The future in the past: Victory, defeat, and grand strategy in the US, UK, France and Germany

van Hooft, P.A.

Citation for published version (APA):
The Future in the Past: Victory, Defeat, and Grand Strategy in the US, UK, France and Germany

This book argues that victory and defeat in war shape the post-war grand strategies of states, specifically their use of military force and diplomacy. It focuses on the experiences of the belligerent states of the Second World War, and in particular on those of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. To explore the argument, the book utilises regression analysis, historical analysis, counterfactual thought experiments, content analysis of documents, and a series of fifty interviews with American, British, French, and German policymakers.

The findings show that victory increases the propensity of states to use force and decreases their propensity to use diplomacy, while defeat fosters the opposite. Experiences with war also shape the types of military capabilities and alliances that policymakers prefer, and their perception of threats. Finally, victory strengthens the legitimacy and influence of policymakers, while defeat constrains them, thereby reinforcing the lessons drawn from war.

Together, the three effects of victory and defeat establish enduring patterns of national strategic behaviour that continue to define transatlantic relations.

Paul van Hooft completed his doctoral training at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) in 2014. Currently, he is a lecturer at the faculty of Political Science of the University of Amsterdam (UVA).
The Future in the Past:

Victory, Defeat, and Grand Strategy in the US, UK, France and Germany

Paul van Hooft
The Future in the Past: Victory, Defeat, and Grand Strategy in the US, UK, France and Germany

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIJT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college van promoties ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel

op dinsdag 27 januari 2015, te 12:00 uur

door

PAUL ALEXANDER VAN HOOFT

Geboren te Nijmegen
Promotiecommissie

Promotor: Prof. dr. B.M. Burgoon

Overige leden:

Prof. dr. A. Freyberg-Inan
Prof. dr. R.V.A. Janssens
Prof. dr. C. Layne
Prof. dr. A.J.J. Nijhuis
Prof. dr. G. Scott-Smith
Prof. dr. G.R.D. Underhill

Faculteit der Maatschappij en Gedragswetenschappen
Foreword

A few words of thanks are due to the people who through their collegiality, their friendship, or their love made it possible for me to conceive, research, and write this book.

To begin with, the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) and the Political Economy and Transnational Governance (PETGOV) programme group have generously enabled me to complete a project that was close to my heart for a long time. They funded the research, training, conferences, and my travels to conduct interviews. But they did not only enable the creation of the this book in this most literal sense, the PETGOV group also helped my overall development as a researcher and an academic through academic exchanges. I would also like to thank all the regular attendees of the RISC discussion group for being generous with their time.

The project would not have existed without Brian and the crucial role he played as my promoter. Brian has seen every stage of this project: from the original embryonic ideas formulated during his classes; to my Master's thesis; to the applications I wrote; and, finally, through all the steps of the actual dissertation. I first met Brian in his American foreign policy class, which, together with his class on US-European relations, proved to have a profound impact on the direction of my life. He made an impression on my younger self, not only for his passion for teaching and for dissecting arguments, but also for not accepting anything less than my very best. I hope this book represents such an effort for him.

The list of people who offered advice and criticism while I was writing the dissertation is long. Andrea played a substantial role in sharpening the dissertation’s argument. I would like to thank him for his collegial and pragmatic attitude as well as his personal support, both of which were key to completing the book. Annette was there from the start of my dissertation, in the Methodology Clinic she teaches with Brian, the IPE group, PETGOV, and later the RISC group. In all these cases, she impressed me with her astute and sharp critiques, and her attention to details. These have, I hope, significantly improved my thinking and work. More memorably, however, Annette impressed me with her great kindness and supportive attitude. In that sense, she is a model for what academics should aspire to be, and one that I am grateful to have encountered. Geoffrey has also long been a part of my academic involvement: when I was doing undergraduate studies long ago, then through the past few years, as I was completing my dissertation. Through it all he has been kind and supporting, and has displayed an impressive knowledge of history and overpriced alcohol. Chris was kind enough to meet me and discuss my ideas at a time when I very much needed to do so. He was encouraging beyond what could be expected and has remained so since then. For this I was and am very grateful.

Wolfgang has been supportive of my work since I met him, which I thank him for. However, besides a shared interest in all the serious stuff on national security institutions and constraints on military force, I was also happy to have found someone to talk indie rock with.

Other people played direct roles in the dissertation and in the practical details of the defence. I thank Uli for standing next to me at the defence, and for his friendship through the past years. I also appreciate his patience in explaining to me how ministerial politics actually work. I consequently forgive him for his lack of knowledge of movie, music, or any other popcultural points of reference. Mike is also kind enough to stand next to me at the defence. I salute him for that, and for his great humour and appreciation of the bizarre, as well as his commitment to
outdoor BBQ, even in Dutch weather conditions. Michal gave great advice and comments on my work. He was a welcome voice of sanity to talk to about contemporary political developments, where he offered true insight and dark humour. We bonded over a mutual love for red meat and realism, and started the first of what I hope will be many collaborations. Great thanks also go to Stephan for his kind help in connecting me to many of the interviewees. I have learned more from actively disagreeing with him than from almost anyone else. More generally, I need to thank the many interviewees who made room in their busy schedules to talk to me, and who then often brought me in contact with others who could help me complete the picture for the research.

My thanks also go to a long list of friends. Rutger, Alex S., and Tarik I thank for their decades of friendship, and for their reluctant interest in what I was doing these past years; Chas – yes, I know, Bill Hicks is from Texas; Mihai - for entertaining me with the latest conspiracy theories you discovered in your fieldwork; Alex V. - that your own late night sessions may soon finish. I would furthermore like to thank in no particular order the many others who were there for most of the trip: Roman E.; Roman G.; Frank; Richard; Marten; Mathijs; Marii; Thijs; Joep; Jerry; Nynke; Maaike; Basje; Luc. Ursula, Julia, Lee, Falk, Jeroen, Daphne; Marc; Elmar; Lutz; Jasper; Sander; Jesse; Francisca; Benno; to my former officemates, Sarah, Julia, and Agnieszka for showing me that there are no limits to how much tea a human body can contain; as well as the students whose enthusiasm for my work motivated me, and specifically: Jort; Raphael; and Alexandra; as well as the members of the administrative staff – like Helena – who helped with important but distracting tasks at moments when it was most needed.

Most of my thanks, however, must go to my family.

Foremost, I would like to thank my mother, Gerda, for giving me the best example anyone could give her son with her calm and pragmatic optimism and for showing me that nothing gets done without hard work. She is one of the people who quietly, without asking for any credit, gets thing done and makes it possible for others to excel. She has certainly made it possible for me to do so, and I cannot thank her enough for that. Her husband, Joost, has always done his best to help with the pragmatic parts of life that easily get overshadowed by a long-term project. I appreciate his help and support tremendously. I would like to thank my father, Leo, for filling me with history since I was a kid. Beyond giving me a head start with this project, it has given me an appreciation of causes and effects, and for how the past lives on in the present. I hope I have also received some of his storytelling abilities to bring it all to life.

Finally, I must thank Valentina. She has been by my side for the duration of the dissertation, giving off constant waves of positivity (‘It will be good, in fact, it will be fantastic!’), offering great solutions to practical and analytical problems, and, should those fail, suggesting good food as the solution. I thank her for that, and for putting up with the strange hours (though she has had her share over the past years), and with my long-winded dissections of American and European history. I would also like to thank her family – Antonio, Miriam, and Fabio – for the affection and hospitality they have shown me. Vale, I think we will finally have some time for ourselves, I am looking forward to it!
Another kind of closing word is also in order. The project was a difficult one to finish, as by their nature dissertations often are. They have the tendency to develop and morph into something beyond the original research proposal, though most of the time this is arguably a good thing. This dissertation was no exception to that rule. However, the dissertation often daunted me due to the inherent darkness of the topic and of the material. In order to make the argument I made, an argument that I think is important, the analysis largely removed the human reality that lies underneath the facts and figures. This troubled me from the start and continues to do so. Yet, there is a point to be made here about the need to look dispassionately at war and strategy. As horrible as war is, and though we should never forget its price is ultimately paid by individual humans and not by aggregate concepts, we cannot close our eyes to their causes, both reasonable and unreasonable, and treat wars as aberrations. Uncomfortable as it may be, we must accept how deeply past wars are interwoven in our thinking and in the fabric of society and our domestic institutions, if we truly care about not living through similar periods of history again. I hope this work contributes something to that.
Index

Chapter One. Introduction

Three sets of claims .................................................................................................................................................... 5
Victory and defeat ....................................................................................................................................................... 7
The cases....................................................................................................................................................................... 9
Four puzzles of American, British, French and German strategy................................................................... 10
From historical analysis to broader theory........................................................................................................... 12
Methodological approach ........................................................................................................................................ 14
Plan of the book........................................................................................................................................................ 15

Chapter Two. Legacies of War, Origins of Grand Strategy

Literature on the legacies of war ............................................................................................................................ 20
Literature on the origins of grand strategy........................................................................................................... 30
The argument: experience driven realism............................................................................................................. 40
The two major theoretical contributions of the book ....................................................................................... 52
Research design ......................................................................................................................................................... 53


Difficulties in testing the war-weariness thesis.................................................................................................... 59
The Second World War: a critical case of total war ........................................................................................... 62
Independent variables: index of loss and index of defeat ................................................................................. 64
Dependent variables: military force and diplomacy ........................................................................................... 67
Results of the regression analysis: Loss and defeat to force and diplomacy ................................................. 71
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................................. 78

Chapter Four. Strategic Beliefs, Domestic Relations: the United States and Germany

Histories: American and German grand strategy ............................................................................................. 81
Beliefs and relations: the US and Germany ......................................................................................................... 90
United States .............................................................................................................................................................. 90
Germany (FRG to 1990) .......................................................................................................................................105
Conclusion................................................................................................................................................................116

Chapter Five. Strategic Beliefs, Domestic Relations: the United Kingdom and France

Histories: British and French grand strategy ................................................................................................. 120
Beliefs and relations: the UK and France ......................................................................................................... 125
United Kingdom .....................................................................................................................................................126
France ........................................................................................................................................................................140
Conclusion................................................................................................................................................................157
Chapter One
Introduction
This book is about how national experiences with war shape post-war grand strategies, and specifically how the experiences with victory and defeat in the Second World War shaped the post-war beliefs and behaviour of the major belligerent states. Its central argument is that victory increases the propensity of states to use force and decreases their propensity to use diplomacy, while defeat fosters the opposite. More precisely, I argue that both victory and defeat in total wars shape the strategic beliefs of policymakers on the efficacy of force and diplomacy, on the balance of power and threat, on force postures and on alliances. These beliefs persist in spite of changes in the international environment and domestic politics, because total wars are foundational events in national history. The legacies of such events touch the thinking of all domestic actors across all levels of the nation-state. Those legacies also shape the post-war legitimacy of key groupings of actors – the ‘Trinitarian’ relationship between state, society, and the armed forces – and the distribution of institutional influence between such groupings in the making of grand strategy. Legacies can define, in particular, the autonomy of civilian and military policymakers to pursue their beliefs and set policy-making, thereby increasing or decreasing the momentum of their respective strategic beliefs. In short, beliefs based on wartime experiences endure, filtered by the domestic distribution of power that itself reflects those experiences.

To articulate these arguments, this book focuses on the experiences of the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Germany in the Second World War. The Second World War was a drastic transformation of both the substance and style of international politics. First and foremost, the Second World War finished what the First World War started; it brought an end to the global order that had been created and led for centuries by European powers, and replaced it with one where the United States was the central power. Secondly, not only the structure of the international environment had been transformed; their experiences in the Second World War seemed to have changed the respective outlooks of American and European policymakers and societies on the role in which diplomacy and military force in particular should play in international affairs. This study focuses on how victory and defeat experienced by the US, UK, France and Germany, among other belligerents in this extraordinary war, shaped the views of policymakers on force, diplomacy, and balancing behaviour, as well as the autonomy of policymakers to make policy. This focus reveals how these beliefs remained remarkably consistent in spite of other conflicts and changes in domestic and international politics.

That the wars could play such an enduring role should not be surprising. Throughout history wars have been portrayed as tests of national virtues, and represented as such in the cultural heritages of nations and states. Victories are perceived as confirmations of those virtues and defeats as their negation, and this makes defeats difficult to digest. After having experienced the horrors of two successive total wars, how could the Europeans not be repulsed by the notion of force in the post-war era? Such repulsions seemed to carry on throughout the post-war era into the decades after the end of the Cold War, as Europeans were reticent to use force and accepted substantial losses of
sovereignty. Likewise, had victory in the Second World War confirmed American policymakers in their belief in the exceptional nature of the US and the efficacy of force?

Throughout the post-war decades the differences in attitude towards force and diplomacy between the US and Europe have become commonplace, with the US generally more willing to use force and the Europeans less willing to do so, while the opposite applied to their willingness to use multilateral diplomacy (Daalder 2001; Calleo 2002; Keohane 2002; Gordon 2003; Judt 2003; Kagan 2003; Krause 2004; Sheehan 2008). The respective American and European approaches towards regime change in Iraq in 2002 and 2003, but also in other post-Cold War conflicts, such as the break-up of Yugoslavia, seemed examples of such apparently deep-rooted differences. For example, in the confrontation over Iraq, US policymakers, supported by their counterparts in the UK, consistently expressed the belief that the Iraqi regime posed an imminent threat with its supposed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program; that superior American conventional force sufficed as a solution; and that a short occupation could transform both the Iraqi state and society. French and German policymakers were sceptical of the same points and refused support for the US, in response to which the US pursued its policy with a more flexible coalition.

While such major differences in approach could reflect transatlantic differences in capabilities, the possible role of memory is hard to ignore. Both proponents and opponents invoked lessons from the Second World War to underline their respective arguments towards Iraq. The Bush (43) administration and the Blair government used the Munich analogy that references the appeasement of Hitler over Czechoslovakia in 1938. Just as in Munich, the international community’s failure to stand up to Saddam Hussein would merely embolden an implacable dictator. Conversely, French policymakers cautioned against war by referencing France’s own troubled past of invasion. The analogies were not only confined to public rhetoric: in August 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld tasked the CIA with drawing up a comparative study of the implications of the post-war occupations of Germany and Japan and their

---

1 For example: ‘Czechs and Slovaks learned through the harsh experience of 1938 that aggression left unchecked by the great democracies can rob millions of their liberty and their lives’. Remarks by President George W. Bush on the eve of the NATO summit to Prague Atlantic Student Summit, 20 November 2002; ‘… as Ernie Bevin knew, sometimes the threat and even the use of force is necessary to ensure a greater peace. The League of Nations failed because it lacked the means to enforce its principles and decisions against the aggression of dictatorships and totalitarianism’. Speech by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool, September 30, 2002.

2 For example: ‘This message comes to you today from an old country, France, from a continent like mine, Europe, that has known wars, occupation and barbarity. A country that does not forget and knows everything it owes to the freedom-fighters who came from America and elsewhere. And yet has never ceased to stand upright in the face of history and before mankind. Faithful to its values, it wishes resolutely to act with all the members of the international community.’ Speech by Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, at the United Nation Security Council meeting, February 13, 2003.
transformation into mature, responsible and peaceful democracies for the coming American presence in Iraq. These could all be examples on the surface of the speeches of leaders that may be mere garnish and post-hoc rhetorical legitimation of strategic decisions. But this book will argue otherwise, namely that these references to history are rather the tip of an iceberg of how wartime legacies shape policy-making.

Such an argument, we shall see, speaks to but moves beyond important claims in a range of major scholarly literatures on the role of ideas in international politics. The recent examples of rhetoric referencing experience with the Second World War, for instance, underline the findings of a broad literature on the use of analogies by policymakers during decision-making (May 1973; Jervis 1976; Khong 1992; Levy 1994; Heuser and Buffet in Buffet and Heuser 1998; Record 2007) to demonstrate how past experiences are used to reduce uncertainty. Such logic might indeed have played a role in setting policy for Iraq in 2002 and 2003, but it cannot offer an equally convincing argument on the longer-term strategies that led policymakers to view their national interests as being at stake there. The story of this book, therefore, is more than a tale about how analogical thinking might matter for political life. The thinking and politics that help make sense of the sharp differences between Western great powers in dealing with Iraq and other crises involve more than the use of particular analogies; they point to larger differences in beliefs on both sides of the Atlantic that derive from experiences with wars.

These differences underscore a broader argument related to a familiar one that the human and material costs of past wars constrain the willingness of defeated states to again incur such costs, while victory emboldens states. Yet the findings based on such arguments have been inconclusive (c.f. Singer and Small 1974; Levy 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986; Garnham 1986; Nevin 1996). This may be because outcomes of wars are complex affairs that affect different domestic actors differently, and cannot be reduced to simple dichotomous outcomes on which the war-wariness literature concentrates. A wide and varied literature consequently looks at the complex processes by which collective memory is formed within nation-states (Ashplant, Dawson et al. 2000; McMahon 2002; Müller 2002; Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006; Winter 2006; Riera and Schaffer 2008; Echternkamp and Martens 2010; Wieviorka 2010). However, from such nuanced portrayals it is difficult to systematically generate expectations for how experiences with war will affect concrete foreign policy outcomes. This book aims to redress the gaps within these literatures. Though partially inspired by the conflict over Iraq, it is not about that particular conflict, nor only about the use of analogies in crises.

---

3 Central Intelligence Agency, 7 August 2002 ‘The Post-war Occupations of Germany and Japan: Implications for Iraq’ (National Security Archive). Tellingly, the conclusions of the study recommend that the US prepare for an extended presence in Iraq, that purging the Sunni-centric bureaucracy of the Baath party supporters is undesirable, and that several elements which enabled success in Germany and Japan (unifying myths such as the Japanese emperor and relatively homogenous societies) are absent in Iraq. Rumsfeld ignored the study’s pessimistic conclusions, as well as the advice of his military staff.
It also is not only a book about the origins of the transatlantic relationship, though its central set of cases deal with the US and Europe.

Instead, this book deals more broadly with the nature and origins of the beliefs of policymakers about the use of force and diplomacy in international affairs, focusing on how such beliefs are shaped by past experiences with war, and on how invocation of the past helps shape policy decisions. It also shows that, at a more fundamental level, experiences with war shape what policymakers believe about international threats and power; alter their preferred forces posture; and condition their preferred alliances. Furthermore, this book seeks to understand why some beliefs and not others are adopted and then reproduced by domestic actors and how the outcomes of wars strengthen or weaken the positions of those actors in the process. In doing so, it represents an attempt to understand when and why nationally specific beliefs and behaviour change and when and why they do not.

