquired for their own defense may not be useful when participating in their patron's operations; conversely, their operational cooperation, often in the form of infantry troops, may not always help augment their own defense capabilities tailored to their local security environments. Second, empirical evidence suggests that patrons' alliance commitments are motivated by various factors often unrelated to junior allies' willingness to coordinate or augment their military skills – such as basing rights, arms sales, spheres of influence, and stability in regions important to a patron's national interests broadly defined.[20] Thus, an ally's dependency for security does not automatically translate into its loss of autonomy with regard to their coordination.

Assuming that junior allies can take one of the two approaches to both their capability growth and coordination, there exist four different, mutually exclusive types of alliance behavior: (*Fast growing*, *Reluctant coordinator*), (*Fast growing*, *Proactive coordinator*), (*Slow growing*, *Proactive coordinator*), and (*Slow growing*, *Reluctant coordinator*), which I call *Autonomous Powerbuilder*, *Skillful Collaborator*, *Vulnerable Entangler*, and *Cheap-rider* respectively (see **Table 1.**). I briefly discuss each type's major characteristics and examples in the following.

## ***Table 1. The Four Different Types of Allies***

| | **Coordination** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Reluctant** | **Proactive** |
| **Fast Growth** | *Autonomous Powerbuilder* | *Skillful Collaborator* |
| **Slow Growth** | *Cheap-rider* | *Vulnerable Entangler* |

[20] For various benefits a patron reaps from alliance arrangements, see, for example, Lindsey W. Ford and James Goldgeier, "Who are America's allies and are they paying their fair share of defense?," The Brookings Institution, DECEMBER 17, 2019.

***Autonomous Powerbuilder.*** *Autonomous Powerbuilders* primarily seek internal balancing, pursuing more advanced military capabilities rapidly while minimizing their coordination with a patron. They most likely cannot rely on a patron's security commitments and therefore seek an independent deterrent against its primary adversary. However, this does not mean they intends to end the alliance relationship anytime soon: they still want to take advantage of some levels of security protection and various assistance by their patron for as long as they can do so; in addition, by demonstrating their ability and intent to build an independent deterrent, some allies try to improve their bargaining position vis-à-vis their patron.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the early years of the Cold War was an *Autonomous Powerbuilder* seeking to reduce its dependence on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. With its military expenditures at levels of four to five percent of GDP annually, the FRG developed an enormously capable Bundeswehr. Bonn substantially diversified its sources of weapons procurement between 1959 and 1962 to increase the shares of France, the U.K., Italy and Switzerland.[21] During the same period, the FRG was reluctant to provide assistance for U.S. forces in Vietnam or align with Washington on nuclear nonproliferation. In the aftermath of the Sputnik I satellite launch in 1957, Konrad Adenauer joined French and Italian leaders to sign an agreement on joint production of nuclear weapons in April 1958. Although the nuclear joint production project was cancelled by President Charles de Gaulle, Adenauer still continued to embrace his hope for a nuclear deterrent under West Germany's national control.[22]

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[21] The U.S. share in the FRG's procurement dropped from nearly 72 % in 1958 to 43% in 1961, according to the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database available at https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers.

[22] In a meeting with President Kennedy in November 1961, Adenauer falsely denied seeking nuclear weapons production, but reaffirmed his opposition to nuclear renunciation. In the spring of 1962, when Kennedy communicated to Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko his willingness to concede German nuclear rights, Adenauer decided to once again establish closer relations with France, and signed a 1963 Élysée Treaty of friendship pledging defense (and nuclear) cooperation between Bonn and Paris. See Kennedy-Adenauer meetings, November 21–22, 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963*, Vol. 14, 616–618; Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement 1945-1963* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999), 340. Also see Marc Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in US Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou Period, 1969–1974," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011):

Israel as an informal U.S. ally is another example of this autonomous type, although it occasionally oscillates between the Autonomous Powerbuilder and the Skillful Collaborator types. It has spent 5 to 10% of GDP on the military even after the Cold War ended, although the percentage is gradually decreasing over time. It certainly has highly relied upon the United States for arms supply, with 70 to 85% on average of all foreign-sourced arms purchases over the past few decades, but it sat out of U.S.-led military operations most of the time.[23] Since the 1967 war Israel has widely been believed to possess a nuclear arsenal as an independent deterrent, which helps Jerusalem strengthen its bargaining position vis-à-vis the American patron while maintaining its autonomy.[24] How Israel attempts to influence American foreign policy will be discussed in more detail at the end of the article's third section.

***Skillful Collaborator.*** *Skillful Collaborators* try to be a patron's pet: they augment their military capabilities with high percentages of GDP spent on their military while proactively contributing to the advancement of a patron's interests through troop contributions and exclusive weapons procurement from the patron's defense industry. They seek to be recognized as a great little brother often with some ulterior motives: looking for special treatment or additional assistance that a patron has not agreed to as *quid pro quo* for being a "good" and reliable partner.

Saudi Arabia was an exemplary case of *Skillful Collaborators* for decades. During the 1990s Riyadh spent an average of 11.4 % of GDP on its military and sourced 68.2 % on average

4–59. Gene Gerzhoy, "Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint: How the United States Thwarted West Germany's Nuclear Ambitions." *International Security* 39, no. 4 (April 2015): 91–129. Note that the unsuccessful attempt to acquire German indigenous nuclear weapons wasn't due to U.S. threats of abandonment: President Kennedy financially supported Adenauer's political opponent, Financial Minister Ludwig Erhard, to mobilize the chancellor's anti-Gaullist critics in the CDU in order to make it difficult for the Élysée Treaty to be ratified.

[23] See the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database at https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers.

[24] Viktor Esin, "Advantageous Ambiguity: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 25 September 2020; Ronen Bergman and Mark Mazzetti, "The Secret History of the Push to Strike Iran," The New York Times, 6 September 2019.

of foreign weapons procurement from the U.S. defense industry.[25] When Washington needed operational assistance, Saudi Arabia offered it abundantly. During the 1991 Gulf War, for example, Riyadh provided 115,000 troops along with 550 tanks and 180 combat aircraft, and 8 frigates—by far the largest number of contributed troops among U.S. allies.[26] Riyadh's motives behind this approach are covered by numerous news reports.[27]

***Vulnerable Entangler.*** *Vulnerable Entanglers* deliberately keep their defense budgets small but do maintain close alliance coordination to behave like acolytes. In so doing, they typically try to increase the chance of the patron coming to their rescue in emergency. They are not interested in substantially augmenting capabilities to the point of standing on their own feet for security, not only because doing so would be costly but also because their vulnerability may help keep a patron's attention – in other words, improving their capabilities relative to their local opponents may bring themselves down the patron's priority list of security assistance. In participating in a patron's military operations, their limited capabilities obviously fail to have any strategic impacts, but they care about appearing as faithful allies; to that end, they also tend to keep close procurement relationships with a patron's defense industry.

Taiwan in the 1950s exemplifies this *Vulnerable Entangler* type and will be discussed in much greater details in the fifth section of this article. Chiang Kai-shek's primary goal was to compel U.S. forces into fighting the communists so he could go back to the mainland China –

[25] See the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database at https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers. In 2018, the United States accounted for 88% of Saudi Arabia's arms imports.
[26] Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, "SSI Special Report Desert Shield and Desert Storm – A Chronology and Troop List for the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis," 25 March 1991.
[27] See, for example, "As crisis intensifies, what's at stake in America's military partnership with Saudi Arabia?" The Washington Post, 12 October 2018; Fareed Zakaria, "How Saudi Arabia Played Donald Trump," The Washington Post, 25 May 2017; Lee Fang, "Inside Saudi Arabia's Campaign To Charm American Policymakers And Journalists," The Incercept, 1 December 2015.

which could not be achieved with his forces alone. Chiang was eager to participate in U.S.-led global campaigns against communists in the 1950s, while he was unwilling to significantly upgrade his military capabilities. Starting in the mid-1950s, Chiang was steadily deploying his best troops and weapons platforms to Quemoy and Matsu – two tiny offshore island garrisons, which, by 1956, totaled about 100,000 men armed with more than one third of the major military equipment available to the Nationalists.[28] Mobilizing such a large number of troops near the continent not only undermined his ability to defend its main island, Formosa, but also significantly increased the chance of provoking Chinese shelling and escalating into a war. Chiang also repeatedly threatened the collapse of his forces' morale in case of U.S. failures in providing military assistance.[29]

***Cheap-rider.*** *Cheap-riders* do not spend high percentages of GDP on their defense or do not desire close operational cooperation with a patron. They rarely care to be seen as capable or faithful partners but aim to ensure national security with "cheap" costs, albeit not for free, even though they are financially and technologically capable of providing their own security. This type of allies assumes that a patron would feel compelled to come to their aid anyway with a full-scale military intervention in emergency for reasons unrelated to their behavior.

A quintessential illustration of *Cheap-riders* is Japan during the Cold War and the 1990s alongside many of the Rio-Pact members in Latin America. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida was convinced that the Cold War structure would require the United States to maintain its long-term military presence in Japan, which alone would be sufficient to deter a military attack from

[28] Kenneth W. Condit, "History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Vol. VI The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1955-1956" (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998), 208, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V006.pdf.
[29] For example, see "Memorandum of Conversation" 22 October 1958, FRUS, China, 1958-1960, Volume XIX.

communist adversaries.[30] The Japanese elites subscribing to Yoshida's idea maintained Japanese defense budgets below 1% of GDP for many years and refused to fulfill even limited defense responsibilities for the Japanese own territory until 1976.[31] Tokyo also categorically denied U.S. requests for direct contributions to military operations in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf except allowing its military bases to be utilized, although the share of the United States in the source markets of Japanese weapons procurement was high.[32]

[30] Shigeru Yoshida, *Kaisō Jūnen Dai San kan* [Looking back the last ten years, Volume III], Tokyo: Shinchō-sha, 1957, 116-118. Also see Kenneth Pyle, *Japan Rising*, First Edition (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 231.
[31] The causes of Japan's attitude toward its American patron have been subject to scholarly debates. Constructivist scholars, who typically attribute it to the Japanese people's attachment to a war-renouncing constitution, refuse to call it "Cheap-riding." However, recent scholarly work from realist perspectives offers evidence that the Japanese elites had more room for maneuver than were previously believed in changing the constitution's interpretations and providing assistance to U.S. forces. For major arguments from constructivist perspectives, see Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore, Md: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). For realist views, see Kenneth Pyle, *Japan Rising*, First Edition (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), chap. 7; Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), chap. 2. Also see Jennifer M. Lind, "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 92–121.
[32] See the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

## Measurements and Empirical Distributions

### *Table 2. Summary of the Four Types of Alliance Behavior*

| | | Coordination | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Reluctant** | **Proactive** |
| **Capability Growth** | **Fast** | ***Autonomous Powerbuilder***<br>Independently-minded allies that keep large defense budgets to acquire advanced indigenous capabilities and prefer to limit alliance cooperation to a minimum level<br>e.g. West Germany, Israel | ***Skillful Collaborator***<br>Useful allies that maintain large defense budgets as percentage of GDP, and reliably contribute to a patron's military operations –to compel a patron into providing assistance as *quid pro quo*<br>e.g. Saudi Arabia |
| | **Slow** | ***Cheap-rider***<br>Aloof and selfish allies as they ensure national security at minimal expense by keeping defense budgets small and by refusing to participate in alliance operations<br>e.g. Japan (1951-2001) | ***Vulnerable Entangler***<br>Entangling allies as they keep their defense budgets small and proactively coordinate with a patron –to increase the chance of a patron's coming to their rescue in case of emergency<br>e.g. Republic of China (1953-62) |

**Table 2.** summarizes the four types of alliance behavior and major examples of each. To identify each U.S. ally's behavior and assess their empirical distribution, this study uses the following measurement rules. To calculate each U.S. ally's capability growth rate, I use their military expenditure as share of GDP from the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database to be able to compare a state's "efforts" to improve capabilities given their available economic resources.[33] The cutting point between fast and slow growth rates is set at two percent of GDP annually, which is a common benchmark for a decent level of defense efforts in NATO discussions. Due to limited data availability, it limits the temporal scope to the past 30 years after 1990.

[33] Their capability growth can be measured in other ways including equipment modernization, military trainings, and their military expenditures in absolute terms. However, these alternative measurements would make cross-case comparison extremely difficult due to limited data availability and currency fluctuations. One could also argue that each ally's appropriate growth rate depends on their capabilities relative to their opponent's in their local security environment. But due to missing data, it would be difficult to pair each ally with a particular opponent and measure a capability gap in a consistent way across all cases.

To determine each ally's level of alliance coordination, this study uses two measurements. First, it calculates the annual share of a patron in an ally's source markets of weapons procurement based on the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Second, it also calculates the frequency of sending uniformed armed officers (or troops) to contribute to multilateral military intervention operations led by U.S. forces over the last three decades.[34] There were a total of nine such military interventions: four in the 1990s, two in the 2000s, and three in the 2010s. These are the Gulf War (1990),[35] the Operation Restore Hope / UNITAF in Somalia (1992-93),[36] the Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti (1994), the War in Kosovo (1999), the Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-), the Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-),[37] the intervention in the Libyan Civil War (2011),[38] the Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) against ISIS,[39] and the Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan (2015-2021).[40] To identify each ally's degree of coordination with a patron – which I call a Coordination Index, the above-mentioned two measurements are averaged with the equal weight.[41] For example, if an ally imported 60 % of foreign-sourced weapons systems from a patron and sent uniformed officers to participate in U.S.-led military interventions 40% of the time for a particular period, then its Coordination Index for the period is 0.5 ((0.6 + 0.4)/2). The cutting point to distinguish between proactive and reluctant coordinators is set at 0.5.