In doing so, this is foremost an investigation of the effect of experiences in the Second World War on policymakers in the US and Europe, as well as on the other belligerents. This contributes to midrange theory of how wartime experience influences foreign policy and international politics. Yet the investigation also makes a larger theoretical contribution by offering a broader argument about the effects of total war in general, and applies to a larger number of states that have experienced both major and limited wars. That argument constitutes an elaborated theory of neoclassical realism that I term experience-driven realism. Experience-driven realism theorises how national beliefs and relations are shaped by outcomes in wars, and in turn also shape the strategic behaviour of states within the structural features of the international environment. In doing so, this book offers a broader argument about the interactions between ideas, institutions, structures, and material power.

Three sets of claims

This book’s central message that wartime experiences shape post-war grand strategies in nation-states entails three sets of claims about the legacies of war. The first set of claims concerns the propensity of victorious and defeated states to use force and diplomacy in foreign policy, regardless of their relative material capabilities, alignments, and regime types. States that are victorious in war become more willing to again use force after the war, and a convincing victory in a total war is more important than a smaller defeat in a limited war. In contrast, states that have been defeated in war

4 Drawing on Posen (1984, p.1), I define grand strategy as the complex whole of diplomatic, military, and other instruments a state uses to achieve desired ends, in response to both its international and domestic environment.
become more willing to engage in multilateral diplomacy once peace resumes. Related to these distinct legacies of victory or defeat, this book also argues that increased willingness to use diplomacy substitutes for the decreased willingness to use force, and vice versa: victories in war lead to the combination of a higher willingness to use force and a lower willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy, while defeats in war lead to the combination of a higher willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy and a lower willingness to use force.

The second set of claims is that experiences with war shape not just force and diplomacy in general, but also the particular internal and external balancing strategies of states. For a state’s internal balancing strategy, the specific qualities of past wars - such as the nature of the adversary or threats confronted, the type of conflict, the level of military readiness, the innovation of military technology, and the type of warfare and weapons used - alter the way victory or defeat plays out in specific post-war beliefs towards the force posture. For example, the failure of an offensive conventional force posture is likely to lead to a more defensive post-war posture, while its success is likely to lead to its maintenance, even in different circumstances or against different adversaries, such as non-state actors. Similarly, for a state’s external balancing strategy, the success and failure of pre-war and wartime alliances and post-war settlements alter the way victory or defeat plays out in specific post-war beliefs towards alliances and multilateral diplomacy. For example, the failure of alliances to protect a state are likely to lead to a search for greater autonomy, while the failure of neutrality is likely to lead the state to seek solid allies.

The third and final set of claims is that the specific wartime experiences have distinct implications for the perspectives, legitimacy, and institutional influence of particular actors involved in the development and implementation of, and support for, national strategy. Specifically, I group the actors within a nation-state as follows: its civilian-political policymakers, its military policymakers, and its civilians. The relations between state, society, and armed forces – three groups that can be called a ‘trinity’ of political groupings in the making of grand strategy – define whose strategic beliefs and institutional beliefs can more heavily shape grand strategy. The strategic beliefs and relations within this trinity lead to nationally distinct and enduring patterns of strategic behaviour that endure long after the initial experiences, despite changes in the international environment and turnover in governments.

5 The variations of balancing behaviour draw from Schweller: overbalancing, when policymakers perceive a state as a threat when it is not; underbalancing, when they fail to act against a state they perceive as a threat; nonbalancing, when a state seeks to avoid the costs of balancing behaviour, a category that includes bandwagoning and buck-passing, and appropriate balancing, when a state perceives a threat correctly and takes appropriate responses (Schweller 2006, p. 10). Buck-passing is passing the costs of containing a threat onto other states, with the specific variation of offshore balancing for maritime powers protected by the sea (Mearsheimer 2001, pp. 234-266).
The three sets of claims on the implications of experiences with war undergird a story about political forces shaping foreign policies, and the interactions within nation-states, that calls for some rethinking of broader constructivist and realist approaches to the study of international politics. The claims about the legacies of wartime experiences remind us how material experiences can be shocks that transform fundamental beliefs and institutions, and that these beliefs and institutions endure and shape the beliefs and political influence of domestic groupings and national strategy with real consequences for the structure of the international environment. This represents a recursive interaction between the domestic and international, and between the material and ideal, that justifies a rethinking of the role of beliefs, institutions, and experiences in politics with material power. That rethinking constitutes, in my judgment, an elaboration of neoclassical realism that takes the nature and origin of strategic beliefs and institutions seriously. The following section fleshes out the logic underlying the three parts of this experience-driven realist argument.

**Victory and defeat**

This book’s three sets of claims about the effects of victory and defeat in total war on post-war policymaking are built on a series of conceptually simple insights that expand upon the different literatures on the legacies of war and the origins of grand strategy. These can best be sensed by contrasting the many implications of victory and of defeat.

Defeats in major wars dampen post-war aggressive behaviour and increase cooperative behaviour in the following ways, all of which are especially applicable to the Second World War. To begin with, the high costs of major war, specifically the human costs, leave post-war societies and policymakers weary of incurring these costs in subsequent conflicts and consequently make them more hesitant to support or initiate future wars, thereby decreasing the likelihood of that nation-state using force. This war-weariness effect should be especially clear in societies that have been roundly defeated and that have suffered high military and civilian casualties. Secondly, the particularly negative experience with war can be expected to stoke feelings of insecurity and increase fears of a new war, as well as underline that military force is inadequate to secure the states. This will make policymakers and the public more willing to surrender sovereignty through agreements and institutions to gain allies or defuse threats, increasing their likelihood to use multilateral diplomacy. Finally, policymakers are forced to take strategic decisions under constant uncertainty over costs and outcomes. Defeat, especially in total war, sends a clear signal that certain policies are likely to fail - whether on the dangers of

---

6 Such a pattern can predominate even if a defeat might, under certain domestic conditions, increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour, as states are motivated by revanchist sentiment or seek to re-establish credibility and prestige.
isolation or the failures of alliances; whether the poor preparedness of the previous force posture or its provocative nature; whether the over- or underestimation of certain threats or of changes in the distribution of power. Under uncertainty, decision-makers will be strongly biased against repeating the mistakes of the past in the present. The lessons of the past are therefore particularly attractive to diagnose the present. These three causal relationships are likely to amplify each other, leading to a decreased likelihood that the state will use force and an increased likelihood that it will use multilateral diplomacy.

For the winners, victories in major wars leave enduring lessons that embolden aggressive post-war behaviour and decrease cooperative behaviour in the following three ways, all of which are also especially applicable to the Second World War. The costs of victory are likely to be lower than those of defeat, or at least are validated by the outcome. This is likely to increase the ambitions of policymakers. Military force is perceived as sufficient to ensure security. Victors do not see the need to sacrifice sovereignty in multilateral diplomacy, and, while victorious nation-states may in fact increase their cooperation with other states, this is likely to be on their terms. Finally, the lessons of the past are also used to decrease the uncertainty of policymakers of victorious countries, who draw analogies to the present and look to the proven successes in policy and seek to replicate perceived superior formulas of alliances, posture, and threat assessment. These three causal relationships are likely to amplify each other, leading to an increased likelihood that the state will use force and a decreased likelihood that it will use multilateral diplomacy.

Wartime victories and defeats not only shape beliefs, but they are also associated with specific domestic actors – whether these are represented as national heroes or as villains. Victory and defeat thereby demonstrate who should be both responsible for and trusted with the articulation and execution of strategy. Specifically, wars change the trilateral relationship between state, society, and the armed forces in terms of the legitimacy and institutional influence of each of them. Legitimacy and institutional influence shape the autonomy of policymakers and thereby establish the conditions under which beliefs and lessons of the past are translated into post-war policy and sustained over post-war decades. This applies particularly to total wars such as the Second World War, because, and unlike limited wars, total wars involve by definition the entire trinity and offer unambiguous outcomes. For example, German pacifism has become so engrained throughout the German state and society, and the role of those advocating the use of military force so marginalized, that the traumas of the Second World War have arguably made it nearly impossible for Germany to decisively and effectively use military force.

Defeats are particularly difficult for nation-states to accept, because they are perceived as judgments on the nation as a whole and on its elites. It is therefore seductive to blame specific domestic actors for failures, weakening their post-war position. The most
infamous example is the stab-in-the-back myth (Dolchstoßlegende) where German defeat during the First World War was blamed on a joint domestic and international Jewish-Bolshevist conspiracy. This scapegoating set the stage for the later takeover of the state by militarists and by the National Socialist Party, and for the persecution of Jews. Defeats can increase or decrease aggressive behaviour, but this depends on whether the actors can avoid blame during post-war reconstruction. Defeats in total war make it less likely for pre-war and wartime civilian-political and military policymaking elites to avoid blame. Due to the stab-in-the-back legend, German militarist elites were not punished for their overly aggressive, single-minded, and offensive doctrines after the First World War, yet no option of heroic defeat was available after the humiliating defeat and subsequent post-war occupation after the Second World War.

Victory validates the beliefs of policymakers and other domestic actors, and their post-war position. However, because victories are rarely flawless, even in victorious states certain domestic actors can still be blamed for specific war policies. Or, they can fail to benefit from war’s glory. For example, though the US and the UK won the Second World War, both had certain pre-war elites that were de legitimised. In the post-war US debates, the ‘isolationists’ (or western hemispherists) who advocated disengagement from Europe were dismissed, because they failed to correctly predict and prevent the rise of the fascist and imperialist threats during the 1930s. In Britain, the pre-war Government had appeased Hitler over Czechoslovakia and thereby emboldened his ambitions, forever undermining those who advocate less forceful measures to deal with dictators.

The effects that experiences with victory and defeat leave on post-war beliefs, domestic relations, and behaviour can be summarised into a series of claims that emerge from this book’s analysis of an array of quantitative and qualitative data of experiences with war and of post-war policymaking. When brought together, they provide ample leverage to judge the influence of experiences with victory and defeat on policymakers’ beliefs, and their choices. At its heart, this is a book about where the core national strategic beliefs originate and how they become embedded in - and are sustained through - the relations between domestic actors.

**The cases**

The three sets of claims that underpin experience-driven realism are explored by analysing the experiences, beliefs, and behaviour of the states that participated in the Second World War. It is the most destructive, systemic, and recent total war: it included all the major powers, drastically changed the distribution of power and involved the entirety of the trinity of state, society, and the armed forces in nearly all the belligerent states. It is the quintessential case where the consequences of war – should there be any
are to be found. Yet, as a case, the Second World War also offers a variety of experiences. These include unquestionable victories and defeats, as well as more ambiguous versions of both. The large number of participants allows for broader comparative analysis, and this gives the Second World War an advantage that more limited conflicts or major wars with a smaller number of participants do not have. Finally, in the post-war environment, the states, including those that had suffered extensively during the war, possessed sufficient resources to consider various policy options. At the same time, the Second World War is not historically unique. Other major wars, while not involving the entire international system, have also left deep marks on the states. Those wars, however, do not allow an equal test of diversity and intensity of experiences across a variety of different states.

The focus in the present study is particularly on how victory and defeat in the Second World War have for a long time defined the post-war policies in the four major Western powers – the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Since the end of the war all four states have been liberal democracies with considerable political, military, and economic capabilities, but with strikingly different experiences with war. The United States and the United Kingdom were the military and moral victors of the Second World War. Yet, while the United States established itself as the superpower of the post-war order at low societal costs, Britain suffered civilian losses and the post-war collapse of its empire. Nominally one of the victorious states, France suffered a sudden military defeat in the opening stages of the war and lost control over its territory. France was subsequently forced into dependence on its allies, who played the militarily decisive role in French national restoration. At the other extreme of wartime experiences, Germany was completely defeated militarily and discredited morally as the horrors of its occupations and the Holocaust became known; it remained occupied by the former Allied powers after the war; and (West) Germany was rebuilt as a democracy. Or, put in another way, the case studies allow variation through two extreme cases – the US and Germany – and two difficult cases – the UK and France. In each case, both general and specific lessons of the Second World War and of the years leading up to the war were reflected in post-war myths on threats, diplomacy, force, and the roles of the domestic actors shaping grand strategy.

Four puzzles of American, British, French and German strategy

This book demonstrates that the beliefs derived from American, British, French, and German experiences with the Second World War help to explain the following puzzling choices for each of the four states in the post-war environment. Why did the US pursue hegemony in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere? Why did it take on the costs of a global military posture and entangling alliances, even after the end of the Cold War when it led to overstretch, overspending, and overdependence on military force as an instrument?
Why did the UK entangle itself in NATO but not in Europe, instead of relying on its nuclear deterrent and geographical advantages? Why has it maintained a costly internationalist activist strategy, arguably beyond its means? Why did France prioritise strategic autonomy, pursue an independent national nuclear deterrent, and extract itself from the NATO integrated political-military command? Why did France risk alienating the US and risk abandonment by it, although it still faced continental threats from Russia and Germany that could again become unrestrained? Why pursue autonomy after the Cold War? Why did Germany accept both external and internal restraints, not attempt to assert its innate potential especially after the Cold War? Why did it risk free-riding accusations from the liberal order, upon which it depends, through reticence towards using force outside of German territory?

This book seeks to answer these puzzles by inspecting in each nation-state the unique interaction between wartime lessons and beliefs, and post-war relations between domestic actors that resulted in distinct patterns of national strategic behaviour that have persisted for decades. Such beliefs and relations can be summarised as follows.

American policymakers perceived the world as deeply insecure without American leadership, and doubted the ability of the Europeans to defend the continent against the threat of Communism. The sudden collapse of Europe when the war broke out, and the attack on Pearl Harbor, discredited domestic isolationists and overcame longstanding anti-statist and anti-militarist tendencies. The credibility of the US is crucial to resist expansionist authoritarian regimes, and is strongly tied to American military strength, a forward presence by American forces, and interventionist capabilities.

British policymakers sought to secure the UK against the sudden vulnerability to continental threats and avoided the isolation that the UK experienced after Europe had fallen to fascism. The sense of insecurity drove them to accept entangling continental commitments, a radical departure from the UK’s traditional offshore balancing strategy. Due to the sudden defeat, policymakers simultaneously distrusted and felt different from the Continent. Policymakers accepted dependence on the US, as American wartime assistance had broken Britain’s isolation. The failure of appeasement in turn increased the importance of the credible threat of force towards potential adversaries.

French policymakers blamed France’s sudden defeat and occupation on the utter failure of its alliances, and the pre-war political divisions that had undermined military innovation and strategic cohesion. They sought to ensure independence and survival in the post-war environment through an autonomous nuclear deterrent, and refused to fully integrate French forces into the NATO alliance. The sense that the UK had abandoned France, and France’s dependence on the US and the UK during the War, caused a particular distrust of its Anglo-American allies. Placing nearly all strategic decision-making in the hands of a strong executive would prevent the lack of decisiveness, cohesion, and innovation of interwar strategy.
German post-war beliefs were defined by the desire to avoid Germany returning to isolation on the continent due its inherently great power. That isolation had led to the militarization of its foreign policy and the capture of the state by extremist political groups. Germany therefore embedded itself in Europe, in multilateral frameworks, and created strong domestic restraints on force, the executive and the armed forces. Furthermore, the devaluation of foreign policy ambitions created a tendency towards insularism in German strategic thinking.

The implications of such enduring patterns of strategic behaviour are not trivial. It matters if the behaviour of these four states is indeed shaped by beliefs that policymakers derive from national experiences with major wars. These beliefs matter because they not only inspire choices on when to use force, but also because they shape the balancing behaviour of individual states, and their respective propensity to over- or underbalance. Their chosen force postures and alliances in turn preselect, enable, and constrain the options available to policymakers in later crises and conflicts. Historical legacies therefore matter for dramatic choices over use military force, such as in past and recent conflicts in Kosovo, Iraq and Libya. These legacies also matter, however, because they shape the order within which states operate, and that, in turn, shapes the likelihood that states choose conflict or cooperation. In short, wartime legacies are likely to play a role in future challenges calling for policy mixes of conflict and cooperation, whether in Eastern Europe or in East Asia.

From historical analysis to broader theory

This book foremost seeks to understand the origins and durability of American and Europeans’ beliefs as shaped by the Second World War. It argues that structural or institutional features of both the post-war and post-Cold War environments alone were not sufficient to explain the transatlantic policy outcomes. Yet, the arguments also constitute an appeal to broaden neoclassical realist theory to explicitly problematise and historicize the role of ideas and institutions. This appeal resides in how the arguments about the legacies of experience with war are distinct from more pure materialist or idealist forces in international politics. In this respect, this book’s central argument is positioned against structural realist, institutionalist, liberal, and strategic culture explanations.

First, the strategic decisions of these four states during the Cold War and afterwards do not conform to structural realist expectations of the balance of power or the balance of threat as drivers of strategic behaviour. Where the US had the plausible option to take advantage of the natural protection of the oceans and revert to offshore balancing, as did (to a lesser extent) Britain, they maintained activist global strategies. Where France needed to balance and embed itself into alliances, it chose autonomy. Though Germany
relies on its multilateral frameworks, it is limited in its support of them. Germany also
has not capitalised on its power potential. Second, the choices guiding the same powers
in the post-Cold War global order cannot be explained by standard institutionalist
thinking. Despite decades of socialization, there are clear limits to their shared beliefs
and interests, as shown in dissension among them on fundamental matters such as
participation in multilateral military actions. Third, though all four states pursue a
broadly liberal global order, share ideological and economic interests, have similar
regime types, and are strongly dependent on one another, they have strongly contrasting
policies. These differences are visible in terms of the precise regional or global orders
they have strived for, the institutional arrangements to achieve these, and the role that
force should play in achieving these interests. Fourth, though there are unique and
persistent strategic beliefs in all four states, these are not static, and have changed over
the past century. Crucially, however, we will see that even the changes in national beliefs
correlate with their unique experiences with major wars.

This book argues that strategic beliefs define how policymakers interpret threats and the
balance of power, and how they assess the efficacy of alliances and force postures. This
seems similar to strategic culture explanations, yet the experience-driven realism I
propose avoids their shortcomings. As an explanation, strategic culture has no concise
argument about the origin of ideas; about the conditions under which ideas change;
about who holds particular ideas; nor does it differentiate between ideas according to
their relative importance. In contrast, experiences of victory and defeat in war can offer
a cohesive explanation for the origins of and conditions of change in beliefs. They
explain why and how policymakers interpret the value and efficacy of alliances and force
postures, and why these core beliefs on strategy precede and are more important than
other, more peripheral beliefs. In this manner, the ideational and organisational legacies
of wartime experiences approximate strategic culture, yet depart from the latter’s broad
nature.

By bringing attention to such legacies into broader theories of international politics, the
arguments developed here are also about the opposite extremes of the material-ideal
divide: here the experience-driven realist approach shares some assumptions of
structural realism, in terms of ranking certain elements of state behaviour over others.
However, experience-driven realism offers an argument about why policymakers
sometimes over- and sometimes under-balance; why they are sometimes willing to
accept entanglement with other states and sometimes prefer autonomy; and why they
sometimes perceive force postures as provocative and sometime as non-credible. With
its incorporation of the conditions under which the relations between domestic actors
change, experience-driven realism is therefore an elaborated version of neoclassical
realism. Post-war constellations of state, society and armed forces can explain why
wartime experiences not only impact the generation that experienced them, but also
shape the beliefs and biases of subsequent generations. Namely, they shape the national
security institutions within which actors formulate and pursue their strategic beliefs. In
sum, experience-driven realism offers an argument on the origins of strategic beliefs and relations, on their persistence, and offers explanations of why, when and how beliefs can change again – something other approaches cannot offer to the same extent.

**Methodological approach**

The methodological approach of this book is matched to the theoretical underpinnings of the research. Those underpinnings involve measuring and understanding complex concepts like ‘victory’ and ‘defeat’ in the context of major wars. They require tracing possible consequences of experiences on the beliefs and autonomy of various actors in several countries, and their translation into policies. This is an ambitious agenda. This book pursues that agenda in three methodologically distinct examinations of the historical record.

First, the book examines whether separate measures of defeat and losses in the Second World War statistically correlate with measures of the post-war use of force and diplomacy. It is a modest quantitative study but one that includes all the participants in the war. This section of the research takes into account civilian as well as military casualties, experiences with occupation, surrender, and moral culpability in order to fully operationalise the variation in loss, defeat and victory. Force is operationalised both in terms of the number of initiations and the number of times force is threatened, while diplomacy is operationalised through the use of diplomatic representation and membership of international organisations. Alternative explanations such as material capabilities, alignment, and regime are taken into account. The analysis reveals positive correlation between victory and the use of force, between defeat and the use of diplomacy, and vice versa. It also shows significant correlation between victory and an increased use of a mix of force combined with the decreased use of diplomacy, and significant correlation between defeat and increased use of a mix of diplomacy combined with decreased use of force.

Second, this book qualitatively examines the history of policy decisions, explicitly tackling the problems of ideational explanations that do not specify how ideas relate to structural constraints and incentives. The study does so by arguing that the choices of policymakers are hierarchically ordered according to their expected impact on national survival, and with an understanding that there are trade-offs of costs and benefits involved in making these choices. Similar behaviour by states has different meanings in different contexts and so does different behaviour in similar contexts. Furthermore, the qualitative policy history includes explicit and structured analysis of counterfactuals – for it is not only the paths taken and those considered that should be explained, but also those not even considered. Combinations of historical and counterfactual historical analysis for all four states both during and after the Cold War show that strategic
options from minimalist to maximalist in scope were and are both possible and plausible. Counterfactuals enable the problematisation and ‘denormalisation’ of strategic behaviour, and demonstrate that the eventual choices were not unavoidable and determined by the strategic environment. The structure of the environment may have forced policymakers to make choices, but not what to choose. Core strategic beliefs on alliances and force posture were decisive for the content of those choices.

Third, this book conducts content analysis of key strategic documents and of policymaker and media discourse to clarify how policymakers connect strategic means and ends, how they weigh and rank threats, the extent to which they feel the constraints of domestic politics, and how these larger strategic beliefs interact with day-to-day politics. Specifically, the study looks into how and which national myths are used to underline these beliefs. The national languages of strategy were researched through the analysis of texts: policy documents, speeches, and interviews. Fifty years of high-level policy documents relating to national strategy, such as national security strategies, white papers and other texts, were examined through content analysis. The analysis was expanded upon through a series of 48 interviews with bureaucrats from the departments of foreign and defence policy, policy advisors, military officers, and members of political parties in the US, Britain, France and Germany. Finally, a historical look at whether and how historical analogies were applied in later conflicts, and whether and how these conflicts reinforced or undermined core and peripheral strategic beliefs was used to evaluate the enduring nature of the legacies of the Second World War.

This book combines these separate methods into one comprehensive argument of why and how choices on force and diplomacy are driven by experiences with war. The research design also takes the complex nature of grand strategy seriously. The final contribution of the book is therefore to open up the methodological toolbox for the study of strategy and to show how to effectively leverage several research tools against one another to gain insight into a dynamic and changing concept.

**Plan of the book**

This book is structured as follows. Chapter two reviews the literature on the legacies of war and on the origins of grand strategy, including the literature that looks at collective memory, the war-weariness thesis, and the use of analogies by decision-makers. The chapter builds the book’s theoretical framework around the three sets of claims discussed above. These claims define experience-driven realism - an elaborated version of neoclassical realism. The strengths of this approach are compared to those of rival theories such as structural realism, institutionalism, liberalism, strategic culture, and other neoclassical realist approaches.
Chapter three provides a test of the first set of claims on the relationship between victory and defeat and post-war propensity to use of force and diplomacy, using regression models. While necessarily focused on a constrained cross section of countries and periods of time, the chapter does unearth substantive, suggestive evidence that the experiences with victory and defeat have measurable and concrete implications for various measures of military force and diplomacy — in line with the book’s central arguments.

Chapters four and five examine more thoroughly the consequences of experiences with the Second World War for core and peripheral strategic beliefs, and the post-war relations between state, society, and armed forces in the US, Britain, France, and Germany. The two chapters then assess the effect of these beliefs and relations, and focus on the respective threat assessments, views on the distribution of power, alliances, force postures, and other instrumental beliefs of policymakers. They also discuss the relative autonomy of the state, society, and the army forces, which define the autonomy of policymakers to enact their beliefs. Chapters four and five pertain largely to the second and third sets of claims.

Chapter six further expands upon the second set of claims about strategic beliefs, and argues, through the use of counterfactuals, that alternative grand strategies were available to these four states, and demonstrates that the actual grand strategies of these states were far from predetermined. Instead, engrained strategic beliefs would seem to have been decisive in choosing how to respond to the structural constraints and incentives of the environment.

Chapters seven and eight explore the use of historical lessons and analogies in strategic documents and discourse. Chapter seven presents the results of the content analysis of the policy documents and focuses on statements concerning the international and domestic environment and instrumental beliefs found in the texts. Chapter eight broadens the scope of the content analysis to include speeches and interviews with policymakers, and discusses how historical references were applied in later conflicts, and how these conflicts reinforced or undermined the beliefs within these four nation-states. Together, chapters seven and eight show both that beliefs mattered for strategic decisions and that they were reproduced over the decades that followed the war, further examining the second and third sets of claims.

The conclusion returns to the three sets of claims made in the introduction and the theoretical chapter, and assesses whether the findings substantiated them. It attempts to apply the implications of the theory to other cases. The conclusion also argues why and how these beliefs are likely to change or remain consistent over time, and what the consequences for strategic responses to the changing global order are likely to be in the near future.
The argument made in this book is important for anyone who cares about the lessons of national experience. While we are not bound to the past, how we understand it strongly defines our approach to the future. There is a real danger if policy is calibrated on some mythical sense of the past. Strategy involves matching ends and means; by definition there are no benign biases in strategic thinking, specifically if one is unaware of them. An unconsidered reticence or principled opposition to the use of force may be as troubling as an unconsidered enthusiasm towards war. The former may embolden threats and create the very chaos it seeks to avoid, while the latter can provoke counterbalancing behaviour and the escalation of conflict.

The world is undergoing rapid change. The redistribution of power in the global order and the rise of new powers, the aggression of declining powers, the enduring insecurity and political insecurity in many parts of the world; these all demand clarity of purpose and sober assessment, keeping biases and misperceptions to a minimum. Fixed beliefs limit the possible futures of Europe and its collective ability to avoid dependence and to foster security. They overextend the US beyond its means and without clear ends, and lead to an overemphasis on credibility that risks driving the existing order towards increasing fragility. What is needed is strategy that avoids both overreaching and shirking, and accepts the fundamental complexity of international relations. The past sets traps for policymakers with a seductive reductionism that at best steers us away from old mistakes but leaves us wide open to new ones. This book might perhaps go some way in increasing our awareness to our own blindness as we stumble into a hopefully brighter future.
Chapter Two

Legacies of War,
Origins of Grand Strategy
The central question that this book seeks to answer is whether and how national experiences with victory and defeat have lasting effects on the post-war grand strategies of nation-states, specifically their propensity to use force and diplomacy? Do victory and defeat strongly shape the beliefs of policymakers on the international environment and on the efficacy of diplomacy and force? And, if they do, why do these preferences endure over time, and under what conditions do they change; why does victory or defeat in one war leave a greater and more enduring legacy than another; and why and how do these preferences shape actual grand strategic behaviour, even taking international and domestic political developments into account?

In the first chapter, three sets of expectations were introduced to answer the central question and its sub-questions. This chapter sets up the theoretical and empirical bases for those expectations. I show that the existing literature already has convincing arguments on the relationship between wartime experiences of victory and defeat on the one hand, and unique and enduring strategic beliefs on the other. There are two separate, but related, literatures: one that focuses on the legacies that wars leave, another that focuses on the origins of grand strategy. Both are reviewed, and their respective strengths and weaknesses discussed. Then, I show how several elements in the two literatures reinforce each other, and build my own theoretical contribution onto those elements. My contribution accepts the importance of structural constraints at the international and at the domestic level, but elaborates on neoclassical realism by arguing that beliefs strongly shape the responses of policymakers to these constraints. It draws from the positivist version of constructivist theories on the role of beliefs, but argues that certain strategic beliefs hierarchically precede others. This places it in line with structural and neoclassical realist arguments. Experiences with war matter for both the beliefs and structure of domestic relations. The final section of the chapter addresses the methodological challenges that are related to an ideational study on the origins of grand strategy.

**Literature on the legacies of war**

The horror that war induces to most of us is arguably only equalled by its grip on our imagination. Neither classical history nor literature or other art is imaginable without this focus on war and the ‘great men’ who fought them. National histories, until very recently, were predominantly accounts of wars against invaders, wars of national liberations, or conversely, wars for imperial glory.

Watershed events such as war are foundational for the identity of the nation-state, and consequently should leave a significant imprint on thinking about, and on actual policy. As an extreme state of being, war defines and shapes our understanding of ourselves as individuals, and of our societies. Wars from the past continue to act as rhetorical
signposts in a nation’s debates on the direction of foreign policy. However, establishing such a relationship between wartime experiences and decades-enduring grand strategy is also deeply problematic and has, so far, been inconclusive. On the one hand, there is the breadth and depth of societal and generational wartime experiences, and national legacies that are aggregated from a diversity of deeply personal events and interpretations. On the other hand, there is the complexity and context of policymaking within continuous and competing pressures that make it difficult to establish clear causal claims between experiences, beliefs and behaviour. These are very difficult and distinctly different challenges.

In response to the complex of the legacies of war, several distinct research agendas have emerged, each with a specific methodological approach. First, there is a historiographical tradition of single case studies, which approach the problem through the in-depth, often sociological, qualitative analysis of the legacy of a specific war on one nation-state, or even on one social group. The collective memory literature largely falls under this category. This literature is often less preoccupied with causal claims than with establishing the complex outcomes of victim or villain status and the meaning of triumph and tragedy. Second, there is a comparative approach which has attempted, quantitatively, to establish whether victorious and defeated states are respectively more or less likely to initiate conflict in the post-war era. This grouping of literature can be termed the war-weariness literature, and it seeks to make clear predictive claims of post-war behaviour based on war outcome. Third, there are a series of studies to clarify if, how and when decision-makers use historical analogies to diagnose events and formulate solutions. These authors also seek to make causal claims, but focus on a series of moments where uncertainty dominates and tend to make fewer claims on other, longer-term strategic choices. Fourth, there is the strategic culture literature, which is not exclusively connected to wartime experiences, but does attempt to historicise how longer-term national strategic beliefs are shaped.

In the sections below these four literatures are discussed with their respective arguments on the experiences with war on the post-war politics and behaviour, and their respective strengths and weaknesses highlighted. These strengths are then applied to the literature on international and domestic origins of grand strategy to show how wartime legacies decisively shape how states respond to international and domestic pressures and constraints.

Collective memory

The first set of literature focuses predominantly on the societal consequences of war in a series of historiographical or sociological single case studies that attempt to uncover the full complexity of events and their interpretation. Authors argue that past wars provide
the foundational myths for the nation-state, giving insight into its weaknesses and strengths. The collective memory of such wars, and the myths that are part of that memory, figure prominently as signposts of a shared national past (Ashplant, Dawson et al. 2000; McMahon 2002; Müller 2002; Schivelbusch 2003; Giesen 2004; Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006; Winter 2006; Macleod 2008; Riera and Schaffer 2008; Echternkamp and Martens 2010; Wieviorka 2010). These national experiences can be considered in terms of two axes: one that ranges between victor and loser, the other between perpetrator and victim (Lebow in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 7). While victory validates the actions of the victor and defeat undermines the loser, the moral ‘rightness’ of victim or villain status can transform the meaning of the outcomes. The victorious are especially validated when they were also the victims of aggression, whereas the defeated become villains especially when they perpetrated aggression. The meaning of the experiences is, however, diffuse, constantly renegotiated, instrumentally used and abused, and reiterated across generations. History does not directly relate to myth (Lévi-Strauss 1978, p.43). To post-war politics it matters whether the wartime regime was seen as prudent or as opportunistic: military defeat can spark popular mobilisation and revolution, and lead to the loss of power (if not the lives) of traditional ruling elites (Kier and Krebs in Kier, Krebs 2010, p.12).

Conversely, defeat can be mediated in the post war environment. For example, after the Civil War, the former Confederate states successfully created the myth of a heroic ‘Lost Cause’ that romanticised and celebrated the honour, devotion, and commitment of the Confederate soldiers, (McMahon 2002, pp. 167, 171-172). In national myths, the tragic hero in defeat often appears in conjunction with a villainous betrayer at the homefront. The ‘Dolchstoss Legend’ that emerged in Germany after the First World War is the most infamous of these. It blamed German military defeat on a supposed Jewish-Bolshevist conspiracy within Germany that stabbed the brave German soldier in the back. Not military leaders who held tight to a failing strategy until defeat was inevitable were to blame, but Jewish Germans shirking their duty in the trenches, war profiteers, and weak social-democrat politicians. Such myths of betrayal display specific troubling, recurring themes across societies. The German dagger legend partly consisted of stories of women - or effeminate men - spitting upon the veterans returning from the front. Similar stories emerged both during the French pullback from Algeria and the American losses in Vietnam. These narratives explicitly emphasise the female-dominated decadence of the home front, and the moral superiority and virility of the combatants (Lembcke 1998, pp. 84-91). They thereby offer an escape from a true appraisal of the events and the ideas that led to the defeat.

Only when societies are forced by absolutely crushing defeat, where no recourse of tragic heroes or scapegoats exists, does the need to create a new sense of national identity and purpose dominate the post-war debates (McMahon 2002, pp. 171-172). Calleo (2002), Sheehan (2008), and others have argued that the European experiences in the first half of the twentieth century led to the end of military culture in Europe, the rise of the
‘civilian state’, as well as a willingness to sacrifice sovereignty in favour of multilateral accommodations to the interests of others.

War does not only impact foreign policy or (de) legitimise certain domestic groups. It shapes the extent of participation and contestation within the domestic political order, and the overall quality of that order. War and the state created one another, as Tilly (1975) famously argued. The concrete effects of war on state developments are diverse and often contradictory, ranging from formative and organizing effects, to disintegrative effects, and reformative effects (Porter 1994, p. 11). Labour movements are more likely to benefit from mass-participation warfare than limited military engagements, because the greater demands the state makes gives these movements greater leverage over the state. War might benefit society, because mobilization creates strong norms of egalitarianism and mobilisation exposes social problems thereby enlightening the state. Or it might administratively and fiscally strengthen the state so it is better equipped to implement reform. Other arguments combine the interaction between state and society, recognising the changing political leverage of certain actors on other, and the conflict inherent in any expansion of democratic citizenship following watershed events (Kier in Kier and Krebs, 2010, pp. 140-141, p. 159).

However, while they address the complexity of unique national experiences with war, historiographical single case studies are inherently limited in establishing larger patterns across nation-states, or the impact of the experiences on foreign policy. There is therefore a need for a more systematic and comparative look at what experiences lead to what outcomes, but one that incorporates the domestic political dynamics that follow victory and defeat.

**War-weariness and war-proneness**

The second major set of theories can be summarised as the war-weariness literature. It starts from an innately appealing thesis: the generations that grew up immersed in the horrors and costs of war would be resistant to, if not inoculated against, new appeals to national pride and martial glory: 'A long and severe bout of fighting confers immunity on most of those that have experienced it' (Richardson 1960, p. 232). Unsurprisingly, the war-weariness thesis was considered particularly relevant in the aftermath of the horror and destruction of the two world wars. For example, the sudden and ‘strange’ defeat of France in 1940 is often ascribed to a supposed lack of morale and will to fight within a French society still dealing with the devastating losses incurred during the First World War (Bloch, 1946; Horne 1969). The works that attempts to disentangle the process by which national experiences reflect collective memory naturally tend towards deep, fine-grained, qualitative analysis, and they are therefore limited in their potential for generalisation. In contrast, the war-weariness thesis has greater potential for
quantitative empirical testing. As larger datasets cataloguing the duration, costs, and outcomes of wars became available, various authors attempted to do just this. However, that literature, while established and quite extensive (including Singer and Small 1974; Levy 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986; Garnham 1986; Nevin 1996; Pickering 2002), has so far not succeeded in generalizing how wars shape the likelihood that nation-states will initialise conflicts after victory or defeat. The effects of war that have been found are often slight, if not contradictory.