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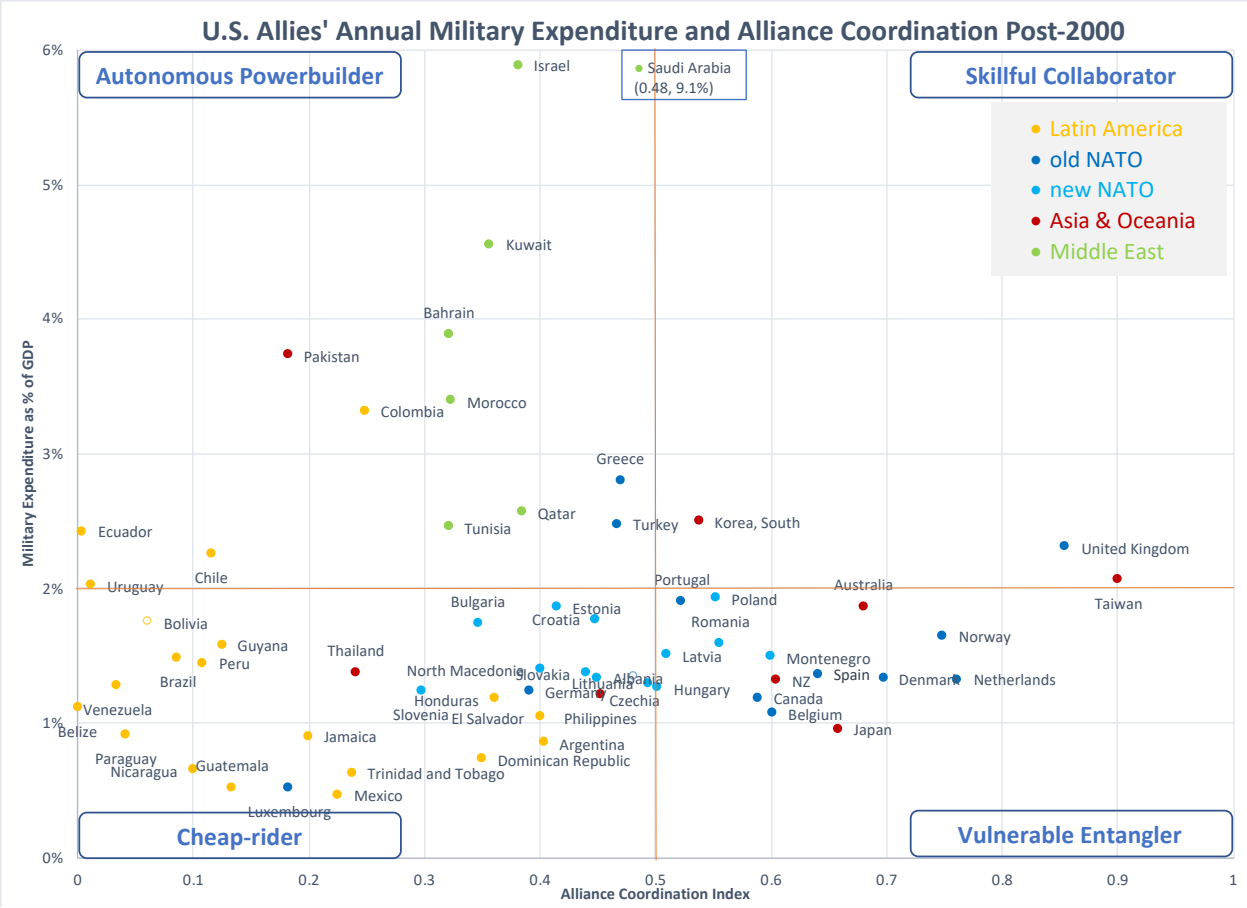
[34] There is significant variation in terms of the size of troops or military capabilities contributed, but for simplicity's sake this study only considers whether their armed forces participated in each of the U.S.-led multilateral military interventions.
[35] Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, "SSI Special Report Desert Shield and Desert Storm – A Chronology and Troop List for the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis," 25 March 1991.
[36] United States Forces, "Somalia After Action Report And Historical Overview: the United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994," p. 61
[37] See MNFI Troops, which tracks the number and duration of troop contributions to the Multi-National Force Iraq from 2003-2010, https://sites.google.com/site/mnfitroops/home.
[38] Source: The Correlates of War Dyadic MID 4.02 Dataset, https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/MIDs.
[39] According to the Global Coalition Against Daesh, https://theglobalcoalition.org/en/partners/.
[40] Source: OPERATION FREEDOM'S SEMTOMEL LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE U.S. CONGRESS, APRIL 1, 2019-JUNE 30, 2019, https://media.defense.gov/2019/Aug/21/2002173538/-1/-1/1/Q3FY2019_LEADIG_OFS_REPORT.PDF
[41] Ideally, the Coordination Index should reflect other measurements of jointness including bilateral joint military exercises as well as the degree of policy consultation over major alliance issues. But this would make cross-case comparison extremely difficult because data availability is extremely varied across cases.

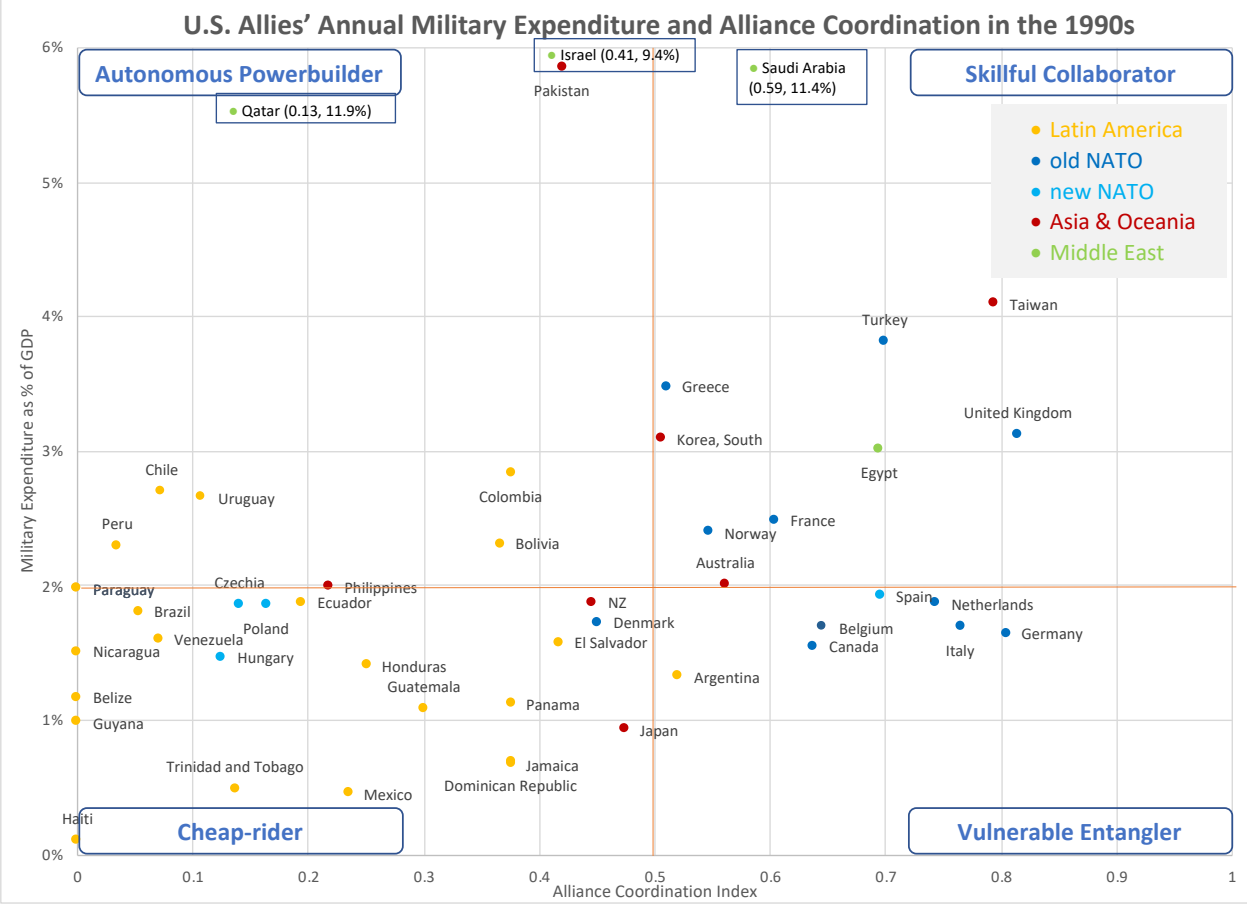
Among 68 U.S. allies including NATO members, Rio Pact members, and major non-NATO allies over the last 20 years, the vast majority (35 states or about 50%) of them, particularly ones in the Central and South Americas, are *Cheap-riders*, while 14 cases (just about 20% of the total) involve *Autonomous Powerbuilders* (see **Chart 1**).[42] Interestingly, *Skillful Collaborator*, the patron's preferred buddy, is found only in a few cases (5 %). *Vulnerable Entanglers* make up for 15 %. The distribution shifts across time. The scatterplot from the 1990s shows roughly linear correlation between the capability growth and the coordination index(see **Chart 2**). However, the number of *Skillful Collaborators* dramatically declined in the next twenty years, and more states behaved either like *Autonomous Powerbuilders* or *Vulnerable Entanglers* (see **Chart 1**).

**Chart 1: Last 20 Years (2001-2020)**




[42] Saudi Arabia with its average military expenditure as percentage of GDP of 9.08% is outside the chart.

**Chart 2: 1990-2000**




*Autonomous Powerbuilders* are the allies that confront regional, non-great-power adversaries that the United States does not regard as its own enemies (see Pakistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain in Chart 1). Pakistan faces India, which the United States sees as a strategic partner since the early 2000s. *Vulnerable Entanglers* are the ones that face growing military threats from Russia and China. In Particular, Norway, Netherlands, and Denmark share the same ambition to appear as loyal allies making noticeable contributions at the tactical level even though their capabilities fall short of shaping a campaign at the strategic level.[43]

[43] Christian F. Anrig, "The Belgian, Danish, Dutch, and Norwegian Experiences," in *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War*, edited by Christian F. Anrig, Karl P. Mueller, Gregory Alegi, Christopher S. Chivvis, Robert Egnell, Christina Goulter, Camille Grand, et al., 267–308. RAND Corporation, 2015. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt16f8d7x.16.

New members of NATO in Eastern Europe such as three Baltic states, Romania, and Montenegro cope with increasing threats from either Russia or Russia-backed Serbia and move in the direction of Vulnerable Entanglers over time. Last but not least, most of the *Cheap-riders* are either Rio-Pact members or those hosting large military bases for U.S. troops such as Germany. Based on these empirical observations, the next section will offer this study's main argument on the origins of the different types of allies.

## III. Determinants of the Different Types of Alliance Behavior

Three factors are likely to lead to the differences among the four types of alliance behavior: 1) alignment of security interests (i.e. whether or not a patron sees an ally's adversary as its own); 2) revisionist policy (i.e. whether or not an ally has a revisionist plan to change the local distribution of power and goods by force); 3) shift in the local balance of power (i.e. whether or not an ally faces growing security threats). In its nutshell, the argument goes as follows: When alliance partners' security interests are strongly aligned (i.e. they see the same adversaries as threats to their own security), allies are likely to cheap-ride, unless they are revisionist with a plan to use force that may need a patron's operational assistance. Unlike their status-quo counterparts, revisionist allies should take a Skillful Collaborator approach to increase their chance of getting a patron's assistance, because great-power patrons rarely commit to assisting local offensive plans in advance. When the partners' security interests are only weakly aligned (i.e. a patron does not see an ally's adversary as its enemy or a threat), allies are likely to be Autonomous Powerbuilders because they have to be prepared to fend off potential dangers on their own. However, this

autonomous approach is not realistic when the allies are facing a shifting local balance of power in favor of their adversaries: allies would not be able to build an independent deterrent quickly enough due to a security dilemma, and as a result, they are likely to engage in the *Vulnerable Entangler* behavior in order to ensure that their patron stays attentive to their security precisely because of their vulnerability. Vulnerable Entanglers may calculate that their chance of survival is higher when fighting back an aggressor with a patron's help than when fighting alone. By deliberately remaining vulnerable, however, they gamble on their patron's probabilistic military intervention, and several techniques they use to tether themselves to their patron will be discussed later in this section. Each of the three determinants is discussed in detail below.

## Alignment of Security Interests (Shared Adversary)

This main determinant refers to the degree to which an ally's security interests are aligned with its patron's. Colloquially, strongly alignment of security interests means that a patron is willing to fight an ally's primary adversary by force. Existing research shows that very few treaty texts offer broad, unqualified, and strong blanket commitments of support; almost all security treaties do provide members with escape clauses or wiggle room regarding the conditions under which members must provide assistance.[44] Thus, allies have a reason to constantly assess whether a patron considers an ally's enemy as its own and whether it maintains necessary capabilities to fight alongside them. Their assessments are changing over time primarily due to their patron's various actions, capabilities and diplomatic and military postures toward each region of the world.

[44] Brett Ashley Leeds, "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2003): 427–39, https://doi.org/10.2307/3186107.; Leeds et al., "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944."; Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States."; Benson, *Constructing International Security*.

## Revisionist Plan

The Revisionist Plan, a binary intervening variable, refers to an ally's military plan to change the local distribution of power and goods by force. A revisionist policy does not necessarily challenge or attempt to upset the entire international order, hierarchy or governing rules, but does aim to change the current, *primarily local*, distribution of power and goods by force.[45] Revisionist plans may affect allies' behavior because they should desire to be seen as capable and useful partners in order to ensure their patron's operational assistance. An assumption behind this is that great power patrons are unlikely to have offered broad unconditional commitments to render support for allied offensive operations, given their general aversion to inadvertently getting involved in low-stake local conflicts. Even if a patron also had its own revisionist policy toward a shared adversary, it might still withhold unqualified commitments in order to maintain control over when to initiate operations and by what means as well as how long to fight.[46] In the absence of such revisionist policy, on the other hand, status-quo-oriented allies with strong alignment of security interests should have little incentive to keep large military budgets or closely coordinate with a patron; they know they could survive without being seen as loyal partners.

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[45] This definition draws on Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration; Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1962., 1962), 91-92, 125. By contrast, status-quo policies "either desire to preserve the established order or those that, while actually desiring change, have renounced the use of force as a method for bringing it about." See Wolfers, 125. The definition of revisionist policy here is broader in scope compared to that proposed by system theorists such as Robert Gilpin and Randall Schweller. Gilpin describes revisionism as seeking "to change the international system through territorial, political, and economic expansion." By "international system," Gilpin means the distribution of power, the hierarchy of prestige, and rights and rules that govern or at least influence the interactions among states." See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 10, 27-34. For Schweller's discussion on revisionism, see Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 72–107, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539149.

[46] Although one could argue that strong alignment of security interests might encourage a revisionist policy in a junior ally, correlation between the two variables discussed so far should not be a concern because empirically most U.S. allies that shared security interests with Washington did not pursue revisionist goals.

## Shift in the Local Balance of Power (Adversary with Growing Capabilities)

This variable, another intervening one, refers to the trend in the local balance of power facing an ally – i.e. whether or not a regional adversary's power grows faster than an ally's. A shift in the local balance of power matters primarily when an ally's security interests are not aligned with the patron's. Allies enjoying strong alignment of security interests need not worry about their adversary's capabilities relative to their own, as a patron's capabilities – much greater than their adversaries' – should largely shield them. With weak alignment of security interests, however, the local balance of power becomes a real concern, as allies may potentially be on their own. To prepare for that eventuality, allies may beef up their capability buildups to establish an independent deterrent, which is a collection of military capabilities that would make the expected costs of military attack unacceptably high for the adversary, even if a patron fails to render military support. The amount of such capabilities depends on the adversary's capabilities, whether nuclear or conventional.[47] However, attempts to build an independent deterrent make sense only if the local balance of power is stable or shifting in their own favor. Otherwise, weak allies facing an unfavorable balance of power may focus on coordination with a patron to improve the chance of getting emergency assistance, since their capability build-up may be a drop in a backet and ineffective in changing the local balance of power.

## Causal Pathways

How do these three determinants lead to the four different types of alliance behavior? The causal pathways should begin with the alignment of security interests (shared adversary), and a

[47] Given the U.S. government's strong policy preferences for nonproliferation, most of the *Autonomous Powerbuilder* allies may be better off by seeking a conventional deterrent in order to stay under the U.S. nuclear umbrella as long as they can do so.

combination of it with one of the two intervening variables leads to the four different types (see **Figure 1.** below for an overview of the causal pathways).

**When Patron Sees Ally's Enemy As Its Own**

If their patron sees allies' enemy as its own, status-quo-oriented allies should be able to assume their patron's willingness to come to their rescue in emergency, so they are likely to not augment military capabilities nor actively seek coordination with a patron. Instead, they are likely to have their patron handle the threat – this is *Cheap-rider* behavior. Proactive coordination may increase the risk of entanglement in a patron's war in regions afar: participating in a patron's military activities could provoke the patron's opponents that the ally does not regard as its own enemy. Those hosting foreign troops on their soil, in particular, may be blackmailed into keeping the visiting forces from conducting operations from their local military bases (e.g. Al Qaeda threats to all states hosting U.S. troops). In fact, the visiting forces can become what I call a "tripwire reversed,"[48] which would *automatically* entangle a host country in a conflict, regardless of their written alliance obligations.[49] Fear of potential automatic entanglement may cause a status-quo ally to be coordinating less with a patron.[50]

[48] Thomas Schelling famously argued in 1966 that US troops stationed in Europe served as a "tripwire" conveying costly signals of American resolve to the Soviets. The argument was explicitly made in Congress that these troops were there not to defend against a superior Soviet army but to leave the Soviets in no doubt that the United States would be automatically involved in the event of any attack on Europe. See Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Revised edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 47.

[49] I use the term "entangle" to distinguish it from "entrap," the latter of which strictly means requiring a partner to participate in a war because of its alliance commitment even though none of its own security interests are at stake. Entrapment happens when a state, due to its broad and unambiguous alliance commitment similar to the 1939 German-Italy Pact of Steel, inadvertently gets dragged into a war where its own interests are not at stake. By contrast, entanglement happens when a state gets embroiled in a war due to physical connections through the presence of troops and facilities, regardless of alliance commitments. For more discussions on the differences between entrapment and entanglement, see Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States."

[50] Incentives to reduce the risk of automatic entanglement through neutral or independent foreign policy may be particularly strong when the junior partner is a non-nuclear state in an alliance relationship with a nuclear-armed senior partner. Nuclear weapons stocked or deployed locally make the costs of getting entangled in the senior partner's war prohibitively expensive, and a number of U.S. allies have refused to host U.S. nuclear weapons for that reason. For example, during the cold war an extensive global chain of nuclear installations and bases spanned hundreds of sites in

Revisionist allies should take a different approach, however. First of all, they need to maintain sufficient military capabilities to execute revisionist missions. Despite shared security interests with their patron, they could not entirely outsource their mission to a patron; rarely do revisionist allies get full endorsements or unqualified promises of operational support from their patron, given the latter's general averseness to getting bogged down in local armed conflicts. Due to this uncertainty regarding a patron's future operational support, revisionist allies should keep their own military capabilities up-to-date and continue their proactive coordination efforts to please a patron. Hence, the *Skillful Collaborator* behavior.

A shift in the local balance of power should have limited impacts on allied behavior, given that allies can count on their patron's capabilities which are much greater than their local adversaries. One caveat is that the local balance of power may induce some adjustments up and down in allies' capability buildup, in coordination, or both. Faced with an unfavorable shift in the local balance of power, a revisionist ally may want to be an even more ardent Skillful Collaborator, making more efforts on all fronts than they normally would, while a status-quo ally may seek more coordination with its patron to feel protected.

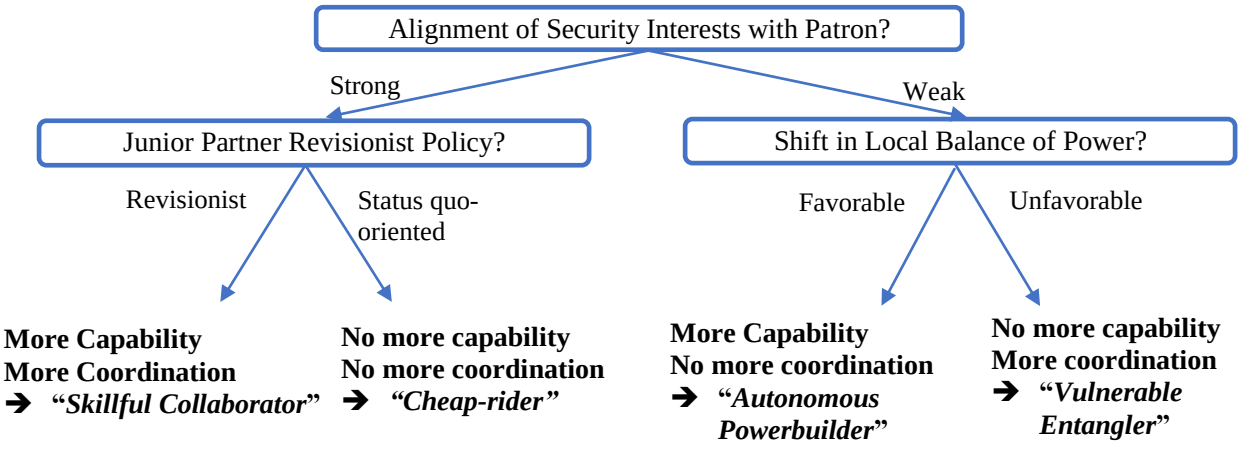
**When Patron Does Not See Ally's Enemy As Its Own**

If their enemy is not regarded as such by their patron, junior allies must do something to increase security and ensure their survival. They may expeditiously augment their own capabilities at utmost speed. For this approach to be successful, their expected capability growth rate needs to be faster than their adversary's efforts. This approach would not be realistic, however, when faced with rapidly growing threats – in such cases, they may somehow try to compel stronger

dozens of overseas host countries, while several base hosts are known to have demanded that the United States not introduce nuclear weapons onto its bases within their territories.

commitments by a patron through more alliance coordination. A key factor that determines which option to choose is a trend in the local balance of power.

***Figure 1. Causal Pathways to the Four Different Types of Behavior***




If facing a favorable local balance of power – either stable or shifting in its own favor – allies should be confident in their ability to acquire an independent deterrent shortly. But doing so can leave little financial and human resources left for diligent coordination efforts – i.e., to send troops to fight a patron's opponents or purchase weapons exclusively from a patron's defense industry when better deals may be available elsewhere. Moreover, their divergent security interests would likely cause some distrust between the partners, making proactive coordination efforts unpalatable to their domestic constituents. Hence, *Autonomous Powerbuilder* behavior.

A revisionist policy should not fundamentally alter their behavior: when partner security interests are not aligned, revisionist allies would have to do even more of the efforts that their status-quo counterparts under the same conditions would make – acquiring more capabilities toward an independent deterrent at utmost speed and avoiding the kind of alliance coordination that would divert resources away from their revisionist plan.

However, if facing an unfavorable trend in the local balance of power – i.e., the balance is shifting in the adversary's favor, their defense build-up efforts are unlikely to produce a net

increase in relative capabilities due to a classic security dilemma: an increase in one's capabilities would be negated by a greater increase in the adversary's. Large military expenditures would only cause an endless arms race but never allow them to achieve an independent deterrent. But to secure themselves, allies should do whatever it takes to increase the chance of getting help from a patron, and thus should act proactively on the coordination front. Hence, *Vulnerable Entanglers*. A revisionist policy reinforces reasons for more proactive coordination with their patron but should not fundamentally alter their behavior, when allies are facing an unfavorable shift in the local balance of power.

The Vulnerable Entangler option sounds like a gamble given the circumstances of weakly aligned security interests discussed above. Why could rational junior allies, while neither building capabilities nor sharing the adversary with their patron, count on a patron's military intervention, especially when they face an unfavorable local balance of power? I argue that this risky option would require allies to make extra efforts to tether themselves to a patron. Some of the measures can certainly be taken by all types of allies, but Vulnerable Entangler allies often employ them most effectively.

First of all, they may become the goose laying the golden egg by developing advanced technologies or by collecting crucial intelligence that no other country could produce. For example, Taiwan has been successfully becoming the technological goose that lays what can be called a "Techno-tripwire," as the United States has been growing more dependent on the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), which alone was responsible in 2020 for 92% of the world production of the most advanced chips used in the latest iPhones, supercomputers and automotive AIs.[51] In an interview with Reuters in 2021, Taiwan's Minister of Economy, Wang

[51] TSMC accounted for 24 % of the world's overall semiconductor output in 2020. See "Tech Inside TSMC, the Taiwanese chipmaking giant that's building a new plant in Phoenix," the CNBC news, 16 October 2021, https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/16/tsmc-taiwanese-chipmaker-ramping-production-to-end-chip-shortage.html.

Mei-hua, stated that its chip sector's importance was not just about Taiwan's economic security but also connected to its national security.[52]

Second, allies can try to increase a patron's domestic costs of reneging on prior promises by appealing to a patron's domestic constituents – effort exemplified by the China Lobby during the early days of the Cold War. The American China Policy Association under the leadership of a wealthy businessman in NY Alfred Kohlberg published a tremendous volume of literature to exert pressure for greater American aid to the Nationalist government in China.[53] Another notable driver of the China Lobby was former Congresswoman Clare Boothe Luce, wife of Henry R. Luce, the owner and publisher of popular American magazines such as *Time, Life* and *Fortune*.[54] The Israel lobby, although Jerusalem is not a Vulnerable Entangler most of the time, has also been successfully shaping U.S. public discourse to ensure that Israel is portrayed favorably, thanks largely to abundant resources and expertise within major Jewish organizations.[55] They exert significant influence on the policy-making process in Washington, pressuring the administration in power to appoint pro-Israel individuals for key positions, providing friendly congressional candidates with generous campaign contributions, and guiding campaign donors to the opponents of candidates who are seen as hostile to Israel.[56]

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[52] See "Taiwan Chip Industry Emerges as Battlefront in U.S.-China Showdown," Reuters, 27 December 2021.
[53] Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics*, Reprint. edition (New York: Octagon Books, 1974), 27–55. Kohlberg also made frequent contributions to a periodical, *The China Monthly*, to criticize what he saw as pro-Communist activities in American foreign policy.
[54] Koen, 51. 87. Clare Luce served as president of ACPA in 1948 and helped insert the views of ACPA members into the Congressional Record. See Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 2nd sess., Vol. 92 (Appendix), Pt. 12 (July 26, 1946).
[55] Jewish organizations such as AIPAC (American Israel Public affairs Committee) are often characterized by "large memberships, well-trained professional staffs, adequately financed social, welfare and political programs, specialized working groups for particular problems and elaborate internal communication networks." See Robert H. Trice, "Domestic Interest Groups and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in *Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy:*, ed. Abdul Aziz Said (Praeger, 1981), 125–26.
[56] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 1st edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), chap. 5.