To illustrate, in one of their earlier articles utilising the Correlates of War (COW) dataset, Singer and Small (1974) examined whether states that initiated victorious wars were more likely to initiate new wars. While such a trend of contagion appeared in the twentieth century, Singer and Small found the opposite for the nineteenth century, where states that initiated and lost were in fact more likely to initiate another conflict. In a further investigation, Levy (1982) found that the occurrence of great power war diminished the overall incidence of war but that these correlations were too small to be meaningful. Levy and Morgan (1986) argued that COW’s 1000 battle deaths is too high a threshold and that analyses should include lower-intensity actions in the states in the periphery. However, their findings were not sufficiently strong to support the hypothesis of positive contagion, while the relatively short time intervals between great wars contradict the war-weariness hypothesis (Levy and Morgan 1986). Attempting to further address unit-level differences by incorporating regime type and generational effects, Garnham (1986), in his study of war-proneness and war-weariness, also found no statistically significant results. Nevin (1996) added additional complexity, by showing that the dampening effect on war-proneness of a loss was offset by one or more wins before the loss. Furthermore, losers had a high probability of initiating wars 20-24 years after defeat, suggesting a generational effect on revanchism. Pickering (2002) elaborated upon the notion of cumulative effects by taking sequences of victory and defeat and showed there was indeed an emboldening effect of victory and a dampening effect of defeat. (Though this result was later strongly criticised by Wilson and Butler (2007)).

Subsequent research (Horowitz and Stam 2014) shows that civilian policymakers who have served in the military, but have no personal experience with combat, are more likely to use force or the threat of force.

Unfortunately, the study of war-weariness and of particular historical moments of wartime experience has shed only faint light on the important issue of the legacies of war. There are several reasons why this likely is the case. Most importantly, existing research exclusively focuses on military casualties and ignores civilian casualties. Relatedly, the ravages left on societies in the wake of invasion and occupation of the home territory, such as collaboration, resistance, torture, and starvation, are also not taken into account. Due to their direct impact on normative views of state power and legitimacy (see also the literature reviewed in the previous section), they should have greater consequences on the post-war societal willingness to use force than other limited and geographically distant, military engagements. The war-weariness literature has so
far been unable to engage with the complex societal effects that emerge from a reading of the collective memory literature. Their exclusion makes it questionable whether until now the war-weariness thesis has been adequately assessed by the various empirical tests. Finally, this literature does not address exactly how and when experiences with victory and defeat have direct effects on the decision-making of policymakers.

**Decision-making and ‘lessons of the past’**

The third grouping of literature focuses on the manner in which decision-makers learn and apply ‘lessons of the past’. Authors have pointed out that policymakers are especially likely to invoke past experiences during crisis situations (May 1973; Jervis 1976; Khong 1992; Levy 1994; Heuser and Buffet in Buffet and Heuser 1998; McMahon 2002; Hoogland Noon 2004; Record 2007; Dallek 2010). They argue that the use of historical analogies is a particularly attractive way to reduce uncertainty and simplify the choices and challenges in an evolving international strategic environment (May 1973; Jervis 1976, p. 217; Khong 1992).

These historical myths may have instrumental uses within political rhetoric, catalysing consensus where the slow and difficult process of persuasion through rational argument might not produce the same result (Heuser and Buffet 1998, pp. 266-267). The use of analogy is particularly effective in terms of the predisposition towards adversaries, where dealing with one kind of adversary will increase the chances that other adversaries will be seen as similar (Jervis 1976, p. 244). The most famous example is the myth of Munich. The failure of the appeasement of Hitler over the fate of Czechoslovakia in Munich in 1938 is often invoked, specifically by advocates of the use of force against contemporary authoritarian regimes, whether in Korea, Suez, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf war, Kosovo, and the Iraq war. Prior biases also increase or decrease the chances that the outcomes of crises are perceived as victories or defeats, through the sensitivity of observers towards certain framing effects provided by the crisis evolution, or the deliberate manipulation of perception (Johnson and Tierney 2003).

What is relevant here is how often certain analogies recur and dominate debates, regardless of the context or the availability of more appropriate and challenging alternative analogies (Khong 1992; McMahon 2002; Hoogland Noon 2004; Dallek 2010). Greater historical knowledge does not necessarily improve decision-making – a dramatic and important experience often provides an analogy that will be applied too quickly, easily, and widely. Decision-makers will lose the context of the lesson on which the axiom is based (Jervis, 1976, pp. 220, 234). Moreover, as with any myth, whether originally used instrumentally by elites or not, there is the risk of blowback from propaganda, where subsequent generations of elites believe these myths and fail to
realize their instrumental origins (Snyder 1991, p. 41). Consequently, the likelihood of re-examination of assumptions decreases, and path-dependency becomes more likely.

Historical analogies may seem instrumentally convenient for policymakers, but there is abundant evidence that policymakers do not only apply these lessons when they are convenient. This suggests that the roots of such recurring myths are foremost cognitive. Cognitive psychology reveals that actors adopt heuristics to deal with uncertainty and depend on biases to deconstruct problems down to more manageable elements. In turn, these heuristics can then also serve as powerful tools to communicate policy by establishing a common understanding between their users. Schema theory is particularly relevant here as both Larson (1992) and Khong (1995) refer to the tendency towards top-down processing - information that does not fit the schema is either ignored or not given the weight that it deserves. Khong’s comprehensive study on American decision-makers during Korea and Vietnam is a particularly good illustration of this logic. He found that policymakers invoked largely the same analogies in public debate as in private meetings to diagnose, comprehend and communicate policy dilemmas (Khong 1992). Other processes of diagnostic learning, such as Bayesian updating, might not be used as often by policymakers (Levy 1994).

The research focusing on the use of analogies in decision-making tends to give the greatest attention to moments of crisis. Reiter’s (1994, 1996) analysis of alliance behaviour by small states is an example of research that does take into account how states adopt long-term strategic preferences based on the results of previous wars. Based on the realist assumption that small states have the choice between neutrality or alliance when faced with the imminent threat of war, Reiter argues that this choice will be made on the basis of analogy to the success or failure that the state experienced with either neutrality or alliance in the previous war, and the level of systemic threat has only marginal effects on the variable (Reiter 1996). Another exception is Legro’s (2005) work, in which he argues that policy failure can lead to profound changes in the manner in which elites look at international society. Yet, this work does not explicitly account that victory could also change the thinking of elites, except as a reinforcement of earlier changes.

While this is promising in understanding more closely how past events shape specific policy decisions, it remains unclear why certain lessons dominate and under what conditions they are able to shape policy (Levy 1994). Partly, the inability to draw larger conclusions on the translation of experiences into behaviour is a methodological problem deriving from the predominant focus on single case studies (acknowledging obvious exceptions such Reiter (1994, 1996). This historiographical and anecdotal

---

1 Learning should not be equated with the ‘lessons of history’ or historical analogies. It is part of learning, but not its sum. (Levy, 1994)
approach makes it is difficult to generalise how experiences with threats, allies, and the use of force should translate into subsequent strategic paradigms in other contexts.

Strategic culture and ideational explanations

The fourth literature, the one on strategic culture, while not dealing exclusively with the legacy of wartime experiences, is relevant because it attempts to historicise enduring national patterns of beliefs and explain the cumulative outcome of national strategic behaviour. However, it remains inherently difficult to establish whether ideas are independent sources of variation, or instrumental or epiphenomenal instead. It is generally acknowledged that ideas have an influence over policymaking, but, as Hall (1989, p. 4) argues, any attempt to specify how ideas acquire political influence tends towards reductionism. It remains difficult to clarify the origins of ideas, who holds them, and the conditions under which they change, but not doing so leaves a clear hole at the centre of our understanding of public policy. The analysis of the role of ideas as independent variables in political decision-making of any kind therefore often goes no further than taking stock of publically expressed ideas.

Strategic culture explanations attempt to show engrained national beliefs regarding strategy. This literature has developed in four waves since the late 1970s (Johnston 1998; Lantis 2006; Glenn 2009), each of which reflects different positions on the difficulties of treating ideas as an important element in strategy-making. When Snyder (1977) and Gray (1981) introduced the notion of ‘national policy styles’ in the late 1970s, they considered them as largely epiphenomenal: nationally specific strategic language and symbols merely intervene in, rather than explain, strategic behaviour. In the 1980s, the post-structuralist school treated culture as an instrument of social actors engaged in selling their policies to a sceptical public. It is only the third wave of positivist/conventional constructivist, which includes authors such as Legro (1995), Katzenstein (1996), Berger (1998), Duffield (1998), Johnston (1998), Kier (1997), and Tannenwald (1996, 2005), that conceptualised strategic culture in a manner that is closest to the positivist research agenda of realism. These authors accorded independent explanatory power to ideas, though they acknowledged problems in isolating strategic culture as a variable. They define strategic culture as an integrated system of symbols (Johnston 1996, p. 222) that acts to establish and maintain pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences at cognitive, evaluative and affective levels that mediate behaviour (Berger 1998, pp. 16, 23-25; Duffield 1998, p. 23). At the cognitive level, strategic culture consists of empirical and causal beliefs on the nature of the international system, whether conflict is inevitable or avoidable, the possibilities for conflict or cooperation, the character and nature of other states (Duffield 1998, pp. 23-25; Johnston 1996, pp. 222-223; Berger 1998, p. 16). At the evaluative level, it contains values, norms, and moral judgments of political goals (Berger 1998, p. 16); specifically of the national
interest (Duffield 1998, pp. 23-25), and causal beliefs about which instruments, particularly military force, are most efficacious to achieve desired outcomes (Duffield 1998, pp. 23-25; Johnston 1996, pp. 222-223). At the expressive or affective level, it deals with issues such as national identity and ideology (Duffield 1998, pp. 23-25); where it strongly conditions the ability of states to mobilize the national resources for military or broader strategic purposes (Berger 1998, p. 16). The fourth wave of interpretivist scholars viewed the search for falsifiable generalized statements as inherently flawed (Glenn 2009). Its research agenda instead reemphasises the instrumental uses of cultural symbols. Scholars argued for the need for the defamiliarisation, denaturalisation, and the problematisation of the conventionalist state-centric bias, and an emphasis on the legitimization of the use of military force through narratives on threats (Weldes, Laffey et al. 1999, p. 20; Kirchner and Sperling 2007; Lock 2010). Lock (2010) argues that the conventional constructivist authors obfuscate the agency of the actors involved in constructing the narratives. The role of language is crucial here: while conventional constructivists assume language corresponds to strategic culture, the interpretative, critical constructivists instead consider language as constituting strategic culture through its use (Lock 2010).

The broadness of the concept, in spite of the intellectually intuitive and accessible appeal, has led to the critique that it is too vague and difficult to delineate, as well as essentialist and static, to be empirically tested (Gray 1999; Johnston 1999; Poore 2003). Scholars from the first, and positivist, generation of strategic culture scholars took issue with the attempts of the third wave of positivist-constructivist scholars to isolate strategic culture as an explanatory variable, with Gray (1999) criticising Johnston (1999) for attempting to do so. In a later piece, Gray (2003) argues it is a methodologically nearly impossible enterprise if one seeks falsifiable theory, because culture is pervasive. Yet, attempts to concretise strategic culture (Cornish and Edwards 2005; Meyer 2005) or more closely integrate it with neoclassical realism (Glenn 2009, 2014) show promise, building on the work of Berger (1998) and Duffield (1998) who were explicit about the role of institutions in underlining the influence of ideas (though considering them separate).

The general criticism of strategic culture perspectives remains that, in their focus on language, they tend to remain underdeveloped on why certain beliefs come to dominate certain policy debates, which actors own which beliefs, and the conditions under which these beliefs change. Distinguishing how much explanatory power lies in the ideational realm, and how much in structural constraints, is further undermined by the methodological approach of the strategic culture studies. Like the collective memory and analogical approaches, strategic culture literature predominantly, and understandably, consists of dense single case studies to achieve leverage over the innate intangibility of ideas. However, this limits the ability to establish whether patterns exist across states.
Theoretical gaps

In summary, these four literatures recognise several key features of the relationship between wartime experiences with victory and defeat and strategic behaviour. First, that wars are foundational to the identity of nation-states and leave long-lasting collective memories and myths. Victory legitimises some actors, while defeat undermines others. The meaning of these experiences is itself politicised and part of on-going domestic political competition. Second, although the evidence is contradictory, victory and defeat seem to have some effect on the propensity of states to initiate wars. Third, that the past is present in the consideration of policymakers, as a means of reducing the uncertainty under which they operate. Fourth, that the policymakers of nation-states tend to hold strategic worldviews, beliefs and biases that are unique and endure across decades.

What these literatures lack, however, is a comprehensive argument for when, how, and why wars shape specific beliefs; how and why beliefs are translated into behaviour; why they endure over time; and the conditions under which they again change. Extensive studies by historians tracing the legacies of particular wars for particular regimes exist, but there is little comparative work that establishes case to case patterns (Kier and Krebs in Kier and Krebs, 2010, p.2). The relationship between victory and defeat on post-war propensity to initiate war is not clear. Problematically, none of the comparative studies has taken into account the full range of experiences, treating war outcomes as simple, dichotomous variables. Civilian casualties are ignored, as are experiences that might bring the costs of war directly to the homefront. National experiences with, for example, occupation should drastically change the perception of the costs of war. How war experiences might impact other elements of strategy that could function as a partial alternative to force, such as diplomacy, has also been ignored in the comparative studies. Nor has sufficient attention been paid to the formation of long-term grand strategy, instead emphasising decision-making during foreign policy crises. The strong focus on language in strategic culture also fails to adequately address how language, beliefs, structural constraints, and behaviour relate to one another.

To understand the importance of beliefs, the range of strategic options available to actors needs to be clear. How experiences with war shape the beliefs of policymakers must be seen in light of the relationships between actors in those national contexts. These are themselves, as seen in the collective memory studies and suggested by the war-weariness literature, shaped by the experiences with war. To build such an argument, it is necessary to contrast and compare states with clearly different wartime experiences, but otherwise similar backgrounds.
Literature on the origins of grand strategy

This section reviews the major literatures on the origins of grand strategy. Just as the dominant debates within the international relations and foreign policy literature, these literatures either focus on the structure of the international environment that constrains state behaviour, or on preferences within nation-states at the societal level that define the national interest. The theoretical approaches can be further distinguished as to whether they are based on realist and liberal assumptions: realist assumptions about the need to maximise power or security, and liberal assumptions about interdependence between societies and shared values. The theories about the role of the structure of the international environment also contain those institutionalist perspectives that emphasise the expanding role of institutions to reduce the uncertainty in interactions between states. The theories that emphasise the domestic level also contain literature on domestic institutions and interests, such as civil-military relations, organisational and bureaucratic politics. In the section, I further define the methodological problems of the analysis of strategic beliefs, specifically because strategy is impossible to divorce from dynamic interactions and context.

After these literatures have been reviewed, I argue for the appropriateness of a neoclassical realist approach when studying grand strategy, due to the attention it pays to both the international and the domestic structure. Yet, shortcomings exist within the neoclassical realist literature with regards to the origins of domestic structure, and the conditions of their change. In order to address weaknesses within neoclassical realism, I will elaborate my own approach in fourth section of the chapter.

International structure

The elaborated version of neoclassical realism I introduce in the fourth section of this chapter takes several of the key assumptions and arguments of neoclassical realism as its starting point, which in turn are built on those of structural realism. The most important of these arguments is that states respond to the international distribution of military capabilities through balancing behaviour, which takes the form of external and/or internal balancing against powerful or threatening states, or bandwagoning with them. External balancing is the formation of alliances with other states, while internal balancing is the construction of military capabilities (Waltz 1979, p. 168). Structuralist realist explanations fall into two camps: the offensive realist paradigm that stresses states seek to maximise their power (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 1990 and 2001; Layne 1993), and the defensive realist paradigm that stresses states seek to maintain and maximise their own security (Posen 1984; Snyder 1985; Walt 1987; Van Evera 1999). Whether conflict is endemic or avoidable depends on whether states respond to imbalances of power, as the offensive realists argue (Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 2001), or
instead to specific combinations of capabilities and perceived intentions that define balances of threats, as defensive realists argue (Walt 1987, Van Evera 1999).

In offensive realism, states either seek regional hegemony or try to prevent other states from achieving it. Military capabilities can be increased through spending. The choice for an offensive, defensive, or deterrent doctrine depends on the power of the state itself and its adversaries, and whether it is a status quo or revisionist state. External balancing strategies include balancing with other states against the would-be hegemon, bandwagoning with the future hegemon, or by passing the buck to other states to do so (Mearsheimer 2001). Maritime states, such as the US and the UK, that are protected by ‘the stopping power of water’ from direct threats (Mearsheimer 2001) are able to act as an off-shore balancer and pass the buck towards continental states. The UK’s strategy throughout Europe’s modern history bears this out, as it kept out of continental affairs except when it appeared a single state would dominate the mainland. The US could avoid entangling itself in European affairs, except when dealing with the possibility of a single state dominating the Eurasian continent. In contrast, France could not afford itself the luxury of off-shore balancing and instead sought balancing coalitions in both world wars. When offensive realism has failed to predict the lack of balancing behaviour against the US after the end of the Cold War, new iterations of the approach argued that, due to the extremely imbalanced distribution of power within the international system, other states have simply given up on balancing the US (Layne 2009).

Defensive realism takes a more subdued approach to the distribution of power, arguing it is the balance of threat in the system that provokes external and internal balancing (Walt 1987). Since states seek to maximize security, the reduction of uncertainty can stave off the initiation of aggression. Posen, for example, argues that the doctrinal choices of Great Britain, France, and Germany in the decades before the Second World War were driven by shifts in the European balance of power. The attempts at buck-passing by the British and the French and German expansionism are in line with balance of power theory (Posen 1984, pp. 228-235). The absence of overt balancing behaviour on the part of the European states after the end of the Cold War may reflect the lack of a perception of threat from the US (Posen 2006), although they might still be soft balancing against the US through alternative means (Pape 2005). Perhaps, it is precisely the maritime nature of American power that makes it less threatening to land-based powers due to its innate constraints on occupying armies (Levy and Thompson 2010). In contrast, historically speaking, land-based powers inherently are threatening to one another with their long borders and large land armies. Yet, the distinction between offensive and defensive realism is difficult to maintain, because the maximization of power security might in practice be de facto equivalent (Mearsheimer 2001, pp. 20-21).

However, neither offensive or defensive realism purports to offer arguments for the speed and intensity of balancing behaviour, and why states can over-, under-, non, or appropriately balance in similar circumstances (Schweller 2006, 2009). The offensive
realists tend to consider such matters as belonging to foreign policy rather than international politics (Waltz 1979, pp. 121-122; 1996; Mearsheimer 2001, pp. 10-12). Realist theories are predominantly systemic and predict structural outcomes, rather than specific foreign policies. Yet, the distinction between international politics and foreign policy is often difficult to maintain, as both structural realist theories generate general predictions on state behaviour. Structural realist have also written foreign policy prescriptions (Elman 1996). However, due to the pre-eminence of power and its understanding of the military roots of strategy, realism offers the baseline approach to the origins of the grand strategies of states.

Institutionalism offers an alternative group of theories that looks to structural features of the international environment in shaping the strategic responses of states. It emphasises the reduction of uncertainty among states through information sharing, and the lowering of transaction costs to solve collective action problems (Keohane 1998). Institutions therefore lessen the persistent insecurity caused by the lack of a sovereign to enforce order in anarchical regional or global order, which makes institutionalism a complementary, rather than rival, theory to structural realism. Institutions do not negate the importance of power (Weitsman 2013, p. 2). Competing approaches stress either the rationalist or constructivist aspects of this process, but agree that institutions have a socializing role and lead to the internalization of new roles and interests (Checkel 2005). Wallander (2000) argues that as institutions, alliances themselves make a difference in the capacity of states to coordinate their policies and mount credible deterrence or defence. Institutions persist because they are costly to create and less costly to maintain, so member-states remain useful despite changed circumstances. In order to achieve assurance and prevent misperception, states design political-military security institutions to foster integration and interdependence among the members so that they can reveal that they have neither the intention nor the capacity to pose a threat to one another (Wallander 2000). Other works, such as Risse-Kappen (1995), emphasise the liberalist and constructivist aspects of cooperation through international institutions such as NATO (see also Katzenstein 1996 for discussion of ideas and institutions). Yet, though liberalism and institutionalism are often lumped together, they are distinct explanations (Moravcisk 1997).

Institutionalists have advanced an alternative set of structural explanations for the puzzling persistence of stable and cooperative relations among the industrial democracies after the Cold War. Ikenberry argues that this was possible due to a combination of: strategic restraint of the US to reassure weaker states that it would not abandon or dominate them; institutions that create constraints on state action that serve to reduce the returns to power; shared values; the firm embedding of the rules and institutions in wider structures of politics and society, with these institutions delivering an increasing return (Ikenberry 1998). In an environment dominated by instability, NATO's experience and assets as an institution for cooperation and integration among members could be expanded to foster assurance among the members, and prevent the
renationalization of defence policies (Wallander 2000). International institutions are clearly an important part of understanding security policies, especially in the post-Cold War environment, but they complement realist or liberalist outlooks rather than replace them, since the origins of institutions lie in the policies of constituent states.

**Domestic level**

Liberalism does not deny that states can exhibit conflict-seeking behaviour, but argues that this is not an inevitable result of the structure of the international system. States first define their preferences at the domestic level and only then do they act upon the international stage (Moravcsik 1997). Therefore it has certain advantages over structuralist theories when explaining foreign policy behaviour. States represent a subset of domestic society, whose views constitute state preferences, and liberal theory analytically precedes both realism and institutionalism because it defines the conditions under which their assumptions hold. Most importantly, liberal theorists argue that they, whether they are ideational, commercial or republican liberalists - do have an argument about change, which is seen to derive from economic, political, and social modernization, unlike structural explanations (Moravcsik 1997). For example, Trubowitz (2011) argues that assessments of domestic political costs explain when American policymakers pursued expansive or restrained policies internationally. With regards to international conflict, liberal peace theorists argue that as a consequence of increased trade, economic interdependence, and the growing number of democracies, at the aggregated international level, the incentives for states to use force are declining (Doyle 1983; Maoz and Russett 1993; Russett and O'Neal 2001). Indeed, whether due the increasing number of democracies and international organisations, as liberal peace theory argues, or to the greater importance of trade and interdependence, as capitalist peace theory argues, the empirical record for over six decades has shown a significant decrease in the severity of war (Gleditsch 2008).

Liberalists argue that the liberal nature of US superpower affects the behaviour of potential major competitors in Europe and Asia. Liberal elites tend to perceive a relatively broad overlap of interest between their own state and other liberal states, which means that most of Western Europe and Japan de facto acquiesce to American power. This is a consequence of the self-restraint shown by the US after the Second World War, when constrained itself through the multilateral institutions it set up (Ikenberry 2001). Consequently, no coalition has formed to counterbalance US power. According to liberal theorists, this is likely to also apply to China as it becomes wealthier and gains a greater stake in global markets (Owen 2002; Ikenberry 2008). For arguments on the origins of grand strategy, this means that liberal democracies are likelier to be aligned and allied with one another, and coordinate their foreign policies to maintain liberal democratic, and capitalist, global order.
Most of the tenets of liberal peace theory are widely accepted and they have been appropriated to justify interventions by democracies against authoritarian states (Gleditsch 2008): authoritarian regimes are inherent threats to a liberal global order. Expanding the number of states that are democracies, promises to not just treat the symptoms of international disorder, but to address the disease. Authors therefore recognise that American grand strategy has sought to expand the sphere that belongs to liberal democracies (Owen 2000; Dueck 2006; Layne 2006; Miller 2012).

Other theories

There are other, non-liberal, approaches that seek to explain state behaviour and systemic outcomes through unit-level causes. Literature on grand strategy, and military doctrine specifically, argue that organisational pressures and bureaucratic politics of the agencies involved in the making of security policy shape the preferences of the state as a whole. Bureaucratic agencies are engaged in a constant struggle over attention and limited resources from the highest level policymakers (Allison and Halperin 1972). Particularly relevant is the struggle between the services of the armed forces for resources and the nature of the state’s military doctrine. Moreover, the institutional interests of the services can lead to genuinely different beliefs on threats and the importance of the particular military instrument. For example, Wolfe (1984) argues that the close relations between American air force officers and the top of the Republican Party during the Cold War lead to a doctrine that emphasised the role of missile bombers based upon a view of their efficacy. Posen (1984) considers whether the organisational interests of the British, French, and German armed forces explain their respective preferences for offensive or defensive doctrines in the years preceding the Second World War. Snyder (1991) argues that internationalist economic interests in the US formed logrolling coalitions with more isolationist groups to gain the consensus to pursue the maximalist Cold War grand strategy. These theories were the precursors of neoclassical realism, and will be treated with greater attention below.

Theoretical gaps

Both groups of explanations – at the international and at the domestic level - have distinct shortcomings. Structural realist authors seem to have provoked the greatest criticism from scholars over the past two decades, who consider it deterministic. Structural realist explanations are not intended to explain specific policy decisions and therefore do not function well as theories of foreign policy (Waltz 1979, pp. 121-122; 1996; Mearsheimer 2001, pp. 10-12). One of the major criticisms levelled against realism is its failure to predict the end of the cold war (for example: Keohane, Owen, et al. 1993;
Lebow 1994; Risse-Kappen 1994), though Schweller and Wohlforth (2000) disagree and argue that power was a precondition for that change. In contrast to the realist prediction that the European states would renew their strategic rivalries when the external threat of the Soviet Union was removed and the US removed its forces from Europe – the former happened, the latter did not (Mearsheimer 1990), the post-Cold War period demonstrated an accelerated process of integration and diminished sovereignty within Europe (Katzenstein 1996; Duffield 1999). Specifically, Germany’s post-Cold War behaviour is often used to illustrate the shortcomings of structural realist assumptions. A reunified Germany could have chosen to weaken its existing alliance ties with NATO and the WEU and to project power in a more traditional sense in its traditional hinterland of Central and Eastern Europe (Duffield 1999). Instead, it further integrated itself in multilateral institutions to constrain its capabilities. Similarly, as Mueller notes, focusing on capabilities did not explain the competition between the US and the People’s Republic of China during the Cold War from the 1940s to 1970s, when nuclear-armed Britain, if it had become communist, would have formed a more imminent threat to the US than China (Mueller 1993, p. 52). In response to Posen’s argument on the interwar European balance of power and choices on military doctrine, Kier found that France’s relative weakness during the interwar period vis-à-vis Germany led to an offensively oriented doctrine during the 1920s and defensive doctrine in the 1930s. Both were rational responses to the same incentives of the system, yet diametrically opposite in execution (Kier 1997, p. 12). Structural realists have responded to these critiques on the explanatory shortcomings of structural realism over the past decades. Layne (2009) argued for an elaborated structural realism, where the extreme distribution of power in the international system that unipolarity represents reshapes the calculations of their interests by states and the manner in which they interact with one another. However, the structure of the international environment is indeterminate to explain the speed, intensity, and direction of the response.

Institutionalism has its own drawbacks that suggest it functions better as a complementary than as a primary causal explanation. Berger (1998) argues that in the post-Cold War period Germany and Japan have resisted the institutional pressures from the US and other allies to expand their global military roles. This behaviour might seem consistent with liberalist predictions, yet Germany’s and Japan’s timidity in assuming greater military responsibilities within the framework of international institutions opens them up to the charge of free riding and threatens to undermine the very security regimes upon which they have come to depend (Berger 1998).

Liberalist theories also demonstrate clear shortcomings in their explanatory power. Liberalism often does not only inadequately explain the variation among democratic regimes in attitudes towards the use of force, it also does not adequately predict the behaviour of authoritarian regimes. As Legro (1995, p. 2) argues, during the Second World War the Nazi regime attempted to make agreements with Britain on submarine attacks against civilian ships, strategic bombing of civilian targets, and chemical warfare.
Such a show of restraint by one of the most genocidal regimes and one of the worst offenders of human rights in the twentieth century cannot be explained through regime type. Equally surprising is the international consensus on restraint vis-à-vis the use of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, that has largely survived because it is broadly supported by states, including authoritarian states (Tannenwald 1996; 2005). Decisions like these, with high strategic stakes, suggest that a more comprehensive argument is needed on how actors respond to structural constraints and threats.

There are specific analytical difficulties in studies of the origins of grand strategy. The fact that strategy can only meaningful exist in relations to specific political, geographic, and other contexts. That creates methodological problems, because studies will tend to take the form of historical narratives of single states in specific eras (Luttwak 1976, 2009; Johnston 1995; Parker 1998; Gaddis 2005; Dueck 2006; Layne 2006; Samuels 2007; Art 2009; Luttwak 2009), or collections of cases (Kennedy 1991; Murray, Sinnreich, et al., 2011). A few exceptions offer structured comparisons (Posen 1984; Narizny 2007). It is also unsurprising that a large part of these studies focus on the strategic decisions of the US, including recommendations (Posen and Ross 1996; Gaddis 2005; Dueck 2006; Layne 2006; Art 2009; Kupchan and Trubowitz 2010; Miller 2010; Posen 2014).

The broadness of the concept of grand strategy also provides difficulties in delineating motives of grand strategy from outcomes, or, wrongly equating strategy with success or failure (Narizny 2007, pp. 8-9). Intentions are difficult to assess, because contingency is always a factor, and strategy has ‘no inherent meaning or value’ (Gray 2010, p. 38). Strategies cannot be divorced from the specific contexts (historical, geographic, social-cultural) for which they were designed (Gaddis 2005, p. 380; Gray 2010, p. 20). As Johnston argues, the ‘categories of political goals or ends may require different labels than categories of grand strategy’ (Johnston, 1995, pp. 110-111).  

For these reasons, neoclassical realist approaches are a natural fit – and have become the dominant approach - in studies on grand strategy. My own definition of grand strategy:

---

2 As Narizny observes, the multidimensional nature of the concept leads most scholars to operationalize grand strategy along the dimension most relevant to their own research (Narizny 2007, p. 11). Authors generally distinguish between grand strategic types, including but not limited to: accommodatist, defensive, and expansionist (Johnston 1995); isolationism, selective engagement, cooperative security, and primacy (Posen and Ross 1996); aggressive or defensive realist, and aggressive or defensive liberalist (Dueck 2005); liberal internationalist (Kupchan and Trubowitz 2010); defensive and offensive realist, and defensive and offensive liberalist (Miller 2010), and others. What is to be explained quickly becomes part of the explanation. If the ideas making up a strategic culture shape the grand strategy and strategic behaviour of state, then it is problematic to include behaviour as part of strategic culture. Cultural explanations are often accused of post-hoc tautological explanation: a certain cultural belief can always be found after the fact that explains a given action (Legro, 1995, p.30).
strategy reflects this. Neoclassical realists take the constraints of the international environment seriously, but also the role of domestic ideas, interests, and institutions. There are problems with the broadness of the approach, and its arguments on origins and change, and those will be highlighted in the next section. Then I will discuss how my elaborated approach to neoclassical realism takes those concerns seriously, and incorporates experiences with war as the driving force behind both beliefs and domestic relations.

**Neoclassical realism**

Neoclassical realists agree with structural realists that over the long term the relative power distribution between states and threats will trigger responses. At the same time they reject the atomic model of structural realism, as well as the liberal or democratic peace theorists that underappreciate the international distribution of power in favour of unit-level variation (Lobell 2009, pp. 2-3). Instead, the domestic distribution of power and unit-level intervening variables such as perceptions, interest groups, social ideas, constitutions, and civil-military relations, determine how pressures from the international system are translated into strategy (Rynning 2002; Rosecrance 1993; Christensen 1996; Rose 1998; Zakaria 1999; Dueck 2005, 2006; Layne 2006; Schweller 2004, 2006; Lobell 2009; Ripsman 2009; Taliaferro 2009; Dyson 2010; Menon 2012; Toje 2012). Within neoclassical realist approaches, policymakers pursue a broader range of interests than solely security, though the survival of the state is paramount. This range of interests can represent perceived comprehensive state interests or the narrow interests of socioeconomic elites (Snyder 1991; Lobell 2009, pp. 57, 61). Assessing the capabilities and intentions of other states is difficult for policymakers, and this applies to adversaries, allies, and neutrals. To achieve survival and other interests, policymakers depend on both external and internal balancing, building either alliances or military capabilities. They can also resort to other instruments such as development aid and financial incentives, trade missions, intelligence, propaganda, knowledge and technology exchange. External and internal balancing are complementary and interdependent, and policymakers strive for coherence between political ends and the various means. No single mean suffices to achieve the ends of any strategy. Policymakers also have a range of domestic instruments at their disposal. The historically most prominent is the latent and actualized use of force by the state to coerce internal and transnational groups to keep order. To mobilise and extract resources from the society, states need to build legitimacy through ideology, nationalism, and other symbols (Zakaria 1999; Berger 1998, p. 16).

---

3 Drawing on Posen (1984, p.1), Art (2009), and Luttwak (2001), I define grand strategy as the complex whole of diplomatic, military, and other instruments a state uses to achieve desired ends, in response to both its international and domestic environment.
Rathbun (2008) emphasises that neoclassical realist studies are a necessary extension of structural realism, specifically in their attention to balancing behaviour. For example, Schweller (2006) has made a significant contribution in his extensive argument on over-, under-, non-, and appropriate balancing as depending on the autonomy of policymakers. Rathbun (2008) argues that neoclassical realism can make a substantial contribution by pointing out exactly those cases where states do not correctly interpret and respond to the distribution of threats in the international environment. Yet, most of the literature belonging to this perspective does not offer an argument for the origins of the domestic structural features, or how they are legitimised, or the conditions under which they change.

In sum, structural realists argue that states respond to the distribution of power or of threats in the international system through external balancing (alliance formation) and/or internal balancing (mobilization of military capabilities). They do not, however, explain long delays in - or lack of - balancing behaviour by states, or alternatively when states overextend their resources. In turn, neoclassical realists argue that balancing behaviour is mediated by the domestic distribution of power, and prevailing ideas, institutions and interests. Yet, they do not offer an overarching argument for the origins of the domestic ideas, interests, and institutions, or why, when, and the conditions under which they change. Similarly, strategic culture theorists offer explanations for specific national styles of force and diplomacy, and of the underlying systems of symbols that policymakers utilise, but do not explain when, where and why these should impact actual behaviour, or what larger cross-national patterns exist between states. This leaves us with explanations for strategic behaviour that are convincing for individual cases, but also ad hoc, nationally specific, and non-parsimonious.

Table 1 summarises the three most important arguments on grand strategy – structural realism, neoclassical realism, and strategic culture - and highlights their strengths and weaknesses. It compares these to the strengths and weaknesses of experience driven realism, the elaborated version of neoclassical realism introduced in the next section of the chapter in which both beliefs and relations are shaped by experiences with war.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Structural realism</th>
<th>Strategic culture</th>
<th>Neoclassical realism</th>
<th>Elaborated Neoclassical Realism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drivers of behaviour of actors</td>
<td>Distribution of power; relative material capabilities</td>
<td>Beliefs and identities of actors</td>
<td>Distribution of power; mediated by national institutions; interests and ideas</td>
<td>Victory and defeat in war shape beliefs and Trinitarian relations; manner in which states respond to distribution of power and threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical assumptions about actors</td>
<td>Nation-state is a unitary actor acting in national interest; actors are broadly rational</td>
<td>Beliefs and identities of nation-state and society; language acts constitute meaning; actors may or may not be rational</td>
<td>Nation-state is not a unitary actor; institutions; interests and ideas; actors are bounded rational</td>
<td>Nation-state is not a unitary actor; institutions; interests and ideas; actors are bounded rational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary means of actors</td>
<td>Balancing through alliances and military capabilities</td>
<td>Diplomacy; force; rhetoric</td>
<td>Balancing through alliances and military capabilities</td>
<td>Balancing through alliances and military capabilities; diplomacy; force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variants</td>
<td>Defensive realism (maximizing security); Offensive realism (maximizing power)</td>
<td>Conventional constructivism; Postmodern constructivism / interpretivism</td>
<td>State autonomy; Institutions and organisational interests; Civil-military relations; Political economic interests</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical strengths</td>
<td>Parsimony; predictive in the long term</td>
<td>Nationally specific behaviour; understanding behaviour and choices</td>
<td>Nationally specific behaviour; speed and quality of balancing behaviour, of adaptation and change</td>
<td>Origin and nature of beliefs; change; and durability; speed and quality of balancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical weaknesses</td>
<td>Speed and quality of balancing behaviour; reductive</td>
<td>Origins of identities; explaining change; poorly delineated; limited predictive abilities; non-parsimonious; neglect material circumstances</td>
<td>Origins of ideas and institutions; explaining change; limited parsimony</td>
<td>Mediocre parsimony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Theories of Grand Strategy: Strengths and Weaknesses
The argument: experience driven realism

There is a need for a more streamlined and parsimonious version of neoclassical realism that accommodates the understanding of how strategic beliefs interact with specific domestic institutions to shape the responses of states to the international environment. I offer as a solution a theory of grand strategy that synthesises neoclassical realism with the cognitive, institutional, and rhetorical lessons that the legacies of war bring upon nation-states. I do this by incorporating elements of strategic culture into the neoclassical realist framework. Based on my theoretical and empirical readings of the relevant literatures and historical records, the beliefs and domestic institutional relations that derive from experiences with war can build upon the specifications in the neoclassical realist approach, while streamlining a more parsimonious basic theory. In doing so, it can significantly improve upon both structuralist and essentialist theories (see table 1 for a comparison with the other theories).