Third, they could strengthen their bilateral ties to other allies of their patron to signal that a failure to help them out would affect the level of trust in the patron's more important allies in the same region. For example, if Japan assists Taiwan militarily in case of emergency, it would almost inevitably drag U.S. forces in Japan into the fighting against Beijing. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen is nurturing closer ties with conservative political leaders in Japan, which Taipei sees as a more important ally of the United States than itself.[57] Central to the Taiwan Lobby in Tokyo is Kim Bi-Ling, journalist and former policy advisor to the Taiwanese president Chen Shui-bian. She has close personal relationships with prominent members of Japan's largest ultranationalist far-right organization, Nippon Kaigi, including the late former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, who argued in November 2021 that "A Taiwan emergency is a Japanese emergency, and therefore an emergency for the Japan-U.S. alliance."[58]

Similarly, Baltic states, Vulnerable Entanglers in Europe, are deepening their military relationships with the U.K. and France. For example, Estonia with an active-duty force as small as 7,200 troops is clever enough to have neither combat aircraft nor airborne air defense capability of its own.[59] Instead, it hosts thousands of foreign troops largely from the U.K. in addition to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) and Enhanced Air Policing (eAP) Mission whereby more powerful NATO allies deploy their top-notch jets in six-month intervals.[60] Estonia also hosted

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[57] "President Tsai pledges to deepen partnership with Japan, US to strengthen resilience," Taiwan Today, 1 November 2022.

[58] Abe spoke virtually at a conference organized by Taiwanese think tank the Institute for National Policy Research on December 1, 2021. His remarks connecting Taiwan to Japan's security is surprising for his country that, until recently, often dragged its feet in assuming military responsibilities for areas outside its territory. See "Former PM Abe says Japan, U.S. could not stand by if China attacked Taiwan," Reuters, November 30, 2021.

[59] International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2022* and NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries (2014-2022)*, June 27, 2022. Estonia has 17,500 armed forces reserves. Lithuania has the largest military of the three Baltic states, with 23,000 total active duty personnel and 7,100 reserves.

[60] U.K. armed forces in Estonia are either fulfilling NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission or visiting on a bilateral basis. As part of the eFP mission, about 900 British personnel rotate on a continuous basis alongside Danish and French troops. There was a temporal surge in British troops by a thousand after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in spring 2022, but the U.K. is expected to halve its troop size in Estonia by the end of the year 2022. See "On NATO's vulnerable eastern edge, Baltic nations face high stakes in Ukraine crisis," 20 March 2022, The Washington Post. Also

French armed forces conducting a surprise military exercise as an act of "strategic solidarity."[61] These visiting forces based on bilateral arrangements provide Estonia with a tool to signal that a U.S. failure to rescue Baltic states could mean a devastating blow not just to the NATO but to the trust of the British and the French in their transatlantic relationships.

Finally, allies with advanced nuclear technologies can threaten to acquire nuclear weapons if their patron fails to sufficiently reassure them or defend them in emergency. When a patron pursues nuclear nonproliferation, this ironically gives its allies an incentive to pursue nuclear technologies and use them as a bargaining leverage. A senior Japanese defense official, Takuya Kubo, noted in his February 1971 memo, that "when Japan acquired enough latent capabilities to develop substantial nuclear forces at any time (as Japan already has in fact), the United States, for fear of nuclear proliferation and its destabilizing impacts on international relations, will even more strongly desire to maintain the U.S.-Japan security treaty with nuclear extended deterrence."[62] Israel's opaque nuclear posture also helps augment its bargaining power vis-à-vis its proliferation-averse American patron.[63] During the 1973 Yom Kippur War when the possibility of an Israeli defeat grew alarmingly possible, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan put Jericho missiles – Israel's nuclear delivery vehicles – on high alert with their hatches open such that they would be easily detected by U.S. imagery intelligence.[64] This is believed to be Israel's deliberate attempt to signal that it was contemplating breaking out its nuclear capabilities as a mechanism to jolt Washington into action on Israel's behalf.[65] Even today, Jerusalem at times threatens a unilateral military action

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see "Estonia's PM says country would be 'wiped from map' under existing NATO plans," Financial Times, 22 June 2022. For the U.K.'s roles in Estonia, see the U.K. Army's website: https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/baltics/.
[61] See "French paratroopers conduct military drill in Estonia," AP News, 22 June 2022.
[62] Takuya Kubo, "Boueiryoku Seibi no Kangaekata [A Point of View regarding Japan's Defense Capabilities]," World and Japan Database, University of Tokyo Institute of Oriental Culture, February 20, 1971.
[63] Vipin Narang calls this approach Israel's Catalytic Nuclear Posture. Vipin Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), chap. 7.
[64] Avner Cohen, "The Last Nuclear Moment," The New York Times, 6 October 2003.
[65] Avner Cohen, *The Worst-Kept Secret: Israel's Bargain with the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 80.

against Iran and Syria to exploit a U.S. fear of entrapment and get U.S. policy toward the Middle East more aligned with their security interests.[66] Given its effective lobbying in Washington, its nuclear weapons in the basement may no longer be central to their alliance manipulative tools. Nevertheless, U.S. fear of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East largely favors Israeli attempts to get U.S. policymakers attentive to their security interests.

## Implications for Patron's Alliance Management

What could patrons do to minimize the risks of entrapment and nuclear proliferation associated with junior allies' behavior? A patron tends to face high entrapment risks when dealing with Vulnerable Entanglers, who, without augmenting capabilities, focus on coordination efforts in order to be recognized as loyal partners. Other things being equal, this behavior most likely arises when the patron is unwilling to fight an ally's enemy by force while the local balance of power is shifting in the adversary's favor. This situation involves high entrapment risks both due to weak allied capabilities and patron commitments perceived to be weak by the adversary, a combination of which creates a window of vulnerability to an aggression. The patron might have no choice but to help, lest disastrous consequences damage trust in its more important allies.

*Skillful Collaborators* with revisionist goals may also raise entrapment risks due to their high propensity for the use of force, but they should cause less of concerns: a combination of shared security interests with capable and coordinating allies means less of entrapment risks for a patron compared to dealing with incapable *Vulnerable Entanglers*.

[66] For examples of how Israel uses a threat of military actions as an instrument of manipulative bargaining vis-à-vis the United States, see Daniel Sobelman, "Restraining an Ally: Israel, the United States, and Iran's Nuclear Program, 2011–2012," *Texas National Security Review* 1, no. 4 (2018): 10–38, https://doi.org/10.15781/T23T9DS99.

In dealing with *Vulnerable Entanglers*, the patron has three options to fend off entrapment: 1) it could withdraw alliance commitments completely; 2) it could take a more confrontational posture toward the ally's enemy in order to encourage *Skillful Collaborator* or *Cheap-rider* behavior instead; 3) it could manipulate the local balance of power to shift in the ally's favor through arms transfers or economic assistance. Abrogating an alliance contract typically takes legal processes extending over six to twelve months, in which period a desperate ally may engineer a crisis in order to compel emergency assistance. Given the local balance of power shifting in favor of the adversary, the ally may even precipitate a war, preferring it to erupt before the balance of power further worsens.

For this reason, threats of abandonment as an instrument to discipline *Cheap-rider* allies, as Donald Trump recently used them, is a risky business. With Cheap-riders' tendency to be dependent and keep their military budgets small, sudden threats of abandonment may lead them to shift to *Vulnerable Entangler* behavior if their local balance of power is unfavorable. It would therefore be wise to manage relations with *Cheap-riders* facing growing security threats cautiously and patiently. This is what I call "a *composite alliance security dilemma*," which the senior partner must grapple with when it plays both alliance and adversary games simultaneously. What a patron typically finds best to manage a difficult ally – by threats of abandonment – is in fact incompatible with its best strategy in deterring the adversary – by strong alliance commitments.[67] Threats of abandonment can be detrimental to the alliance's ability to deter an adversary, since they can create a window of opportunity for the adversary to make provocations. By distancing itself from an ally

[67] This argument is built upon Glenn H. Snyder's concept of "composite security dilemma." Snyder argues that the dilemma is not just whether to support or restrain the ally, but whether to support the ally or to collaborate with the noninvolved state on the opposite side in restraining both protagonists. See Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics."

by threats of abandonment, the patron may face even higher entrapment risks – which is the *opposite* of Glenn Snyder's alliance security dilemma hypothesis.[68]

The second option for a patron – taking a more confrontational posture toward the ally's enemy – is safer, although doing so credibly and effectively is not an easy task, because the patron's commitment to fighting may ring hallow if it is not in sync with more fundamental strategic factors including the patron's interests in the adversary's technological skills and market values. If these remain the same, a superficial change in the diplomatic façade toward the adversary would hardly change perceived commitments either by an ally or an adversary.

The third option –arms transfers or economic assistance to manipulate the local balance of power – may help encourage *Autonomous Powerbuilder* behavior in the long run, and this would be ideal if the patron intends to bring the alliance to an end sometime in the future. However, this option runs greater risks of horizontal nuclear proliferation in junior allies. The Theory predicts highest nuclear proliferation risks among *Autonomous Powerbuilders* for the following reason. *Skillful Collaborators* and *Cheap-riders* are unlikely to develop nuclear weapons as a security measure if the alignment of security interests with a patron is expected to remain intact, as they could ultimately count on a patron's strategic or tactical nuclear weapons. *Vulnerable Entanglers*, on the other hand, would find it difficult to acquire indigenous nuclear weapons safely, as they often face adverse security environments discussed above. Nuclear weapons do not always make every state more secure: once a state's intent on nuclear breakout is made public, it goes through a dangerous transition phase – what Joseph Nye Jr. calls a valley of nuclear vulnerability[69] – where it faces a higher risk of adversary counterproliferation attacks or of preventive war aimed at

[68] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 329–30.
[69] Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Opinion: After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we need to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation efforts - The Globe and Mail," The Globe and Mail, 8 July 2022, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-after-russias-invasion-of-the-ukraine-we-need-to-strengthen-nuclear/.

resolving security disputes before it is too late[70]; even after a state successfully conducted the first nuclear test, a small nuclear arsenal without survivable delivery systems such as submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), Transporter-erector-launchers or TELs, faces acute crisis instability problems – a use-it-or-lose-it dilemma. For these reasons, it would be exceedingly difficult for *Vulnerable Entanglers* to successfully acquire an operational nuclear deterrent. *Autonomous Powerbuilder* allies, by contrast, have a better chance of getting indigenous nuclear weapons because, as they are likely to be facing a favorable local balance of power, their traversing across that valley of nuclear vulnerability runs relatively smaller risks of counterproliferation attacks or of preventive war.

When the United States considers shedding its legacy Cold-War alliance commitments, the safest places to start retrenching, from the standpoint of minimizing entrapment risks, are regions where U.S. allies have already developed an independent deterrent. Examples of such allies are those with nuclear weapons or those having achieved local air superiority such as Israel, Turkey and nuclear-armed NATO allies. There is certainly a tradeoff between flexible alliance management and successful nuclear nonproliferation policy. General U.S. retrenchment as Donald Trump advocated at least rhetorically, as opposed to a region-specific retrenchment, may signal weakened overall commitments to all allies and potentially drive some of *Skillful Collaborator* and *Cheap-rider* allies to adopt an *Autonomous Powerbuilder* posture and acquire nuclear weapons.

## IV. Scope Conditions and Limitations

[70] Alexandre Debs and Nuno Monteiro also have extensive discussions on the risk of counterproliferation attacks. See Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, *Nuclear Politics: The Strategic Causes of Proliferation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chap. 2.

The argument laid out above – the Theory of Asymmetric Alliances – has limited explanatory power under three different circumstances. The first is when there are significant ideational or ideological factors influencing a state's foreign policy. For example, the Theory frequently mis-predicts members of the British Commonwealth including the U.K., Australia, and Canada. These are arguably status-quo powers in relatively stable geopolitical environments, so they should be either Cheap-riders or an Autonomous Powerbuilders, depending on the degree to which their security interests are aligned with the United States. And yet, they have a track record of acting as Skillful Collaborators (the U.K.) or Vulnerable Entanglers with high levels of coordination with Washington. With the notable exception of the Vietnam War, Britain has joined virtually every single U.S.-led coalition since World War II. While there are certainly competing explanations for what appears to be a special U.S.-U.K. relationship, one of the most prominent is shared identities built on their language, culture, and people-to-people exchanges.[71] Similar challenges arise with the behavior of the People's Republic of China toward the Soviet Union in the 1950s. The Theory predicts Beijing to be an Autonomous Powerbuilder from the onset of the alliance, because Stalin was very cautious to avoid direct military confrontation with the United States, which indicates weak alignment of security interests. [72] And yet, Mao Zedong acted like a Skillful Collaborator by sending troops to Korea in 1950 to live up to Stalin's expectations, and this "coordination" should be understood in the context of a broader ideological communist movement, of which Mao hoped to lead.[73]

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[71] For more on hypotheses for the causes of UK-US close relationships, see David Sanders and David Houghton, *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy Since 1945*, 2nd edition (London: Springer, 2017), chap. 6. Also see Schuyler Foerster and Ray Raymond, "The US-UK 'Special Relationship' at a Critical Crossroads," *Atlantic Council*, 2017, 16.