My synthesis of neoclassical realism and the legacies of war can be articulated in the form of three sets of expectations, which were already referenced in the introduction. The first set presents the crude version of the argument, and looks at the general effects of victory and defeat on the propensity of policymakers to use diplomacy and force, and combinations diplomacy and force. These are derived more directly from the literature on the legacies of war and can be stated in a fairly brief and succinct manner. The second set provides the nuanced version of the argument, taking into account the specific qualities of the national experiences with war and the actors involved, to clarify how wartime experiences alter internal and external balancing behaviour in grand strategy. The third and final set of expectations address how wartime experiences affect ‘Trinitarian’ relations between the state (executive), military and society.

Expectation one: victory and defeat shape the use of force and diplomacy

Force

States that are victorious in war become more willing to use force afterwards, as the benefits of war outweigh the costs and victory justifies the sacrifices. Furthermore, I also argue that a large victory in a total war is more likely to leave enduring effects with regards to the propensity to use force than a smaller defeat in a limited war. The components of this expectation are distilled fairly directly from the war-weariness literature. They take into account how costs of war change the calculations of whether states are likelier to use force or other means in the post-war environment.
**Diplomacy**

States that have been defeated in war become more willing to engage in multilateral diplomacy afterwards. The failure of force to achieve security or national ends, and the human and financial costs of attempting this, are likely to lead to reconsiderations of the benefits of sovereignty. Here too, I argue that a large defeat in a total war is more likely to leave enduring effects regarding the propensity to use multilateral diplomacy. The second expectation is less directly derived from the existing literature, which suggests, but has rarely tested, how victory and defeat affect the propensity of states to use diplomacy.

**Force and diplomacy**

Finally, victories in war lead to the combination of a higher willingness to use force and a lower willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy, while defeats in war lead to the combination of a higher willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy and a lower willingness to use force. This expectation is related to, but distinct from, the first two as it argues that increased willingness to use diplomacy substitutes for the decreased willingness to use force, and vice versa. While both victorious and defeated states can be willing to use force and diplomacy because of their material capabilities or their regime type, I argue that the relationship between force and diplomacy depends on their wartime experiences.

These first three expectations derive in varying degrees from the literature on the legacies of war. However, they not only seek to address gaps in the literature regarding the consequences of war, but also to clarify what constitutes victory and defeat beyond simply the outcomes of conflicts. The focus is on a broader range of experiences and costs. The three expectations also reflect the neoclassical realist foundation of the book. The nation-state is assumed to be the central actor in international relations and its relative material capabilities vis-à-vis those of other states provide the structural constraints within it can be expected to operate. States primarily respond to the international environment through their force composition and alliances. Yet, it is uniquely national wartime experiences that are argued to significantly shape decisions on diplomacy and force. The first three expectations still only represent the cruder version of the overall argument of the book that wartime experiences shape grand strategy, that the experiences of victory and defeat are specifically likely to be important, and are likely to be so for a long time.
Expectation two: victory and defeat shape internal and external balancing behaviour

The second set of expectations offers the more nuanced version of the argument, and focus particularly on the implications for balancing behaviour. These expectations take into account the specific qualities of the national experiences of war and the actors involved. The expectation specific qualities of past wars – such, as the nature of the adversary or the threats confronted, the type of conflict, the level of military readiness, the innovation of military technology, and the type of warfare and weapons used – alter the way victory or defeat play out in specific post-war preferences towards the force posture. The success and failure of pre-war and wartime alliances and post-war settlements also mediate the way victory or defeat affect specific post-war preferences towards alliances and multilateral diplomacy. In realist terms, this second set of expectations focus on how experiences with war shape respectively the internal and external balancing strategies of states. I will develop these expectations in turn.

Hierarchies of core and peripheral beliefs

A major proposition of the elaborated version of neoclassical realism is that civilian and military policymakers hold nationally specific and enduring beliefs that explain persistent patterns in grand strategic behaviour. However, not all beliefs are important enough to do so with the same intensity or with the same persistence. This hierarchical approach to beliefs draws from the structural realist and neoclassical realist assumption that states must first and foremost ensure state survival in the regional or global order and that they can do so through alliances and force posture – respectively external and internal balancing. The consequences of these choices are high-impact, long-term and difficult to reverse for reasons of credibility, coherence, and investment, and they therefore precede all other choices. Beliefs on alliances and force posture constitute the core beliefs of policymakers.

Policymakers also hold peripheral beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behaviour in contingencies that follow from a chosen strategy. These beliefs suggest scripts for the possibility of negotiations, the effectiveness of interventions, the application of compellence and deterrence, the importance of credibility, and the necessity of sovereignty. Peripheral beliefs are more malleable than core beliefs. Core and peripheral beliefs differ in how likely they are to change over time and the extent to which they are affected by systemic changes. This conceptualisation of beliefs draws from similar distinctions between categories of beliefs as Goldstein and Keohane (1993) outlined where worldviews sit at the first and highest level of abstraction. Worldviews define what actors believe the ‘universe of possibilities for action’, while the second and third categories of principled and causal beliefs are what actors believe on how they can achieve their goals (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, pp. 8-11).
The making of strategy implies that policymakers must maximise among trade-offs in the pursuit of numerous irreconcilable ends that have severe possible costs: failure to balance appropriately fatally endangers the survival of the state. The environment is indeterminate, and this implies that under the same structural conditions policymakers can pursue diverging, but still reasonable, ends. While building the alliances for external balancing, policymakers might achieve either security, influence, or autonomy, but never all three, as choices for one or more will ensure losses of another. Policymakers risk either entanglement by allies in conflicts not in their state’s interest, or abandonment when an ally refuses to come to the state’s assistance when its interests are threatened (Snyder 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Christensen 1997; Weitsman 1997; Morrow 2000). Trade-offs are also apparent when building military capabilities for internal balancing strategies: policymakers must choose between specialized and all-purpose forces (Posen 1984; Biddle 2004), between ‘guns and butter’, and between readiness, credibility and provocation.

This conceptualisation of strategic beliefs as hierarchical and composed of trade-offs is important because, while strategic culture might be ‘all the way down’ (Gray 1999), not all of it is equally relevant. The view that language is constitutive risks obfuscating the differences in weight and impact of certain choices, where beliefs might play decisive roles, and where expressed ideas are used selectively and instrumentally. Giving language too central a role and overemphasising key phrases and symbols, risks obfuscating where ideas play decisive roles in the responses of policymakers, and where they simply underline responses that were to be expected given the environment. The frequency of expressed ideas is not particularly helpful, as core beliefs are less likely to be prominently or frequently discussed. Having addressed problems of conceptualising beliefs, the origins of hierarchies of beliefs and the conditions under which they change still remain unclear.

Core beliefs: external and internal balancing

Experiences with and in war shape the core and peripheral strategic beliefs. Specifically the systemic nature of total wars offers lessons on the fundamental assumptions that policymakers base their decisions on: the quality of alliances in general, and certain allies in particular; on the effectiveness of offensive, defence, or deterrent force postures vis-à-vis the nature of threats; and how to interpret when and how other actors threaten the survival of the state and the international system by upsetting the balances of power and threat. In line with Reiter’s (1996) argument that choices for alliance or neutrality of small European states depended on the success or failure of alliance or neutrality during the First and Second World War, it is argued here that the willingness to accept entanglement and engage in multilateral diplomacy depends on experiences with entanglement, with abandonment by allies, or isolation that interact with experiences with victory and defeat. States that have experienced any of these are likely to design their post-war strategies with an eye towards avoiding repeating the same risks and
threats, if the environment allows them to choose. The consequences of wartime and pre-war experiences for the core beliefs of policymakers can be phrased in the form of the following four expectations. First, pre-war failure of policymakers to understand whether they are living in a balance of power or a balance of threat world will lead to a post-war reprioritisation between the two. Second, the (complete or partial) failure of wartime or pre-war alliances or the failure of non-alliances (isolation, autonomy and neutrality) will lead to a post-war preference for the alternative. Third, the failure of a wartime or pre-war force posture will lead to a post-war belief that prefers the alternative, whether this means moving from an offensive to a defensive or deterrent posture, or vice versa. It will also address specific problems with integration and innovation (Posen 1984, p.1). Fourth, the success of wartime or pre-war alliances or non-alliances and force posture is likely to validate these choices for post-war beliefs.

Peripheral beliefs: how to use diplomacy and force

Wars also leave peripheral beliefs that deal less with the what of grand strategy than with the how: the importance of credibility; the diplomatic ability to negotiate with, threaten, appease, or defeat threats; the speed and decisiveness of response; the willingness to surrender sovereignty in other domains; the type of warfare and weapons to be used and the types of conflict to be fought, and the applicability of national values. It is precisely this second group of peripheral beliefs that is most discussed in the literature on the lessons of history and the diagnostic and rhetorical use of analogies by policymakers to reduce uncertainty (May 1973; Jervis 1976, p. 217; Larson 1985; Khong 1992).

It is wars that function as the major catalyst of change in strategic beliefs, absent radical changes in the distribution of power in the environment or domestic revolutions. Lacking clear signals on how to solve trade-offs between roughly equally plausible alternatives, the dominant role that total wars play in creating enduring beliefs among policymakers becomes apparent, and why these are only affected in a lesser degree by later, more limited wars and conflicts. However, to explain the particular institutionalisation of these beliefs and how and when they are translated into behaviour, we must look at who holds which beliefs and why these actors are in the position to translate them into policy.

---

4 For example, victory is likelier to inform an assertive approach to negotiations with other states than defeat.

5 In any case, radical changes in the distribution of power are likely to be the consequence of systemic war between major powers.
Expectation three: victory and defeat shape the three-way relations between state, society, and the armed forces

The third and final set of expectations argues that the specific wartime experiences affect, in distinct and contrasting ways, the perspectives, legitimacy, and institutional influence of particular actors involved in the development of national strategy. Specifically, I group the actors within a nation-state as follows: its civilian-political policymakers, its military policymakers, and its civilians/society. The relations between this trinity of state, society, and armed forces define whose strategic beliefs and institutional preferences can shape grand strategy. Figure 1 is an illustration of the three-way relationship between them.

The conditions and boundaries under which strategic beliefs can be pursued and endure depend on the relative legitimacy and institutional influence of the nation-state’s civilian policymakers, its military policymakers, and its civilians, or as they will be referred to from here on: state, society, and armed forces. Each of the three groups holds strategic beliefs that are inherent to its role. The relative legitimacy and influence of each of the groups will result in different combinations of Trinitarian relations, some of which will create greater manoeuvre space than others for certain actors to pursue their particular preferences and beliefs. The result defines the overall direction and coherence of the nation state’s grand strategy.

State

As the central foreign policy executive, the state’s civilian policymakers have control over the nation-state’s alliance choices and thereby are the primary group of actors to shape external balancing behaviour. The state has the most external orientation and is the most likely to pursue internationally activist policies. It also has access to the broadest range of instruments: foremost alliances and military force, but also financial aid, public diplomacy, and trade agreements. Simultaneously, civilian policymakers must conceive of the entire national interest (Christensen 1996, p. 18) and adjudicate between external and internal concerns such as general welfare. They must manage the state’s financial resources, mobilize and extract resources and are therefore more dependent than the armed forces on societal legitimacy to pursue their preferences and beliefs. The expectation is that the greater the relative influence and legitimacy of civilian policymakers (Zakaria 1999; Rynning 2002; Schweller 2006), the more they will be able to pursue their preferred strategy. If the state enjoys too little influence and legitimacy,
the likely result is underbalancing, while if it enjoys too much, the result is likely to be overbalancing in the form of excessive commitments abroad.

![Trinitarian relations](image)

**Figure 1. Trinitarian relations**

**Armed Forces**

The armed forces shape the quality of military force in national strategy, and the political success of any internal balancing strategy depends on their contribution. The state may set their financial constraints, but the functional specialization of the armed forces, and the informational asymmetry between military and civilian policymakers this creates, gives them a unique advantage and freedom to develop the force posture. Without clear external threats, civilians will endorse what the armed forces suggest, as long as it is compatible with domestic priorities. It takes a more challenging international environment to bring to power a civilian leadership that is knowledgeable about national security affairs and willing to take a more active role (Desch 1999, pp. 13-14; Kier 1997, p. 5; Ripsman 2009, p. 186). Despite the advantages that derive from their functional specialization, the armed forces are limited in the pursuit of their preferences by institutional arrangements and their legitimacy. These in turn are defined by the risk of interference of the armed forces in domestic politics. Society may distrust the armed forces if these have been politicized and have settled domestic struggles between societal groups. The armed forces, if they believe civilian

---

7 Yet, security from invasion and prosperity will, in principle, minimize the influence the role of the military (Andreski 1968 (1954), p. 126).
8 Such internal use of the armed forces has been mostly seen in the past five decades in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, but European armed forces have at various times in history
policymakers are endangering national security, will either isolate themselves or intervene directly in the state (Andreski 1968 (1954), p. 126; Ambler 1966; Posen 1984; Kier 1997; Desh 1999). The expectation is that the better the relations between the state and the armed forces, the greater their legitimacy, the more the armed forces will be able to successfully innovate their doctrine and integrate it with the political goals and other instruments of national grand strategy (Posen 1984). If the armed forces enjoy too little influence and autonomy, the likely result is underbalancing or insufficient military capabilities to support alliance commitments, while if they enjoy too much, the result is likely to be overbalancing in the form of a militarised strategy that is incompatible with the alliance commitments or out of place with the threats the state is facing.

Society

Societal actors do not play a direct role in strategic choices and shape grand strategy primarily by the autonomy they grant or withhold from civilian policymakers, and, to a lesser degree, military policymakers. Instead, they comply or abstain from extraction and mobilisation of financial and human resources for activist policies. This in turn enables or constrains the intensity of national external and internal balancing behaviour. In democratic societies, the legislature has a certain level of discretion or authority over the ratification of treaties, the level of spending, the acquisition of major military material, and it has varying degrees of control over when and where the executive decides to use military force (Wagner 2006). The more institutionally powerful the legislature, the more the state depends on creating a domestic consensus. Similarly, the more vulnerable the positions of the incumbent members of the legislature are to replacement, the more they will be sensitive to public opinion, interest groups or logrolling coalitions of such groups (Snyder 1991). In authoritarian states, the state will still need to gain the support of domestic interest groups or coalitions to attain the necessary resources. What is important here is that, even in the most democratic states, the legislature generally offers only minimal ideational input into force posture and alliance formation. Societal actors lack the required specialised knowledge, and generally do not have a great deal of interest in foreign policy. This gives the foreign

played similar roles in domestic politics. In particular, maritime powers tended to be different than continental powers. In the latter, armies were close to the metropole and could dominate the population while the armies of maritime powers were always far away and navies can hardly be repurposed for suppression of urban revolt (Andreski 1968 (1954), p. 125).

Failure on the battlefield in particular can cause doctrinal innovation (Posen 1984, p. 59) within the armed forces, and these lessons will be more narrow and specialized than those of the civilian policymakers, and more difficult to absorb for the state as a whole. Defeat can also lead civilian policymakers to seek greater control over doctrinal developments and reign in the autonomy of the armed forces.

It must be emphasised that, in contrast to popular assumptions, the armed forces do not necessarily advocate actual aggressive policies. They might instead have a more restrained, if understood as realpolitik, outlook on the use of force (Feaver and Gelpi 2011). Their emphasis on military preparedness will, however, make the use of aggressive policies more likely.
policy executive a great deal of de facto leeway in creating policy. The relative legitimacy matters here too, as, for example, the public may distrust dealings of professional diplomats, which are by their nature specialized, abstract, and secretive. Armed forces are to an extent more populist, ‘of the people’, specifically in the case of mass conscription or large professional armies, while civilian policymakers tend to mirror the societal elite. The expectation is therefore that societal distrust of the state will impede its external balancing efforts, and distrust of the armed forces will impede the quality of the internal balancing efforts. Abundance of trust will allow the state and the armed forces to pursue their desired policies.

The interaction between the institutional influence and legitimacy of each relative to the others therefore defines the strategic coherence, and the presence and integration of specific instruments. The ‘nation state’s ability to commit to long-term strategy, such as alliance obligations, and to maintain a shared political understanding on the benefits and limits of the use of force depends on this coherence.

The concept of the Trinitarian relationship is not intended as a simplistic reification of what are internally diverse groups of actors, and the separation between them cannot always be explicitly demarcated. This trinity is based on Clausewitz’ conceptualisation of war as driven by the forces of the government, people and the army. The Trinitarian

---

11 In absolute size, its (mostly male) members historically have formed a sizeable and visible section within society, whether consisting professional or volunteer forces, unlike the civilian elites who are involved in policymaking. It is true that, in contemporary democracies, their roles and tasks have become quite broad, the constraints on possible interventions in domestic politics are quite strong and their size and composition have become more diverse. Globally and historically, however, this has very much been an exception. Even now, the armed forces retain their specialized and unique role and therefore stand apart from the rest of the state’s policymaking apparatus.

12 See, for example, the condemnation by American liberals of ‘secret deals’ after the First World War.

13 Perceived or actual partisanship on the part of the armed forces in domestic politics will affect their broad legitimacy and the autonomy they are granted. See Kier (1997) for an excellent discussion of political polarisation in interwar France undermining innovation and political-military integration.