[72] The Chinese Communist Party's Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi negotiated with Stalin on Mao's behalf and was left with the impression that Stalin was carefully avoiding a direct military showdown with U.S. forces. See Niu Jun, "The Origin of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*, ed. Odd Arne Westad, First Edition (Washington, D.C.: Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ Press, 1998), 70-71.

[73] Mainland Chinese historians generally argue that Mao had very little room for maneuver in this situation to voice objections to the *fait accompli* – Stalin's approval – presented by the Koreans. But leading China experts Shen Zhihua

Second, the Theory should not work well when the origins of their alliances trace back to their colonial relationships such as those between France and its African partners like Chad, Congo, and Gabon. Despite their *de jure* independent status, these allies often hire retired army officers from a patron's state as military advisors and thus lack autonomy.

The last condition that makes the Theory frail is when states are members of a multilateral organization, such as NATO, whose group dynamics creates a couple of confounders. First, members of a large multilateral alliance face strong free-riding incentives based on the logic of collective action, although they also act under social conformity pressures in a medium-sized group.[74] For these reasons, members of the NATO would likely behave differently, were they in individual bilateral alliances with the United States, and thus they may be somewhat mis-predicted by the Theory. Second, allies in a multilateral organization deal with the state with the largest military power (e.g. the United States) while keeping the options of turning to other great powers (e.g. the U.K., France, Germany) for help. For similar reasons, the Theory tends to perform poorly when allies have bilateral alliances both with a great power and a regional major power simultaneously (e.g. North Korea in alliance with Beijing and Moscow during the Cold War).

## External Validity

To what extent does this Theory explain state behavior in broader cooperative security relationships that do not involve formal treaties or other forms of security commitments – such as

and Yafeng Xia argue, on the contrary, that Mao was quite eager to send Chinese troops to Korea as he aspired to play a leadership role in a communist revolution in Asia. See Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, *A Misunderstood Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-Sung, and Sino–North Korean Relations, 1949–1976* (Columbia University Press, 2018), 33.Also see Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii, f. 45, op.1, d.347, 41-45, 46-49, cited in Zhihua Shen, "China and the Dispatch of the Soviet Air Force: The Formation of the Chinese–Soviet–Korean Alliance in the Early Stage of the Korean War," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 2 (April 1, 2010): 222, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402391003590291.

[74] Olson and Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances."

strategic partnerships (e.g. Japan-Australia, China-Russia), *ad hoc* coalitions of like-minded states (e.g. the 1991 Gulf War coalition, the "Coalition of the Willing" during the 2003 Iraq War, the global anti-terror coalition in the 2000s), and pluralistic security communities (e.g. ASEAN)?[75] The existing arguments in the alliance literature generally claim broad applicability beyond formal alliances. Glenn Snyder notes that his discussion "must not be limited to formal alliances […] What we really want to understand is the broader phenomenon of 'alignment' of which explicit alliance is merely a subset."[76] Stephen Walt defines alliance as "a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states."[77] For Patricia Weitsman, alliances are "bilateral or multilateral agreements to provide some element of security to the signatories."[78] The Theory of Asymmetric Alliances should certainly travel beyond the boundaries of explicit alliances for mutual defense. However, the definitions by Walt or by Weitsman are so broad as to encompass just about any interstate security arrangement and are clearly much greater than my scope. Whatever the security arrangements may be called, the minimum requirement to meet for cases to be included in the scope of this study is that their members need to have peacetime expectations for at least one member's military responsibilities to come to the rescue for others in case of contingency. This is because the central tenet of the Theory involves junior allies' expectations for other members' military assistance that can be decisive for the outcome of war.

Some of the strategic partnerships may meet this requirement. China and Russia declared in February 2022 that they were in an "alliance with no limits" and U.S. officials now see the

[75] For a discussion on a taxonomy of alignment archetypes, see Thomas S. Wilkins, "'Alignment', Not 'Alliance' – the Shifting Paradigm of International Security Cooperation: Toward a Conceptual Taxonomy of Alignment," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (January 2012): 53–76, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210511000209.
[76] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 123. Note that Glenn Snyder defines formal alliances as "formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership." See Snyder, 4.
[77] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 1.
[78] Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, 27.

signal that their relationship is edging toward a true alliance.[79] Japan and Australia in October 2022 agreed to work together to deter "aggression and behavior that undermines international rules and norms" and to "further enhance interoperability between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Australian Defence Force."[80] The two countries are expected to move toward the integration of their security operations with an eye on Taiwan contingencies.[81] Singapore's security relationship with the United States is another example of strategic partnerships. Singapore is known for its long-term deterrence posture of Poison-Shrimp – easy to swallow at first but later causing serious pains for aggressors.[82] The island state's small territory of just 660 $km^2$ often belies two major "poisonous" dents in its strategy. First, its military, the most powerful air force in Southeast Asia, has a significant surge capacity in case of emergency, as it stations a substantial part of its military force abroad – namely in France and the United States. Second, its Sembawang Naval Base implicitly supports U.S. power projection, serving as a hub of regional naval cooperation among U.S. allies and partners.[83] It is unclear, however, if this status-quo island would continue to be a Skillfully Collaborator, if it permanently hosted American forces there.

*Ad hoc* coalitions of like-minded states, such as the one during the 1991 Gulf War, are primarily war-fighting short-term alignments that form after unforeseen threats emerged. Unlike most of peacetime alliances for deterrence, *ad hoc* war-fighting coalitions typically do not involve

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[79] According to remarks by Colin Kahl, Undersecretary of Defense, on November 8, 2022. Although their detailed arrangements are secret, it may well be possible that President Xi offered some sort of reassurance to President Putin since Russia's defeat in Ukraine was certainly not in China's interests. See Chris Buckley and David E. Sanger, "In an Era of Confrontation, Biden and Xi Seek to Set Terms," The New York Times, 12 November 2022.

[80] See "Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation," 22 October 2022, available at https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/documents/2022/_00018.html.

[81] See "Japan and Australia ink 'landmark' security pact to counter China," The Japan Times, 22 October 2022.

[82] See "Singapore's poison-shrimp defence," South China Morning Post, 6 February 2004; Seng Tan, "Mailed Fists and Velvet Gloves: The Relevance of Smart Power to Singapore's Evolving Defence and Foreign Policy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 3 (April 2015): 335, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2014.1002909.

[83] See "Austin Visits U.S. Troops, Civilian Mariners in Singapore," DOD News, 13 June 2022. It has been actively participating in multilateral Rim of the Pacific naval exercises since 2008. See "Singapore Navy's Inaugural Participation In Rim Of The Pacific Exercise," 27 July 2008, National Archives of Singapore, https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/20080727994.pdf.

advance promises made in peacetime by their members to conduct military operations alongside one that came under attack. Thus, state behavior in *ad hoc*, short-lived, wartime coalitions cannot be explained by the Theory.

Finally, pluralistic security community – a concept first proposed by Karl Deutsch and his associates – is a security-community formed by separate governmental units that offer the assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically but will settle their disputes in some other way.[84] While there are certainly significant overlaps between multilateral alliances such as the NATO and pluralistic security communities, only some of such security communities qualify for the universe of cases for the Theory. The ASEAN does not, because no state of the rank of great powers offers defense commitments to other members after the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization dissolved in 1977, although it could evolve into a multilateral defense organization in the future.[85]

To demonstrate the utility of this theoretical framework, the following fifth section presents the U.S.-Republic of China (ROC) alliance as an illustrative case. It does not fit the Theory perfectly, but it is useful since Taiwanese leaders engaged in three different types of alliance behavior in a period of just 26 years between 1953 and 1979. As such, it helps examine whether the three explanatory factors are correlated with different Taiwanese behavior.

[84] Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton University Press, 1957), 6.
[85] For a case study on the ASEAN as a nascent security community, see Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, 1st edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000).

## V. The U.S.-Republic of China Alliance (1953-1979)

The origin of the alliance dates back to November 1953, when the Eisenhower administration formally incorporated Formosa into its Western Pacific defense perimeter. Until it ended in 1979, when the United States severed its diplomatic relations with the ROC, Taipei's behavior both in terms of capability growth and coordination changed, ranging from *Vulnerable Entangler* (the 1950s through 1962) to *Skillful Collaborator* (1962 through 1969) to *Autonomous Powerbuilder* (the 1970s).

Also varied simultaneously are U.S. security interests in East Asia as well as the local balance of power across the Taiwan Straits. Taiwan was a *Vulnerable Entangler* in the period between 1954 and 1962, when it saw signs of American efforts to negotiate with the communists to end the Chinese civil war once and for all, while the balance of power was rapidly shifting in the mainland's favor.

Taiwan's military strength was largely based on, if not confined to, resources provided by the United States.[86] Taiwan's president, Chiang Kai-shek, repeatedly threatened a deterioration of the national morale to ensure that Washington remained attentive to the Taiwan Straits[87]; he deployed such a large number of troops to offshore islands near the coastline as to jeopardize the security of the main island, Formosa[88]; these are the signs that President Chiang did not attempt at

[86]Hsiao-ting Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-Shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 194.
[87] For example, Chiang Kai-shek rebroadcasted to their troops on the Quemoy garrison Secretary Dulles' press conference that denied U.S. commitments to the islands, and claimed that the Dulles speech had caused lowering of morale on Quemoy to such an extent that his troops might collapse. See Morton H. Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History" (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1966), 360–61, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM4900.html.
[88] See comments by Acting Secretary of State, Christian A. Herter, in the Memorandum for the Record, meeting with the President following the 376th meeting of the National Security Council, 14 August 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, China, Volume XIX, p. 54.

a rapid growth of military capabilities; but he was focused on close coordination to be recognized as a loyal ally, offering U.S. forces in the Far East with generous intelligence and reconnaissance assistance throughout the 1950s. An ally not engaging in *Vulnerable Entangler* behavior would have cut the costs of its military personnel to modernize its military equipment. But President Chiang did not care as much if his forces were fully equipped with advanced weapons because he knew his goal of returning to the mainland would not be possible without full-scale offensive U.S. invasion operations against the Communist forces.

Taiwan's behavior shifted from *Vulnerable Entangler* to *Skillful Collaborator* in the mid-1960s, when the United States was fiercely fighting communists in North Vietnam, a close ally of Beijing. Unlike the 1950s, Washington's attitude toward Beijing markedly changed to become more confrontational toward Beijing. Meanwhile, President Chiang promised to start building military capabilities and not attempt to entrap U.S. forces in offensive military operations.[89] On the other hand, he continued to keep diligent coordination with the United States through various contributions to the Vietnam War including transportation service and provision of military training for Vietnamese soldiers.

After President Nixon's overture to Beijing in 1972 – a radical change in U.S. diplomacy that signals that U.S. and Taiwanese security interests were no longer overlapping as much – Taipei became *Autonomous Powerbuilder* and sought an independent nuclear deterrent, as is predicted by the Theory. Unlike in the 1950s, Taipei reacted to weaker alignment of security interests by becoming *Autonomous Powerbuilder* rather than *Vulnerable Entangler*, arguably because the local balance of power was now favorable: the PRC was plagued by enormous upheavals of the Cultural Revolutions as well as militarized border disputes with the Soviet Union.

[89] Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to President Kennedy, 5 September 1963, POF, box 113a, China General, 1963, JFK Library.

In what follows, I will examine how the Taiwanese behavior evolves alongside changing American security interests and the local balance of power.

## (1) The Republic of China As *Vulnerable Entangler* (1954-1962)

The United States was negotiating with Beijing to end the Chinese civil war once and for all in the 1950s, and this left Taipei convinced that the United States would not help with Taipei's goal of retaking the mainland by force. It was not long after a U.S.-Taiwanese security treaty was signed in December 1954 that Washington launched a series of diplomatic demarches to prevent a war across the Taiwan Straits. To start, President Eisenhower under pressures from the U.K. and New Zealand, reneged on his pledge to defend Quemoy on behalf of Taiwan.[90] Second, the United States supported a New Zealand proposal in January 1955 for a U.N. Security Council resolution barring the use of force in the Taiwan Strait.[91] Third, the Eisenhower administration in February and March 1955 sought to assure Beijing through public statements that Washington would not support a Nationalist invasion of the mainland.[92] And finally, the United States initiated regular ambassadorial talks with Beijing in August 1955 to mediate between the two Chinas.[93] Beijing resisted when Washington demanded a Beijing pledge to renounce the use of force in its attempts

[90] "Memorandum of Conversation, January 21, 1955," box 55, Records of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Lot Files, RG 59, National Archives.
[91] "Memorandum of a Conversation (Dulles), the White House, January 19, 1955," FRUS, 1955-1957, China, Volume II, document 17, 43.
[92] On February 10, for example, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Robertson, modified his testimony of the year before and said that he had erred in giving the impression that the administration was thinking of solving the problem on the mainland of China by military attack, and that neither he nor the State Department proposed such a solution. See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, Departments of State and Justice, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies, Appropriations for 1956, Hearings, 84th Congress, 1st session (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), 127-8.
[93] "Telegram from Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson to the Department of State," August 1, 1955, FRUS, 1955-1957, China, Volume III, p. 2.

to reunify China.[94]

These American demarches provoked the deep Nationalist fear that the United States would return to its 1949 policy of disengagement from the Nationalist China as a *quid pro quo* for no use of force in the Taiwan Straits – which would mean the end of the Nationalist dream of returning to the mainland.[95] President Chiang assessed correctly that "the U.S. did not object to the sort of *de facto* recognition of the Chinese Communist regime apparently implied in the protracted talks."[96] The proposals of the two sides as to renunciation of force as revealed in the press releases from Beijing and Washington were disquieting to the ROC Government.