14 Clausewitz 1976: via Summers and others (Summers 1995; Strachan 2005). Clausewitz introduced three elements/elemental forces as shaping war: (1) primordial violence, hatred, and enmity; (2) friction and the play of chance and probability; (3) and war as an instrument of policy. He connected these forces to three sets of human actors, respectively the people, the army and its commander and the government. The forces and actors are, however, not equivalent and cannot be equated in one-to-one relationships (Clausewitz 1976; Bassford 1995 and Villacres). The closer association or equation of these three elements to actors as people, army, government seems to have originated in Harry Summer’s influential study on Vietnam (Bassford and Villacres 1995). The Clausewitzian trinity has been critiqued as outdated and limited (Van Creveld 1991, p. ix; Keegan 1993, p. 1), but such critiques deny the versatility of the Clausewitzian concept and how well it endures in different contexts precisely because it acknowledges both the rational and irrational element within politics.
conceptualisation provides a major heuristic to understand why and how certain ideas on strategy dominate, and how and why they will be able to do so over time. The Clausewitz concept endures well in different contexts, because it accepts force as both a rational and an irrational element of politics. Clausewitz deliberately references the religious meaning of the word trinity where it conveys that the three forces intrinsic to war are separate yet part of an indivisible whole (Echevarria 2007).

The approach draws from the strengths of the neoclassical arguments on the autonomy of the foreign policy executive vis-à-vis society (Zakaria 1999, Rynning 2002; Dueck 2006; Ripsman 2009; Taliaferro 2009). It also draws from the literature that focuses on civil-military relations and organisational features of the armed forces (Huntington 1957; Posen 1984; Snyder 1985; Van Evera 1985; Kier 1997; Desch 1999). However, there is no comprehensive argument on the origins of these specific national contexts.

Experiences with war

Experiences with war shape the distribution of legitimacy and institutional influence between state, society, and the armed forces, and they determine the manoeuvre space of actors. In particular, victories and defeats in total war define Trinitarian relations, as they offer judgments on the fitness of national security institutions, and on the abilities of the actors involved. Moreover, lessons are likely to differ depending on the roles of those who have experienced them (Jervis, 1976, p. 240).

This yields the following two expectations.

The first is that defeat will either strongly weaken or strengthen the civilian and military policymakers of the executive, depending on whether they were perceived as responsible for the defeat. This effect is qualified by the totality of defeat. If defeats are total, they will discredit the entire existing institutional relationship and constrain post-war policymakers, and lead to a more complete reappraisal of strategic beliefs. Defeats will divide and undermine societal support for civilian and military policymakers, and limit more internationally activist policies (see the war-weariness thesis: Levy and Morgan 1986; Nevin 1996). If defeats are not total, they will undermine the actors associated with the failed policy or those actors who are perceived to have insufficiently supported the policy (see also the stab-in-the-back myth). When the armed forces are considered culpable, defeat will lead civilian policymakers to reign in their autonomy and seek greater control over doctrinal developments. When civilian policymakers are perceived to have failed to set attainable political goals, the armed forces will seek their own path and thereby impede the coherence of post-war strategy. Perceived lack of support from (groups within society) can further alienate the armed forces. When society becomes divided over who to blame, defeat is likely to fuel more aggressive, revanchist, and nationalist sentiments. The experience of defeat therefore functions as a two-step process: (1) the replacement of the previous strategic paradigm; (2A) the reinforcement
of the post-war strategic paradigm by new experiences with war and conflict; or, failing a successful replacement, (2B) a renewed, more ferocious attempt at the previous strategic paradigm that includes persecution of those held responsible for the previous failure.

The second expectation is that victory will strengthen the autonomy of the executive and the legitimacy of the armed forces and diminish institutional checks and balances. This effect, however, is often more moderate than that of defeat. Victory enables more ambitious and activist policies as ambitions of civilian elites are likely to have been increased, as is the military’s ability to develop an offensive doctrine. Victory can deliver a high level of legitimacy and influence to the armed forces that makes it problematic to pursue adequate civilian state oversight and control. Victory will validate and strengthen the societal groups associated with it. However, even when the nation-state as a whole emerges victorious, the perceived failure of certain pre-war civilian and/or military elites to adequately predict or prepare for the conflict, or the lack of support of certain societal groups, is likely to undermine the influence and legitimacy of these groups. Post-war national politics will be politicised between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’.

Beliefs and Trinitarian relations, total and limited war

The process by which experiences with war shape both beliefs and Trinitarian relations, and the interaction between them, is visualised in figure 2. This interaction produces a set of possible combinations for the direction of grand strategy, and the speed, intensity, and coherence of its execution.

Crucially, the recognition that experiences with respectively total and limited war will impact beliefs and relations differently, explains the speed and intensity of change in grand strategy. In the case of the former, all three parts of the trinity are impacted as the nation-state as a whole must muster its cumulative resources for national survival. In the case of limited war, no such demands for mobilisation and extraction are made, and with limited societal costs the experience will therefore only impact specific beliefs and the relative legitimacy and influence of actors, depending on the outcome. After limited wars the partial lessons on strategic beliefs and relations are overlaid over the dominant core beliefs and relations left by total war experiences. Lessons from limited wars are more likely to matter when they reinforce existing ideas and institutions, than when they undermine them.
That total wars leave enduring legacies does not mean they are perpetuated into eternity, but experience driven realism offers a plausible argument why specific combinations of ideas and beliefs endure over generations. The international system rarely sends unambiguous signals to policymakers, whether they are correctly responding to the international environment, or whether they are over- or underbalancing. Such signals are even more difficult to assess for societal actors. And because unambiguous rewards and punishments are rare within the international system, updating beliefs is slow and incomplete.

In sum, expectation the second and third sets of expectations above together build an elaborated neoclassical realist theory that aims to add a limited number of additional concepts that address in the shortcomings of the existing theories on grand strategy. Experience driven realism builds on this literature, but attempts to expand the

Figure 2. Elaborated Neoclassical Realism: How Experiences with War shape Strategic Beliefs and Trinitarian Relations
explanatory power, add depth and complexity, while simultaneously streamlining the separate arguments into a more cohesive whole.

The two major theoretical contributions of the book

The above three sets of expectations/arguments make two major theoretical contributions, one for each of the major literatures I address. The first is a midlevel range theoretical contribution to the literature on the legacies of war and can be articulated in the form of the following three components.

First, I problematise the meaning of experiences with war, and particularly with victory and defeat. I include variation beyond simple dichotomous outcomes, and distinguish between the particulars of the experience. The experiences deeply impact actors in the nation-state, but not in a monolithic manner. Victory and defeat leave enduring lessons on the rightness and efficacy of diplomacy and force, but these lessons have more to do with the particulars of the national wartime experience than suggested by the war-weariness literature.

Second, I systematise the relation between experiences and strategy. This improves the comparability between states, while still accounting for the nationally specific elements of those experiences that relate to the nature of threats and power, alliances, the force posture, and so on. I further distinguish the varied impact these experiences will have the relative influence of domestic actors. Through this systematisation I can achieve more breadth than the historiographical, single-case studies of the collective memory literature.

Third, I contribute to the literature on the legacies of war by providing an arguments on why total wars leave enduring beliefs, and more limited conflicts generally do not. Total wars directly impact the continued survival and status of the nation-state, they affect the state, society, and the armed forces, and the relations between all three. They represent significant reorderings of domestic political order. Taking structural realist theory seriously allows differentiation in importance between core and peripheral beliefs. Core beliefs precede and set the conditions for other, more vocally expressed, but also more peripheral ideas. This also represents a contribution to the literature focusing on the use of historical analogies during decision-making in crises and shows the context in which analogies matter.

The second major contribution of the book is a grand theoretical contribution to the literature on the state behaviour and consists of three components. First, it adds to the literature that problematises the state and grand strategy. It clarifies how and when domestic ideas and institutions matter. The argument shares key assumptions that
derive from structural realism: the state is the central actor in the international order; the distribution of power and threats between states constrains their behaviour; and force postures and alliances are the primary means with which states respond to other states. However, like others following the neoclassical realist approach, this book recognises the need for structural realists to look at how decisions are made within nation-states. Decision-making is not reducible to structural constraints and incentives, but domestic ideas and institutions are not entirely particular and unique to each nation-state either. Experiences with war in fact yield broad patterns across states. The book’s argument therefore builds on neoclassical realism, but adds depth and nuance, while also streamlining existing neoclassical realist studies.

Second, it offers an idea-driven argument that can explain both the origins and the conditions of change within beliefs. It thereby stands in contrast to the more essentialist culturalist arguments that emphasise identity as a given and cannot explain why and which traditions adapt. The book also stands in contrast to those ideational explanations that argue language is constitutive of identity and operates outside of material structural constraints and incentives.

Third, and finally, it contributes to neoclassical realism, because it specifies the roles of beliefs and specific groupings of actors. Thereby it can explain the direction, speed, intensity, and coherence of the balancing behaviour of states. It acknowledges that structure punishes or rewards ‘appropriate’ behaviour and signals to policymakers which choices they must make. But it takes ideas seriously, insofar as policymakers lack the ability to successfully assess what appropriate responses are, and therefore resort to established beliefs.

**Research design**

This book has an ambitious agenda. It is attempting to analyse causal effects of variables that are difficult to measure. It offers an ideational argument that spans decades; it does not outright dismiss the competing explanations for state behaviour but instead argues when these might not apply. It looks at both general behavioural trends and particular policy decisions that cannot be replicated. The research design hopes to gain traction on the complexity and many moving parts that make up the central argument of the book through three major empirical pieces of analysis that use both quantitative and qualitative methods.

This book takes as its basis a single, if epochal, case of wartime experience. The Second World War offers a clear test of the argument as it was the most recent and most total war that states could have experienced, yet the experiences of the four states in that war varied tremendously. Due to its systemic and total nature, the Second World War
presents us with the influential case to test the argument on the legacies of war. The range of experiences was varied and complex for all of its participants. The war involved the entirety of state, society and the armed forces. Its outcomes were definitive in nature and changed the international order. The variation within the experiences of the Second World War allows us to further differentiate the belligerent states on the effects of the war. The experiences of its participants ranged from total defeat to total victory; from aggression to victimisation; from moral justification to morally indefensible actions; from the loss of territorial sovereignty to it remaining unscathed; from few to massive military casualty numbers; and, from no civilian casualties to the death of entire populations. Finally, the Second World War had a large number of belligerent states, allowing for a single correlational test between measures of defeat and loss, and post-war use of diplomacy and force. It is a critical test of the theory: should enduring effects on strategic beliefs and behaviour not be found in the case of the Second World War, then they are even less likely to be found elsewhere. This book investigates the effect of the Second World War in three separate attempts.

First, this book conducts a comparative quantitative study of the belligerents of the Second World War that takes a broader range of wartime experiences and a broader range of post-war policies into account. It looks not only at wartime military casualties, but also civilian casualties. It notes whether nation-states experienced surrender during or at the end of the war; whether they experienced occupation during or at the end of the war; whether they fought on the losing side at any time during the war; and whether they initiated the war. The comparative study then looks at whether and how these experiences with victory and defeat impact the likelihood of initiating conflict in the post-war years, and using force or the threat of force, and the likelihood of using diplomacy and joining international organisations. The study uses the COW and the IMI data, and supplements these with data from Ellis (1993), as described in chapter three.

Second, the book investigates how victory and defeat during the Second World War impacted the strategic beliefs and the relations between state, society, and armed forces in four cases: the US, the UK, France, and Germany. These four states are comparable in terms of regime type and political economic systems. Material military capabilities are distributed unequally between the US and the Europeans, but all three European states had access to multiple strategic options throughout the past decades, even acknowledging the indisputable institutional constraints on Germany during the Cold War. Due to their comparable backgrounds, all four states have faced similar ‘objective’ problems: (1) how to contain the threat of the Soviet Union; (2) how to manage the reintegration of Germany into Europe; (3) how to deal with the unequal transatlantic distribution of power; (4) how to manage the competing pursuits of autonomy and

---

15 Even during the First World War, despite the massive death toll and the psychological horror of trench warfare, civilians were mostly kept out of harm’s way and the war resonates differently in collective memory for that reason (Strachan 2000).
security (especially when domestic priorities as welfare or empire are at stake); (5) when and where to effectively use force to maintain a preferred liberal-democratic global order; and (6) the extent to which they use multilateral diplomacy to maintain a preferred liberal-democratic global order. In the seven decades since the war’s end, all four states have faced nationally specific as well as collective foreign policy crises that could reinforce or undermine the earlier beliefs, and at least one major subsequent strategic revolution in the system with the end of the Cold War (and they might be undergoing a second major revolution right now, as unipolarity seems to be coming to an end.)

However, the four cases clearly vary in terms of their experiences during the war. The design incorporates two extreme cases (Gerring, 2007, 101-105): the US as the clear victor of the war, and Germany as the clear loser of the war; and two difficult cases - Britain and France – that present more complex and ambiguous experiences of victory and defeat. As Calleo (2002), Sheehan (2008), and others have argued, the European experiences in the first half of the twentieth century seem to have led to several enduring changes. These include the end of military culture in Europe, the rise of the ‘civilian state’ (Kagan 2002; Czempiel 2003), and the willingness to sacrifice sovereignty in favour of increased multilateral diplomacy. The design makes it possible to assess both whether this transatlantic difference holds and also whether variation exists within Europe. I analyse these four cases in several ways.

Through historiographical studies, I dissect the legacies that the American, British, French and German experiences of the Second World War left on: (1) core strategic beliefs; (2) peripheral beliefs; and (3) relations between state, society, and the armed forces. I then examine (4) how their subsequent experiences in limited wars – such as Korea, Suez, Algeria, Vietnam, the Falklands, the Gulf War, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq - reinforced or undermined these lessons. The first three points are covered in chapters four and five, while point four is covered in chapters seven and eight. Taken together, I argue why and how the ideational and institutional legacies were visible in American, British, French, and German behaviour throughout the post-war period, and endured over decades.

These beliefs are often analysed through their recurrence in texts. Yet, actors could be using beliefs instrumentally. As Deighton argues, one of the ways to show the persistence of beliefs is by demonstrating that they impede actors from achieving other important goals (Deighton, 2002, p. 37).

Subsequently, on the basis of theoretical expectations from primarily offensive and defensive realism, but also institutionalism and liberalism, I construct a series of counterfactual histories of those same four cases to demonstrate the range of maximalist and minimalist strategic choices available to them that were not taken, and often, barely considered. By doing this, it is possible to lessen the danger of finding self-confirmatory
results when developing ideational explanations, but also to expose the flawed predictions of structuralist theories. Historiographical approaches increase the tendency of analysts to see after-the-fact rationalizations of policy in line with their own expectations, thereby ignoring the myriad responses to the international environment that were equally theoretically valid. Counterfactuals make apparent which trade-offs states have been willing to accept over others, and, when done comparatively, reveal that states in fact often behave exactly in contradiction to the predictions of the theory.

The third route to approach the question on the legacies of war, takes the same four cases and analyses how policymakers motivate choices in policy documents, interviews, and speeches. Through content analysis, I compare high level national security documents – such as national security strategies and white papers - of the US, Britain, France, and Germany - to illustrate how consistent the textual validations of their policies (and the policies themselves) are, and how historical analogies are used in the process. Analogies are especially interesting because they often address precisely those trade-offs of risks, costs and benefits that the counterfactual histories have highlighted. Finally, I report on the 48 interviews I conducted with policymakers in all four cases to further explore the rationale for strategic decisions. These interviews include past and current members of the national security institutions, ministries/departments of state/foreign affairs and ministries/departments of defence, members of the armed forces, thinktanks, and political advisors dealing with security issues. These interviews are used to examine how policymakers express strategic beliefs, the awareness of trade-offs, how they justify choices and costs, whether they draw historical comparisons, and whether beliefs differ between civilian and military policymakers. The findings from the interviews are used to support the arguments and findings derived from the other research methods. The policy documents, speeches, and interviews, are presented in chapters seven and eight.

These three passes at the historical record make it possible to achieve explanatory leverage on the issue and to do so without dismissing the nuances and intricacies of the relationships between experiences with war, strategic beliefs, domestic relations, and behaviour.
Chapter Three

Victory, Defeat, Force, and Diplomacy: Second World War Belligerents 1946-2006
This chapter represents the book’s first examination of the thesis that victory and defeat shape the propensity to use force and diplomacy. It does so, by testing the first set of expectations, namely that: (a) victory increases the propensity of states to use military force; (b) defeat increases the propensity of states to engage in multilateral diplomacy afterwards; and (c) victory leads to a combination of a higher propensity to use force and a lower propensity to engage in multilateral diplomacy; while defeat leads to a combination of a higher propensity to engage in multilateral diplomacy and a lower willingness to use military force. This chapter tests these expectations through exploring the statistical correlations between the defeats and losses that the belligerent states of the Second World War experienced and their post-war policies, and thereby builds upon the war-weariness literature.

The argument is straightforward and intuitive: attitudes towards war and peace in legacies of polities defeated in wartime would be expected to be different than those emerging victorious. Defeat is accompanied by high human and financial costs, and the experiences with humiliation and destruction that follow defeat in war may spur serious self-examination on the part of the defeated, while the low costs and feelings of triumph validate the behaviour on the part of the victorious. The resulting beliefs might become engrained in the consciousness of later generations of policymakers and society, and exert a gravitational pull that makes policymakers either more prone or more cautious to engage in new conflicts. On the other hand, even the most traumatic or triumphant of national-historical wartime experiences could be expected to have only short-lived and modest effects, as new generations that have not directly experienced the war will adapt national policy for new situations. Lessons of the past might play prominent roles in political rhetoric, but policymakers only instrumentally use them to justify policies taken for other motivations or within certain constraints. Various factors can be expected to exert their influence on the direction of national strategy, including: shifts in the regional or global distribution of power; alliance commitments; provocations; economic developments; financial constraints; and domestic political crises. Furthermore, even other, more enduring, nationally specific cultural factors may shape policymaking. Indeed, as discussed in the literature review of the war-weariness literature, the results so far have been inconclusive. Yet, as will become clear from the sections below, the operationalisation of the war outcome variables and the measures of losses seem too limited so far to properly test the thesis.