Meanwhile, the local balance across the Taiwan Straits was rapidly shifting in Beijing's favor. Between 1954 and 1962, Taiwan's economic growth rates ranged from 4 to 8 percent.[97] This looked lackluster compared to the PRC's average annual growth rate of 9 percent between 1952 and 1957 based on its official statistics; in the two years of the Great Leap, net domestic product rose by 34 percent in 1958 and 21 percent in 1959; the PRC's official national income statistics may have some upward biases, another, more accepted, estimate by U.S. scholars also gives an average annual growth rate of 8 percent between 1952 and 1959.[98]

Communist military buildups with massive Soviet military and technical assistance further widened a capability gap across the Taiwan Straits. Immediately before the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis, Chinese communists armed with Mig-15 jets had achieved air superiority over the Taiwan Straits and the capability of capturing the offshore islands, provided that they were willing to

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[94] "Telegram from Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson to the Department of State," September 28, 1955, FRUS, 1955-1957, China, Volume III, p. 107.
[95] "Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State," February 1, 1956, FRUS, 1955–1957, China, Volume III, p. 296.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Council for Economic Planning and Development, *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1966*, p.2.
[98] Chu-yuan Cheng, *The Economy of Communist China, 1949–1969* (University of Michigan Press, 1971), 6–8, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.19999.

sustain a large number of casualties.[99] By contrast, the Nationalist Navy was estimated to be capable of lifting one division from Formosa to the offshore islands, but unable to confront Chinese Communist PT boats and submarine forces on their own.[100] Besides, the Nationalist Air Force, only with piston-powered F-47s and P-51s, was significantly inferior to the communist counterpart, according to a CIA estimate.[101]

## Little Effort to Upgrade Defense Capabilities

If measured by numbers, Taiwan's military spending appears high. For example, its defense spending as percentage of GDP ranged from five to eleven percent in the 1950s.[102] There were six million soldiers in Taiwan accounting for 7.6% of the total population during the 1950s.[103] However, its military expenditure was almost entirely financed through U.S. economic and military aids, which amounted to 100.3 million USD in 1957 – more than 7 % of Taiwan's GNP of 1,416 million USD the same year.[104] Besides, most of the military equipment was provided by

[99] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 14.
[100] As of 1958, the Nationalist Navy possessed 4 destroyers, 5 escorts, 7 patrol escorts, 9 mine sweepers, and 110 miscellaneous vessels. By contrast, the Chinese Communist navy had 4 destroyers, 16 submarines, 4 escort vessels, 249 patrol boats, 31 mine sweepers, 53 landing crafts, and 300 surface crafts. See "Special National Intelligence Estimate 100-9-58 ("Probable Developments in the Taiwan Straits Area"), Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum, Memorandum to the Intelligence Advisory Committee, Annex A, "Chinese Communist and Chinese Nationalists Military Strengths and Capabilities in the Taiwan Straits Area," August 22, 1958, cited in Halperin, 5–10.
[101] Halperin, 6. The Nationalist Air Force possessed 450 jet fighters, 1 jet bomber, 9 piston tactical attack planes, 10 land-based ASW planes, 143 piston transports, 167 other piston planes, and 46 other jets. By contrast, the Chinese Communist Air Force had 1785 jet fighters, 275 piston fighters, 450 jet light bombers, 505 piston tactical attack aircraft, 20 land-based ASW planes, 20 piston medium bombers, 260 piston transports, 225 other jets, and 810 other piston airplanes. See "Special National Intelligence Estimate 100-9-58 ("Probable Developments in the Taiwan Straits Area"), Opt. cit.
[102] Eric S. Lin, Yi-Hua Wu, and Ta-Sheng Chou, "Country Survey: Defense Policy and Military Spending in Taiwan, 1952–2009," *Defence and Peace Economics* 23, no. 4 (August 1, 2012): 349, https://doi.org/10.1080/10242694.2011.626974.
[103] Min-Hua Chiang, "The U.S. Aid and Taiwan's Post-War Economic Development, 1951-1965," *African and Asian Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (May 9, 2014): 111, https://doi.org/10.1163/15692108-12341287.
[104] Neil H. Jacoby, "Evaluation of U.S. Economic Aid To Free China, 1951-1965" (Bureau for the Far East, Department of State Agency for International Development, 1966), tbl. IV–1, VII–1. The U.S. aid obligation of 132 million USD in 1955 was more than 10 % of Taiwan's GNP of 1,273 million USD the same year. But the aid amount that arrived in 1955 was only 94.5 million USD, 7.4 percent of Taiwan's GNP.

the United States for free.[105]

These numbers regarding the cross-strait military balance already suggest Taipei was incapable of defending itself on its own. But its offensive posture further exacerbated Taiwan's dependency and risked its collapse. Chiang Kai-shek deployed massive troops to offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu to such an extent that he put the mainland Formosa at higher risk. Based on these islands, Nationalist troops and their guerrilla allies were harassing cargoes destined for major ports on the continent and mounting raids against the mainland – activities that the PRC referred to as a justification for shelling during the Taiwan Crisis of 1954-55.[106] In August 1954 – in the middle of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis – the Taiwanese placed 58,000 troops on Quemoy and 15,000 troops on Matsu, and began constructing defensive structures on Quemoy.[107] From July 1955 through October 1956, Chiang was steadily deploying more of his best troops to the offshore islands, and by mid-1956 they totaled about 100,000 men.[108] In August 1958, the Taiwanese Army consisted of 450,000 men, of whom 320,000 were of combat capacity; approximately one-third of whom were on the offshore islands, with 86,000 on Quemoy and 23,000 on the Matsu group.[109]

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had assessed in 1955 that the deployment of an additional Taiwanese division to Quemoy would not substantially increase the defensibility of Quemoy and

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[105] Lin, *Accidental State*, 194.
[106] The Chinese Communists also claimed that the cause of the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis was the build-up of Chinese nationalist troops on Quemoy, although they also had other, more important motivations. See Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 8.
[107] Tucker, "John Foster Dulles and the Taiwan Roots of the 'Two Chinas' Policy," 252–53.
[108] "Letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Davis) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), August 3, 1955," FRUS, 1955-57, China, Vol. III, Document 7, 13; "Telegram from the Chargé in the Republic of China (Cochran) to the Department of State, June 28, 1955," FRUS, 1955-1957, China, Volume II, Document 279, 616.
[109] See "Special National Intelligence Estimate 100-9-58 ("Probable Developments in the Taiwan Straits Area"), Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum, Memorandum to the Intelligence Advisory Committee, Annex A, "Chinese Communist and Chinese Nationalists Military Strengths and Capabilities in the Taiwan Straits Area," August 22, 1958, cited in Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 6.

that the offshore islands could not be held without American forces' interventions anyway.[110] At this point, it was unclear, at least from an operational standpoint, why the offshore islands needed as many as one third of Nationalist troops: Quemoy was not an operational base for significant Taiwanese activities against the PRC, and there had been little action around those islands, from either side of the belligerents, since the evacuation of the Tachens Islands in February 1955.[111] No overflights were ever staged from the offshore islands.[112] Taipei certainly did use the offshore islands in blockading the port of Xiamen, but these naval operations could be carried out easily from bases on Formosa.[113]

U.S. leaders were therefore convinced that these troop deployments were efforts by the Nationalists to provoke a Communist attack killing a large number of Taiwanese troops – a condition that would inevitably pose an existential threat to the ROC and therefore would trigger a U.S. legal obligation under Article 5 to render assistance.[114] Indeed, this was not just one incident: President Chiang frequently sought to engineer an escalation and then convinced U.S. leaders to commit. According to President Eisenhower's autobiography, Chiang warned him that unless Nationalist forces were allowed to take an offensive action on an extensive scale, Quemoy, along with one-third of the ROC's army, would be lost.[115] A White House meeting minute on August 29, 1958, reads:

"Chiang Kai-shek, despite our advice, had put such a large proportion of his

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[110] "Letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Davis) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), August 3, 1955," FRUS, 1955-57, China, Vol. III, Document 7, p. 13.
[111] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 8.
[112] Small planes sometimes flied in close for observation from a single airfield on Quemoy, but they never penetrated over the mainland. There was no airfield on the Matsu islands.
[113] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 8.
[114] JCS 2118/90, May 7, 1956, CCS 381 Formosa (11-8-48), Sec 32, cited in Condit, JCS and National Policy, 1955-1956, 208. Also see John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia*, 1 edition (Armonk, N.Y: Routledge, 1997), 135.
[115] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years 1956-61. Waging Peace.*, Book Club Edition. edition (Heinemann, 1965), 298–300.

> strength on the offshore islands and now came "whining" to us……. Admiral Burke and Governor Herter both indicated that Chiang was seeking to find out if we were really behind him. The President remarked that in effect he had in fact made his soldiers hostages on those islands. Admiral Burke said that this had been done deliberately and in fact made Taiwan virtually a hostage. Mr. Quarles added that Chiang's policy in this respect was designed to put leverage on us."[116]

Not only did President Chiang make his forces vulnerable to Chinese attacks, he repeatedly threatened the collapse of his forces' morale in case the U.S. government hinted its reneging the security commitments. During the 1958 crisis, for example, Taipei rebroadcasted Secretary Dulles's press conference – which the Taiwanese claimed was softening U.S. commitments to the islands and therefore demoralizing to the troops on Quemoy.[117]

## Proactive Coordination Efforts

Meanwhile, President Chiang in the early 1950s was always ready to contribute Taiwanese troops wherever needed to assist U.S. military operations against communist forces. A few years before signing a security treaty, the Taiwanese volunteered to send 33,000 troops and 20 air transports of the type C-46 to Korea in June 1950.[118] The following year, they contributed as many as 100,000 troops to U.S. operations in Korea under the cover of a commercial company, Western Enterprises, to provide logistical support such as overflights, leafletting and radio broadcasts in

[116] "Memorandum of Meeting, Summary of Meeting at the White House on the Taiwan Straits Situation, August 29, 1958," FRUS, 1958-60, China, vol. XIX, 98-99.
[117] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 360–61.
[118] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1950, Korea, Volume VII, 178, "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Freeman)" June 30, 1950.

collaboration with the CIA.[119] Although rejected by Washington in 1952, Chiang Kai-shek proposed a large-scale amphibious assault on the mainland, a coastal blockade of China, and bombing of Chinese facilities with U.S. planes in 1952.[120] Besides, Chiang adamantly objected a truce agreement with North Korea in 1953, and would have continued to provide operational support on the Korean Peninsula, had the Korean War not ended then.

After the security treaty entered into effect, the Taiwanese continued to provide troops to participate various U.S.-led anti-communist missions. For example, Taiwanese troops were assisting Tibetan refugees in Northern India in collaboration with the CIA[121]; in Laos, Nationalist troops were mobilized alongside U.S. forces to respond to communist breaches of a ceasefire while peace negotiations were underway in Geneva in 1954.[122] Finally, virtually all the Taiwanese military equipment was of American origin and had been supplied under the American Military Assistance Program. However, the U.S. share in the sources of arms imports in Taiwan may not be a good measurement for coordination, considering Taipei's political isolation from the rest of the world.[123]

In short, a combination of growing communist threats and concerns about U.S. policy not aligned with Taiwan's security goals drove its *Vulnerable Entangler* behavior during the 1950s, but U.S. deeper involvement in Vietnam steered Taiwan toward a different direction in the 1960s.

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[119] 793.5/8-3051 Memorandum of Conversation between General William C. Chase and Robert W. Barnett, box 4219, RG59, National Archives. Also see Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain Friendships*, First Printing edition (New York : Toronto : New York: Twayne Pub, 1994), 64.
[120] "Charge in Republic of China (Jones) to the Department of State, 22 July 1952," FRUS, 1952-1954, China and Japan, Volume XIV, 76-77.
[121] Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 267.
[122] Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992*, 44–45.
[123] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," 7–8.

## (2) The Republic of China As *Skillful Collaborator* (1963 – 1969)

In September 1963, Chiang sent a letter to President Kennedy and asserted that "we shall so conduct ourselves as to make it unnecessary for American armed forces to be involved" in Nationalists' invasion operations.[124] Consistent with his letter, Chiang Kai-shek, after 1963, ceased to deploy large troops on the offshore islands and started modernizing his military capabilities to be less dependent on the United States for security. At the same time, he continued both contributing troops to U.S. operations in Vietnam and importing weapons exclusively from the U.S. defense industry. In the theoretical framework I propose, this represents a shift from *Vulnerable Entangler* to *Skillful Collaborator*. As will be discussed below, two major factors are likely to be driving this change: shared security interests and a favorable local balance of power.

The local balance of power was no longer rapidly shifting in Beijing's favor due to a couple of events that plagued the mainland: first, the Sino-Soviet Split in the early 1960s slowed down the Communist military modernization; second, Mao Zedong's failed agricultural collectivization movements as well as a series of natural disasters combined to cause a massive starvation in 1961 and 1962. These fortuitous developments opened up a potential opportunity for Taiwan to carry out an invasion without meeting strong PRC resistance or Soviet military interventions.[125] By late 1963, a Nationalist propaganda campaign had begun to stress that time was now on the Nationalist side and that the Taiwanese should bide their time.[126]

Second, the Taiwanese perceived more of their security interests to be overlapping with the United States, as Washington gradually increased its involvement in Vietnam to fight North

[124] Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to JFK, 5 September 1963, POF, box 113a, China General, 1963, JFK Library.
[125] Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992*, 95–96.
[126] Roger Hilsman, *To Move A Nation*, First Edition (Doubleday & Company, 1967), 319–20.

Vietnam backed by Chinese Communists and see Beijing as its own adversary. President Kennedy believed that it was necessary to "fight fire with fire" by supporting subversive and guerrilla warfare within Communist countries assisting revolutionary movements in Vietnam and beyond.[127] For Kennedy, the best way to counter Beijing's support for subversion and revolution in South Vietnam would be to destabilize the communist power by supporting comparable anti-communist subversive activities on the mainland – which is exactly the kind of activities that Taiwan was conducting at the time.[128] After Kennedy's death, the Johnson administration doubled down and made it very clear that it would hold Chinese Communists responsible for continued North Vietnamese aggressions in Indochina, and, as a result, Johnson gave a possibility of military collaboration with Nationalist forces in Vietnam serious consideration.[129] The ROC's value as an American ally was further boosted by the utility of Taiwanese territories as a staging area for U.S. attacks on North Vietnam. The U.S. military was operating C-130 transport squadrons, KC-135 tankers, fighter aircraft, and two fast-reaction F-4 nuclear bombers from Taiwanese bases, and established repair and refueling facilities in Taiwan.[130] These changes should lead an ally with a revisionist policy like Taiwan to be *Skillful Collaborator* – i.e. rapidly improving its capabilities while also keeping close coordination.

## Improving Capabilities to Defend Itself

Taiwan's arms inventory quickly grew in the 1960s procuring a series of modern U.S. fighters such as F-86F, F-86D, F-100, F-104, and F-5 aircraft as well as tanks, artillery, warships,

[127] Louise Fitz Simons, *The Kennedy Doctrine* (Random House, 1972), 179–87.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992*, 97.
[130] For more on the importance of Taiwan as a support base for the Vietnam War, see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 207–10.

and antiaircraft missiles.[131] These were more than sufficient to deter the PLA Air Force being still reliant on large numbers of obsolete Soviet designs such as MiG-19.[132] The ROC Air Force also gained a margin of technical superiority over the PRC Air Forces thanks to U.S. military aids.[133]

In terms of finances, it was clear Taiwan was moving toward self-sufficiency rather than deepening its dependency as it was in the 1950s. In 1964, U.S. economic aids amounted to 67 million USD – only 2.8% of Taiwan's GNP of 2,357 million USD.[134] And most of the American aids came to end in 1965, except for agricultural aid programs.[135] Nevertheless, the ROC had high levels of military expenditures ranging from 7.0% to 10% throughout the 1960s.[136]

Another sign of Taiwan no longer being a *Vulnerable Entangler* is that it now halted large-scale troop deployments of escalatory nature that would put its own survival at risk. Although it was conducting artillery bombardment operations around the offshore islands in the early 1960s, live shells were replaced by propaganda brochures. The scale and duration of its operations in the 1960s strongly signaled restraint, with more focus on covert, small-scale activities.[137] Starting in 1962, for example, Chiang Kai-shek was sending small-sized armed units to the continent, first for the purpose of installing "guerrilla bases" in sparsely populated areas in the interior, and then for conducting commando raids against PRC installations along the coast starting in 1963.[138]

## Continued Proactive Coordination Efforts

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[131] Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, 1 edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 141.
[132] Martin Edmonds and Michael Tsai, eds., *Taiwan's Security and Air Power: Taiwan's Defense Against the Air Threat from Mainland China*, 1 edition (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 163.
[133] American support for the development of Nationalist military capabilities was limited by the U.S. desire to deny Taipei the capability to autonomously initiate large-scale offensive operations against the mainland. See Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 66–68.
[134] Jacoby, "Evaluation of U.S. Economic Aid To Free China, 1951-1965," tbl. IV–2, VII–1.
[135] Chiang, "The U.S. Aid and Taiwan's Post-War Economic Development, 1951-1965," 108.
[136] Lin, Wu, and Chou, "Country Survey," 349.
[137] For a list of limited Nationalist offensive operations for the period of 1960-65, see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 107.
[138] Garver, 103–7.

Taiwan maintained its proactive alliance coordination with the American patron from the 1950s, through troop contributions, intelligence sharing, and exclusive weapons purchases from the United States. Taipei made substantial operational contributions to U.S. fighting against North Vietnam.[139] It sent to South Vietnam Nationalist aircraft crews – a detachment based on the 34th. squadron of the ROC Air Force – to fly transport and espionage missions, with some of the teams camouflaged as Nung soldiers – an ethnic minority living along the Vietnam-China border – or given Vietnamese identities.[140] A relatively large contingent from the ROC served in southernmost Vietnam as part of the Sea Swallows unit led by a Catholic priest and supported by American aids.[141] The ROC established special training programs for South Vietnamese troops on its territories.[142] From the mid-1960s, the ROC Air Force's 35th Squadron, composed of CIA-provided U-2 or U-2R aircraft, regularly conducted reconnaissance missions from the Taoyuan Air Base to monitor the PRC's missile and nuclear test sites after the Sino-Soviet split.[143]

The ROC was ready to provide operational support even on a much larger scale. In April 1964, Chiang told Secretary Rusk that he would like to airdrop 5,000 to 10,000 Nationalist guerrillas into China's Yunnan province to encourage an anti-Communist revolution and disrupt Chinese Communist supply lines to their allies and partners in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma.[144] After the PRC's first nuclear test in October 1964, Chiang suggested a joint military

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[139] Stanley R. Larsen and James L. Collins, *Allied Participation in Vietnam. Vietnam Studies.*, First Edition (Washington: Department of the Army, 1975), chap. V.

[140] #315, Hummel, Taipei, 14 September 1965, NSF Country File bx 237-38, f: China Cables, vol. 4, LBJ Library.

[141] "台湾曾秘密参加越战 (Taiwan was secretly engaging in the Vietnam War)" Xinhua News Agency, 16 March 2007. Also see George Kahin, *Intervention* (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor, 1987), 333.

[142] Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992*, 97.

[143] Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 195–96. Such Nationalist U-2 overflights provided the United States with valuable intelligence regarding the reality of the Sino-Soviet split, especially with photos that made clear the abrupt halt of work at PRC nuclear facilities and at missile and nuclear test sites after the departure of Soviet specialists from China.

[144] "Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and Chiang Kai-shek, April 16, 1964," Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, Lot 65 D 330, also available in "Telegram from the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State, April 29, 1964," FRUS, 1964-68, Vol.1, Vietnam, 1964, 247.

action to strike China's nuclear installations as well as the creation of a joint U.S.-Taiwanese defense force.[145] In 1965, he also offered to launch an Operation Great Torch-5, a cross-strait invasion of five southwest Chinese provinces where the Communist control was weakest – Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Yunnan, Kweichow, and Szechwan – to distract Chinese forces away from Vietnam.[146] U.S. leaders eventually declined many of these Taiwanese offers for fear that the ostensible presence of ROC combat troops in South Vietnam might provide a pretext for direct Chinese military interventions.[147] For Dean Rusk, "the issue of Southeast Asia should not get mixed with the enormous issue of the basic Chinese conflict."[148]

Taiwan's substantial improvement in defense capabilities in the 1960s while keeping proactive coordination with the U.S. suggests its shift from *Vulnerable Entangler* to *Skillful Collaborator* in the mid-1960s. This was crystallized in Chiang Kai-shek's remark – a quintessential example of *Skillful Collaborator* when he emphasized that U.S. "suspicions that the ROC seeks more military aid, or seeks to involve the US in its return to the mainland are superficial – what is really important is that we consult more closely at high levels of government on matters of Asian policy and strategy,"[149] and added that "ROC forces are 'available' to support free world interest in Asia on a short notice whenever Americans anticipated the ROC forces might be needed."[150]

In the light of positive developments in American attitudes toward Taiwan in the mid-

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[145] David Albright and Corey Gay, "Taiwan: Nuclear Nightmare Averted," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 54, no. 1 (January 1, 1998): 55, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1998.11456811.
[146] Remark in his meeting with Secretary of Defense McNamara. See "Memorandum of Conversation, September 22, 1965," FRUS, 1964-68, Volume XXX, China, 209-214.
[147] Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation in Vietnam. Vietnam Studies.*, 115. "Memorandum of Conversation, U.S. Embassy in Saigon, April 19, 1964," FRUS, 1964-68, Volume 1, Vietnam, 1964, 252. Also see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 201–3.
[148] "Telegram from the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State, April 29, 1964," FRUS, 1964-68, Volume 1, Vietnam, 1964, 247.
[149] "Memorandum of Conversation, September 22, 1965," FRUS, 1964-68, Volume XXX, China, 211.
[150] Ibid.

1960s, Chiang and his son became less concerned about how to entangle Washington in the Taiwan Straits. Instead, they sought to become a useful and capable ally and explored how best to prepare for future operations in a way that would also help U.S. forces in Vietnam. However, such exemplary *Skillful Collaborator* behavior did not last for long, as the United States reached a stalemate in Vietnam and pursued rapprochement with Beijing – a sign that U.S. and Taiwanese security interests began to diverge again. In the late 1960s, Taipei began to downgrade its coordination with the patron: its operational contributions to support U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were now replaced by its rapprochement and cooperation with the Soviet Union. Behind this radical shift in Taiwanese behavior were once again two major factors – shifting U.S. posture and the local balance of power.

## (3) The Republic of China As *Autonomous Powerbuilder* (1969 – 1979)

As the Vietnam War dragged on, public calls intensified for an end to American military presence in Asia. Moreover, American diplomats took steps toward normalizing relations with the PRC – which inevitably eroded the foundation for the U.S.-Taiwan alliance. Richard Nixon took office as president in January 1969, and began to make good on his campaign promises of bringing Communist China into the community of nations while reducing American responsibilities as the "policeman" of Asia and beyond.[151] In December 1969, the U.S. Seventh Fleet discontinued patrols of the Taiwan Strait.[152] President Nixon visited the mainland China in February 1972 and signed a U.S.-PRC Shanghai communiqué, in which he promised a gradual withdrawal of U.S.

[151] Richard Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 46, No. 1 (October 1967), 116-23.
[152] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, Reprint edition (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979), 187. Also see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 267.

military forces from the ROC.[153] By the end of the year 1973, more than one-third of all U.S. military personnel stationed in Taiwan had been withdrawn. [154] Certainly, the Nixon Administration still hoped to keep the alliance with the ROC, and Defense Secretary Schlesinger told the Taiwanese in August 1973 that "the loss of rigidity in U.S.-PRC relations will not affect our alliance" and his administration intended to continue to provide advanced fighters and submarines to Taipei.[155] But diplomatic meeting records from this period abundantly reveal that U.S. willingness to fight the PRC by force had significantly decreased.

Meanwhile, the local balance of power remained stable, as the PRC's military buildup was further slowing down due to what appeared to be catastrophic consequences of the Cultural Revolution such as social disturbances and economic disasters. Threats from the mainland were still "substantial" according to General Lai Ming-tang, ROC Chief of the General Staff, but achieving and maintaining air and naval superiority over the Taiwan Straits was seen as an attainable goal.[156]

Considering these dramatic developments around the turn of the 1970s, the Theory predicts Taiwan to be an Autonomous Powerbuilder – less coordination but rapid increase in own military capabilities.

## Less Alliance Coordination and Even Rapprochement with the Soviet Union

Most U.S. covert operations to intervene in Communist China's domestic affairs had been

[153] The New York Times, "Nixon and Chou Agree to Renew Contacts; U.S. to Withdraw Gradually From Taiwan," 28 February 1972.
[154] U.S. Taiwan Defense Command, Command History, 1 January -31 December 1973, compiled by the Public Affairs Office, headquarters USTDC, Taiwan, 1974, Washington: Naval Historical Center, 11-13.
[155] "Memorandum of Conversation," FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XVIII, China, 1973-1976, Document 47, p. 314.
[156] Ibid.

suspended in the late 1960s, due to Washington's desire to prevent the expansion of the Vietnam War into a direct Sino-U.S. armed conflict. Now that both the Vietnam War and anti-communist intelligence operations came to a close, there were certainly much less opportunities for Taiwan to make operational contributions to help advance U.S. security interests. However, even regular intelligence sharing regarding Communist China was markedly declining in frequency so much so that Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements asked General Lai "how good is the ROC intelligence capability concerning the PRC?" in 1973.[157]

Moreover, Taipei pursued rapprochement with the Soviet Union without consultation with Washington, starting in October 1968, when Taipei held secret indirect talks with Moscow, inviting Victor Louis (Vitalii Evgen'evich Lui), a Moscow-based reporter for the London Evening News and reputed KGB agent, who met with Chiang Ching-kuo and spent four days in Taiwan.[158] Soon thereafter, Taipei deliberately leaked the meeting to the Washington Post.[159] It was the Taiwanese authorities that reached out to the Soviets for secret talks.[160] Louis noted that the Taiwanese took pride in no longer needing American economic aid and that Taiwan sought 'an independent foreign policy.'[161] Louis visited Taipei at least four times – October 1968, November 1971, December 1974, and June 1975 – and had at least two more meetings in Vienna with Wei Jingmeng, Director of National Intelligence of Taiwan.[162] When Wei met with Louis in Vienna in

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[157] Ibid.
[158] Michael Share, "From Ideological Foe to Uncertain Friend: Soviet Relations with Taiwan, 1943-82," *Cold War History* 3, no. 2 (January 2003): 22, https://doi.org/10.1080/713999981.
[159] The Washington Post, 2 November 1968. The reporter who broke the story was Stanley Karnow. Also see Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "Taiwan and the Soviet Union During the Cold War: Enemies or Ambiguous Friends?," *Cold War History* 5, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 79–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/1468274042000339179.
[160] Michael Share, "From Ideological Foe to Uncertain Friend," 22–23, 28–29.
[161] Washington Post, 19 March 1969.
[162] Wei, Jingmeng, *Sulian tewu zai Taiwan: Wei Jingmeng riji zhongde Wang Ping dang'an* [Soviet Special Agent in Taiwan: Wang Ping's files from Wei Jingmeng's Diary], Taibei: Lianhe Bao She, 1995, 21; Li, Jian, *Taiwan yu Qiansulian jiaowang milu* [Secret Record of Contacts Between Taiwan and the Former Soviet Union], Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Chubanshe, 1995 Vol. 2, 560–61; The Far Eastern Economic Review, 27 June 1975; Yu, Kejie, "Taiwan yu Sulian de mimi jiechu [Secret contacts between Taiwan and the Soviet Union]," Bai nian chao, no. 2 (2000): 34–39; Thomas J. Bellows, "Taiwan's Foreign Policy in the 1970s: A Case Study of Adaptation and Viability." Asian Survey 16, no. 7 (July 1976), 597.

May 1969, the two sides agreed on two major points: first, in the event of the ROC's invasion operations on the mainland, the Soviet Union would not support Beijing; second, the two countries would establish regular collaboration programs between their intelligence agencies.

Louis's second meeting with Wei in Vienna in late October of 1970 brought the two states even closer, as he conveyed the message that Moscow hoped to cooperate with Taipei to destroy Mao's regime. In 1973, the burgeoning Taipei-Moscow cooperation further expanded to have a military component: two days before the head of a newly established U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing was inaugurated, several Soviet warships passed through the Taiwan Strait between 20 and 40 miles from the mainland coast and then turned back north to circumnavigate Taiwan – action of such military significance that the Soviets would have never undertaken without Taipei's permission.[163]

Taiwan was still almost exclusively importing weapons from the United States due to its existing U.S. military assistance program (MAP), but Taipei's growing intelligence and military ties with Moscow suggest that its coordination posture toward the American patron experienced a significant change for the worse.[164]

## Building More Capabilities and Pursuing an Independent Nuclear Deterrent

Meanwhile, Taipei maintained high levels of military expenditures throughout the 1970s: its military budgets as a percentage of GDP ranged from 4 to 8 percent.[165] Outside the military budgets, it began to seek advanced nuclear technologies in 1969 – the same year that President Nixon was inaugurated. It started construction of a reprocessing laboratory with components

[163] "Cable from American Embassy in Taipei to Secretary of State, May 21, 1973," RG59/1613/2204, National Archives. Also see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 278.; John W. Garver, "Taiwan's Russian Option: Image and Reality," *Asian Survey* 18, no. 7 (1978): 757, https://doi.org/10.2307/2643529.
[164] It occasionally imported items from Japan and Israel, according to the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.
[165] Lin, Wu, and Chou, "Country Survey," 349.

obtained from around the world, at a time when Washington argued that the ROC's civil nuclear program did not need a reprocessing facility.[166] Consistent with the Theory, the U.S.-PRC rapprochement led to the rise of a "hawk" faction in the ROC political circle, which asserted that, as the American protection was now unreliable, nuclear weapons would be a necessary last-resort defense against attacks from the mainland. Even those who were formerly opposed to nuclear activities on the basis of their fiscal burden also argued that indigenous nuclear weapons might help signal to Washington that U.S. interests would not be served if the Taiwanese felt compelled to rely entirely on itself for defense.[167]

In early 1972, a few months after the ROC lost its seat in the United Nations and the IAEA, it decided to acquire a reprocessing plant from West Germany's UHDE-Lurgi, and secretly initiated a nuclear weapons program called the Plan Tao Yuan.[168] The new plan aimed to produce indigenous weapons-grade plutonium by separation, using irradiated TRR fuel, which went critical in January 1973.[169] Furthermore, Taipei procured 100 metric tons of natural uranium from South Africa with no strings attached in 1973 and 1974, and it also imported uranium from German suppliers in small batches of less than 400 kilograms via Britain.[170]

These activities eventually surfaced on the CIA's radar in 1974, when it reported that "Taipei conducts its small nuclear program with a weapon option clearly in mind, and it will be in a position to fabricate a nuclear device after five years or so."[171] By the end of 1975, the ROC's

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[166] Testimony by Assistant Secretary for East Asia Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., before Subcommittee on Arms Control, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 22 September 1976, in Department of State Bulletin, 11 October 1976, 454–56. Also see Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 279.
[167] The New York Times, 30 August 1976; Washington Post, 31 August 1976; Garver, 279.
[168] Albright and Stricker, sec. 641. In late 1972, the ROC had secretly signed an agreement with UHDE-Lurgi to provide parts for a reprocessing facility.
[169] Albright and Stricker, sec. 611.
[170] Albright and Stricker, location 1023. At the time, IAEA safeguards did not require a country to report uranium imports. In addition, Taiwan's safeguards agreement with the IAEA did not require IAEA inspection of the uranium metal.
[171] Director of Central Intelligence, Memorandum, "Prospects for Further Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," September 4, 1974, NSA EBB 181, Doc. 8.

reprocessing facility had become fully operational, producing fifteen kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, and had come under intense scrutiny by the IAEA and the United States in 1976.[172] To be sure, Taiwan's intent to acquire nuclear weapons was unclear at this point, and its deliberate ambiguity may have been an indication of its attempts to attract attention from the U.S. foreign policy establishment. For example, while Taipei resisted IAEA inspections with obfuscation or deception in the late 1970s, Chiang Ching-kuo, ROC premier since 1972, said in September 1976, "we have the ability and the facilities to manufacture nuclear weapons (…) we will never manufacture them."[173] One week later, Premier Chiang made a promise to the U.S. Ambassador in Taipei that the ROC would not construct its own reprocessing facilities or engage in any activities related to reprocessing.[174] The United States learned only a few months later that negotiations had still continued between Taipei and Comprimo, a Dutch company, over a reprocessing contract.[175] After President Carter inaugurated in January 1977 and firmly demanded that the ROC halt its sensitive nuclear activities, the Taiwanese agreed to shut down its nuclear programs, but the ROC's military leadership still continued to improve the readiness of nuclear weapons capabilities.[176] Not surprisingly, the United States later realized that Taiwan's nuclear weapons program was still up and running well into the mid-1980s.

Consistent with theoretical predictions under the conditions of divergent security interests between the partners and a stable local balance of power, Taipei's alliance behavior shifted from *Skillful Collaborator* to *Autonomous Powerbuilder*, at the turn of the 1970s. It is certainly difficult

[172] Testimony by Hummel, 22 September 1976.
[173] The New York Times, 5 September 1976.
[174] Senate Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Organizations, and Security Agreements, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on Non-Proliferation Issues, March 19, April 16 and 28, July 18 and 22, October 21 and 24, 1975; February 23 and 24, March 15, September 22, and November 8, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 345–71.
[175] Cable from American Embassy in Taipei to Secretary of State, Taiwan's Continued Interest in Reprocessing, January 8, 1977.
[176] Albright and Stricker, *Taiwan's Former Nuclear Weapons Program*, loc. 1944.

to identify Taipei's alliance coordination levels by normal measurements like operational contributions and exclusivity of arms imports, due to the lack of options available on the heels of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and U.S.-PRC rapprochement. Nonetheless, Taipei's overt resistance to U.S. nuclear nonproliferation efforts should be understood as an indication that Taipei deliberately backed away from coordination with Washington. Chiang Kai-shek in the mid-1960s had shelved his nuclear ambition for the sake of preserving a close operational relationship with the United States.[177] In the light of Nixon's new foreign policy toward Beijing, Taipei swiftly resumed its quest for advanced nuclear technologies, not necessarily as steps toward an actual nuclear arsenal but as a strong signal that it would be able to act independently from the senior partner if necessary – the same signal sent by pursuing its rapprochement with Moscow.

Overall, the case of the U.S.-Taiwan alliance demonstrates the utility of the Theory, as the junior partner behavior evolved consistently with its theoretical predictions. Both in the early 1960s and the late 1960s, changes in the senior partner view of the protégé's primary adversary – were the major driver of shits in the ally's behavior.

## VI. Conclusion

As the first systematic analysis of allies' behavior in the context of asymmetric alliances, this article provides a framework for understanding conditions under which junior allies are likely to engage in different types of behavior, some of which may raise entrapment risks for a patron. Its findings challenge the conventional wisdom that junior partners are easy to control given their weak material capabilities. They show that there are four different types of alliance behavior, of

[177] Albright and Gay, "Taiwan," 56. Albright and Stricker, *Taiwan's Former Nuclear Weapons Program*, loc. 375.

which *Skillful Collaborator*, the only one of the good kind as a security partner, is a relatively rare breed at least among U.S. allies over the last few decades.

This article argues that a senior partner faces an elevated risk of alliance entrapment when its junior ally is a *Vulnerable Entangler* – behavior which is likely to be driven by weak alignment of security interests combined with an unfavorable local balance of power. The Theory certainly requires more work to assess its empirical support across time and region, but if it's corroborated, it provides a qualification for Glenn Snyder's alliance security dilemma hypothesis: in the context of asymmetric alliances, distancing oneself from a junior ally would increase, rather than decrease, entrapment risks for a patron, if the ally faces growing military threats from its adversary. Applying this logic to U.S. allies in East Asia, U.S. strategic ambiguity vis-à-vis the Taiwan Straits is likely to be causing Taiwan to be a Vulnerable Entangler; its defense spending as percentage of GDP has been steadily declining over the last 20 years, and Taipei grew more dependent on the United States as it refuses to invest in the kinds of low-cost weapons capabilities it needs to defend itself on its own.[178] This, in turn, may increase risks of alliance entrapment, particularly if China becomes an imminent existential security threat in Taiwanese eyes.

While there are much fewer *Vulnerable Entanglers* than *Cheap-riders*, those that currently appear to be *Cheap-riders* could become *Vulnerable Entangler* overnight if the above-mentioned set of conditions obtain. This should offer cautionary tales for U.S. policymakers, who frequently "toy" with threats to withdraw existing security commitments to other states as a punishment tool for insufficient alliance contributions. Threats of withdrawing troops from *Cheap-riders* may lead to unintended consequences, driving allies to be *Vulnerable Entanglers,* if they are facing a local balance of power shifting in favor of their adversary. Given their tendency of dependence for

[178] Raymond Kuo, "The Counter-Intuitive Sensibility of Taiwan's New Defense Strategy," *War on the Rocks*, December 6, 2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/the-counter-intuitive-sensibility-of-taiwans-new-defense-strategy/.

security, it is much harder for *Cheap-riders* to quickly reinvent themselves as *Skillful Collaborators* than to behave like *Vulnerable Entanglers* and this is especially the case if they locally face a growing military threat that exacerbates the security dilemma.

In sum, alliance managers should be aware that their allies exhibit more diverse behavior than is generally assumed and that their material weakness or subordinate status does not always translate into their lack of autonomy. No great powers offer alliance commitments for the sole purpose of protecting weak states; they do so to advance their own interests. Unless a patron is ready to forego dividends from its alliances all together, the effect of material power asymmetry on each alliance member's bargaining position is, in fact, not as great as when they were not security partners yet. Robert Gilpin notes that hegemonic powers' empire-building endeavors are costly. America's alliance-based empire-building seems to be no exception. Although David Lake is right to argue that great powers can set up hierarchical security institutions to control small powers' opportunism, allies can often get away with impunity when violating rules on a *de facto* basis. [179]

Before offering new commitments to weaker states or expanding an existing alliance to cover more states, policymakers ought to anticipate how their prospective allies might behave once their commitments are offered, and this article provides a useful framework for such a policy exercise. Moreover, policy decisions to alter existing security arrangements should be made on a case-by-case basis by taking into consideration each ally's current security environments (i.e. the local balance of power) as well as revisionist goals they may have, to predict the partner's behavior in response to the proposed policy changes.

[179] Lake, *Entangling Relations*; Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*.