This chapter seeks to expand upon the war-weariness literature by improving these measurements of defeats and losses, as well as those of the post-war use of force. It also explicitly adds the use of diplomacy to the thesis. The chapter does so by focusing on the belligerents of one particular war, namely the Second World War, and examining their experiences and their post-war behaviour.
Difficulties in testing the war-weariness thesis

The argument that wars matter for post-war behaviour is intuitively appealing and seems suited for straightforward tests, as various authors have attempted (Singer and Small 1974; Levy 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986; Garnham 1986; Nevin 1996; Pickering 2002). The war-weariness thesis was popular particularly in the aftermath of the two destructive World Wars of the last twentieth century, and in the aftermath of the draining American experience in Vietnam when US policymakers seemed hesitant about committing American troops to other conflicts in the periphery for fear that they could no longer justify the troop losses at home (Levy and Morgan 1986). The grinding losses sustained during the Vietnam conflict led to an enduring casualty aversion on the part of American policymakers, the ‘body-bag syndrome’, and a clear reticence to commit American boots on the ground in later conflicts (Smith 2005). The body-bag syndrome directly informed the engagement of American forces in the Gulf War and in Kosovo, as well as the jitteriness in continuing the 1993 Somali mission after the Mogadishu incident. The spate of research on war-weariness that came out during the 1970s and 1980s was, as discussed in the previous chapter, largely inconclusive. Yet, these results reflect the difficulty of the argument itself.

The difficulty of testing the war-weariness thesis is that the effects of war can be present and yet deliver contradictory outcomes. When Levy elaborated on the war-weariness thesis (Levy 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986), he incorporated contradictory ways in which victory and defeat can shape post-war behaviour: (1) a victorious state may be stimulated by its success and its newly acquired power and seek to further its gains; and (2) success in war can firmly establish the more war-prone faction of policymakers into power, increasing the likelihood of subsequent conflict or, conversely, (3) a victorious state may be sated after achieving its ends and avoid risking its newly attained status or good, decreasing the likelihood of subsequent conflict. In contrast, a defeated state may (4) have depleted its resources and become incapable of fighting another war; (5) war, and particularly unsuccessful war, may generate the belief that another war should not be undertaken unless the likelihood of victory is nearly certain; (6) war, and particularly unsuccessful war, may provoke changes in domestic politics and bring to power a more peaceful faction with the policymaking elite; (7) war, especially a long and destructive war, may generate a general societal revulsion against violence lasting until the memory of war fades over the next generation or the one after that, all decreasing the likelihood of subsequent conflict; or, conversely, (8) a defeated state may become revanchist and seek to recover its losses from an earlier war or overturn a punitive peace settlement; or (9) seek to re-establish its credibility, increasing the likelihood of subsequent conflict.

Pointedly, the existing research on war-weariness focuses on military casualties, consequently ignores civilian casualties and ravages on society that are left in the wake of invasion and occupation of the home territory such as collaboration, resistance, torture, and starvation. These latter, broader experiences are often excluded, even
though they can be expected to undermine the legitimacy of state power and thereby have consequences for the post-war societal willingness to engage militarily. Their exclusion may reflect an unconscious bias by researchers to use the US and the UK as models for the use of military force, though these maritime powers tend to deploy troops abroad rather than fight over control over national territory.

The theoretical and empirical limits of the existing research are shown in terms of chosen independent and dependent variables. In one of the first uses of their Correlates of War (COW) dataset, Singer and Small examined whether states that were victorious in wars they themselves began were more likely to initiate new wars, using the COW threshold for conflicts of 1000 battle deaths (Singer and Small 1974). Levy (1982) found that, instead of serious wars being followed by smaller wars, and a longer period of time until the reoccurrence of serious wars, the opposite seems to happen. Levy and Morgan (1986) then examined wars between 1500-1975, arguing that the 1000 battle deaths threshold maintained by COW is too high, but the short time intervals between great wars do unambiguously contradict the war-weariness hypothesis (Levy and Morgan 1986). They split the analysis in pre- and post-1815 to take into account the increasing importance of societies vis-à-vis states, where citizens are likely to act as a restraint on ambitious civilian and military policymaking elites. However, the process of contagion, where one war begets another war, remains virtually unchanged before and after 1815 (Levy and Morgan 1986). Garnham (1986) attempted to further incorporate regime type into his analysis of war-proneness and war-weariness of the United States (1816-1980), Great Britain (1884-1980), and France (1877-1940, and 1946-1980) that also includes generational effects. Garnham uses battle deaths, duration (in months), battle deaths per capita, and a measure of the cumulative battle deaths in all wars during the previous twenty-five year period discounted by the time which has elapsed since each war ended. However, despite these comprehensive tests, Garnham finds no statistically significant results.

The contradictory and weak results of the various studies, combined with the return of American triumphalism after the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War, seemed to have led to a decline of war-weariness studies. Still, Nevin (1996) finds that the slowing effect of a loss was offset by one or more wins before the loss, and that losers had a high probability of initiating a conflict 20-24 years after a loss, suggesting a generational effect. Nevin speculates that a prior win establishes a momentum of conflict initiation that makes it persist despite the adversity of a loss. Pickering (2002) built upon the notion of cumulative effects of war-weariness upon initiation and the size of subsequent interstates interventions between 1946-1996, by taking sequences of victory and defeat to express the emboldening effect of victory and war-weariness. He uses the International Military intervention (IMI) database, which allows him to model the size of the intervention, as well as a wider range of the types of force used. He finds a significant effect of both strings of victories as well as strings of defeats, leading to a U-shaped relation (Pickering 2002). Though Pickering’s result seems to validate the war-
weariness thesis, his article is one of the papers singled out in Wilson and Butler’s (2007) critique of the manner in which researchers have widely applied, but misunderstood, Beck and Katz’s (1995) paper on Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). They consider Pickering’s article an example of research that overlooks extreme unit heterogeneity and alternative dynamic structures (Wilson and Butler 2007). All in all, this is an ambiguous state of affairs for testing the war-weariness thesis.

The existing research consequently has several difficulties in addressing the underlying argument on lessons based in past wars, both in terms of theory and in terms of the data used. What is conceptually missing from the war-weariness literature is a more comprehensive view of the nature of wartime experiences that have profound but complicated effects on post-war domestic politics. While the systemic nature of some wars has been addressed to an extent, this literature has insufficiently explored the notion that variation in the degree to which wars are total – whether and to what extent they involve state, society, and the armed forces – could matter for post-war behaviour. Defeats that end in humiliating surrenders, peace agreements or occupations will damage the legitimacy of existing national institutions to the core and trigger post-war searches to assign blame on either external or internal parties. Consequently, there is a much wider range than simply the final military outcome of the conflict, as coded in the Correlates of War (COW) dataset. Societies that have directly experienced large-scale conflict on their own territory are more likely to be troubled about the nature of war and critical of their government’s post-war policies than those societies for whom conflicts are far removed.

It is therefore striking that the existing research has only used military casualties and ignored civilian casualties. Traumatic experiences such as occupying armies marching through the rubble-filled streets, the commandeering of houses, collaboration, resistance, sexual violence, starvation, torture, and so on are not adequately addressed in the data. Though the number of battle deaths correlate to whether a war is a total or a limited war, these measurements are not equivalent. This matters because theoretically we assume that the more total a war is, the more it should de-legitimise the war-prone part of the civilian and military policymaking elites.

Finally, the tests only look at one facet of post-war policy, namely the use of force, whether through initiation of conflict or through broader threats and use of force. The existing research does not cover the possibility that policymakers become more likely to use alternative tools of statecraft to ensure national interests. Specifically, in light of the arguments on post-military, ‘civilian power’ Europe (Czempiel 2003), this seems an oversight.
The current war-weariness research offers contradictory and incomplete stories. It therefore seems necessary to re-examine some of these questions, incorporating diplomacy, and expanding upon the COW dataset with more fine-grained measures of experiences and military force.

The Second World War: a critical case of total war

To better explore the possibility that war experiences can have strong and enduring implications for post-war propensity to use force as opposed to diplomatic engagement, the Second World War is an extremely valuable case. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Second World War was a systemic war that fundamentally changed the hierarchies in the international system, hastened the decline of the British and French empires, and firmly established the United States as the new superpower. This punctuated and made irreversible a trend that was underway before the First World War, and dealt a psychological blow to European policymakers and social elites. The war involved the societies of the belligerent nation-states from top to bottom. It included not only deaths in faraway battlefields, but brought the war directly home to the territories of many of the participants, whether through invasion and occupation, the deliberate targeting of civilians as targets of aerial bombing campaigns, or through industrialized genocide. The totality of the war made generations of policymakers, academic, artists, and the public draw lessons from it that went beyond those of simply a military operational nature, and instead generated decades-spanning debates on the nature of state authority, human rights, the protection of minorities, and the role of the military in society. The Second World War, more than others in contemporary history, offered clear extremes on the axes of victors and losers, but also perpetrators and victims (Lebow in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, pp. 7, 18-19). Yet, despite the extraordinary stakes and moral starkness, the Second World War also constituted an ambiguous experience for many participating polities. It had its own category of ‘in-between’ states, such as France and Italy, whose experiences included military defeat, occupation, collaboration, resistance, and victory. This allows for the maximum variation in outcomes, and as many graduated steps between those extremes. This gives the test an advantage that combining the outcomes of several dyadic conflicts do not have. Compared to the Second World War, more limited conflicts have neither the moral legacies of fascism, nor involve civilian casualties to the same extent.

Defeat has so far not been systematically captured, and existing quantitative treatments have had difficult clarifying variation in outcomes. The COW dataset, still the most complete source for the historical view of warfare, defines outcomes of wars in terms of final military outcomes – win, loss, or stalemate. The dataset counts states as disparate as France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Italy as victors in 1945 (although the collapse of Vichy France and fascist Italy are treated as separate defeats) and thereby equates their
warranty experiences to those of the US and the UK. This would only Germany and Japan as truly ‘defeated’ states. For example, the ambiguous experiences of France and Italy with authoritarianism and powerful domestic fascist groups, and Communist resistance movements, complicated post-war attempts to re-establish state legitimacy. It particularly made the role of the armed forces, and the use of military force, problematic. Or, for another example, several smaller states that were overrun and occupied, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, are also counted as winners, though they depended on allies to even regain sovereignty. Some states, such as Denmark, are not even included as belligerent in the COW dataset. The Danes sustained sixteen military casualties during an invasion that lasted a mere two hours and hence does not meet the COW threshold of 1,000 battle-field deaths. Finally, and crucially, adequately capturing war losses requires at least some attention beyond the strictly military losses on which COW and most military datasets focus. Thus, civilian casualties should be included in the analysis.

To explore in more detail the war-weariness hypothesis, this chapter’s analysis of the Second World War addresses such variation in defeat and losses. It also provides an overview of how such variation correlates with reliable indicators of the post-war tendency of different polities to use military force and/or diplomatic engagement of various forms. The focus, here, is on a simple quantitative study of a cross-section of 27 belligerents in the Second World War.

The states that are included in the analysis are: Albania, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, (South) Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, USSR/Russia, and Yugoslavia/Serbia.¹ Most African, Middle Eastern, Latin-American, and other Asian states were deliberately left out. The majority of states from the developing world have had a more complicated set of national experiences that often include decolonization, arbitrary demarcation, resource curses, and intra-state ethnic rivalries that cumulatively create a fundamentally different set of drivers of peace and conflict. There is no good theoretical or conceptual reason to include them here when testing the effects of the Second World War. The limited number of countries provides only modest degrees of freedom to control for the influence that other factors may exert on the willingness to use force or diplomacy, or to explore the effects of time. However,

¹ Unfortunately, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia could not be included in the analysis, because existing data collection often combines Austrian soldiers with German soldiers, and does not distinguish between Czech and Slovak casualties. However, considering the experiences of these countries during the war and their post-war behavior, they should be expected to work to the disadvantage of our test, rather than to its advantage. Their exclusion therefore makes the test more conservative, and strengthens the robustness of the results. The possible inflation of German numbers is less problematic because of later tests where the extreme cases are excluded.
there is sufficient variation in both the independent and the dependent variables to test the most relevant aspects of the war-weariness thesis.

**Independent variables: index of loss and index of defeat**

For the purposes of our study, wartime experience is measured with two indexes, one for ‘loss’ and one for ‘defeat’. These simple measures of loss and defeat are explored to gauge whether they have implications, at least in correlational terms, for the belligerent states’ use of military force and diplomatic engagement in the post-war period from 1946 to 2006.

Loss has been operationalized and measured as *WWII civilian and military casualties (% pop.)*, the total number of civilian and military casualties that societies suffered during the Second World War as a percentage of the total pre-war population. These numbers are derived from the comprehensive set of Second World War data compiled by Ellis (Ellis 1993). In the sample, countries vary substantially with respect to this measure of loss, with Brazil suffering civilian and military casualties that were a ‘mere’ 0.004 percent of its population, while Poland suffered the almost unimaginable 17.5 percent (see the annex of this chapter). Other measures of the ‘costs’ of war might focus on more economic measures. The presumption here is that blood is likely to be more important than treasure, and that civilian bloodshed matters as much or more to later politics as does military bloodshed. This baseline measure of loss, in any event, provides an encompassing and measurable portrait of the depravations of war that these societies suffered.

To operationalize the extent of defeat, the second major index, the emphasis is on four of the most important and observable aspects of the wartime experiences of each participating state. We specify whether states at any point of the war: (1) surrendered; (2) were occupied; (3) fought on the losing side of the war; or (4) acted as an aggressor and initiated the war. Each of the four represents a separate facet of the war and allows us to show greater variation between the states. Surrender – either during or at the end of the war -represents the loss of control by the state, and its consequent humiliation. Included in the surrender measure are highly unfavourable terms in agreements, for example those that resulted in the significant loss of territory. Occupation is defined as the loss of control over the home territory during or at the end of the war, and includes losses of national territory for extended periods of time. Like surrender, this measure indicates humiliation, although arguably not to the same extent. The third measure is similar to the outcome variable of the COW dataset, but is counted as fighting on the losing side by the state’s government at any point of the war. This indicates whether civilian and military policymakers, and societal groups that sympathised with the losing side, are likely to partly or entirely lose their moral legitimacy after the war. There are
indeed many more subtle and nuanced measurements of defeat possible, for instance taking into account degrees of political and economic collaboration, or support for or carrying out the rounding-up of Jews. Unfortunately, data of this kind has not been collected in a single, comprehensive source for all the belligerent states of the Second World War. Data on the amount of ideological sympathizers would be preferable, but this is unavailable, and largely overlaps with occupation. Finally, we include initiation of conflict in combination with loss as the fourth part of our measure of loss. This is another indicator of the failing of wartime policymakers and post-war de-legitimization of the ruling pre-war political elites.

Added together, these four components constitute our Defeat Index. Figure 3 provides an overview of the coding of the four components of the index. A number of countries were spared any of the principal measures of defeat in the index, and can be seen as ‘victors’ – most obviously the United States and the United Kingdom, but also more marginal combatant states like Brazil. And only two countries were defeated in all four ways emphasized by the index, namely Germany and Japan. The countries in the in-between category are perhaps the most interesting. For instance, we have Italy differing mainly with respect to formal surrender, while France experienced the travails of occupation and surrender. Yet, France was not an aggressor, nor did it substantially contribute its military to the losing Axis powers, though the ‘dark years’ of the Vichy period left deep scars in the post-war collective memory (Gildea 2002; Wieviorka 2010). In any event, there is substantial variation with respect to these four, simple degrees of defeat. The analysis shall focus on the full composite Defeat Index, but supplemental analysis also considers each component separately.

---

2 Ideally, a measure of post-war moral legitimacy should also include: numbers of collaborators; numbers of resistance fighters; the politicisation of the national armed forces, the para-military, or the police for the suppression of internal revolt.
Figure 3. Second World War Defeat Index, 1946-2006

Figure 4 below shows how the two measures of war experience – *WWII Casualties* and *WWII Defeat Index* – are positively but only very weakly related to one another. We see that the states that score on all for aspects of the defeat index, Germany and Japan, also have very high casualty rates compared to the states that score on none, even the United Kingdom. But there are clear exceptions to this simple pattern, the most obvious being Poland and Denmark, both of which suffered occupation and surrender during the War, but had radically different experiences when it came to the basic measure of military and civilian casualties – Poland suffering the greatest casualty rate of the war’s belligerents and Denmark among the least. This is good news for the analysis. Loss and defeat should be correlated to some extent, as states that lose the most are also likely to have
lost the most military and civilian casualties due to lost battles, invasion, and occupation. However, if the correlations were very strong, they would essentially measure the same concept. They do not, and therefore give additional leverage on the question of the effect of experiences in the Second World War.

![Figure 4. Second World War Deaths and Defeat Index](image)

**Dependent variables: military force and diplomacy**

The next challenge is to operationalize the propensity to use force and diplomacy of states in the post-war period. The dependent variables are more straightforward. There are four simple measures (two for propensity to use force and two for propensity to use diplomacy) that are cross-temporally and cross-nationally comparable but also sensitive to variation in the many post-war foreign-policy stances. For all four measures, the focus is on the broad patterns (means or sums) over the entire post-war period, from 1946 to 2006, meaning the averages and cumulative numbers of those numbers for the sixty-plus years. Ideally, there would be measures for the use of force and diplomacy on a year to year basis. However, the data for the use of force is obviously very uneven, given that
most states (fortunately) only rarely use military force. In any event, the interest is in exploring the possibility of generational or longer implications of victory and defeat – making the full post-war period relevant. Shorter periods are, however, considered, as well as the possibility that Cold War and post-Cold War experiences have been different with respect to such memory.

To gauge the propensity to use force in national policy, the same COW measure of initiation adopted in the war-weariness literature is used. The initiation of both interstate wars as well as intrastate wars in the post-1945 period is combined into one variable, *Initiation of Military Force*. States that are more willing to use force should be more likely to initiate new conflicts, even if the COW measure ignores wars with less than a 1000 battle deaths, which we can test with our new outcome variable. Such initiation over the full period between 1946 and 2006 ranges from 0 for several countries (e.g. Bulgaria, New Zealand, Japan, Denmark) to 5 for China.

As a second measure of force, we use the less constraining definition of conflict found in the IMI dataset. From that data, we constructed a single measure of force that includes both intimidation as well as actual combat. This measure consequently takes into account the broader compellent or deterrent role that military force can play in state policy, where it accomplishes political goals even if not used for offensive or defensive purposes to harm an adversary or prevent such harm (Schelling 1980, pp. 1-34; Art 2009, p.1). Threats of force always imply a political risk. Therefore, this measure arguably better reflects the underlying willingness to use force of states and their societies. Sample variation in the resulting measure, *Any use of military force*, ranges from 0 for Japan to 34 instances of the use of force in France.

Figure 5 shows how these two measures of force-prone orientation tend to positively correlate, though again weakly. Japan and Denmark have never initiated a conflict in the post-war period according to the COW definition and never used military force according to the IMI definition, while the UK, the US and China have excelled in the use of both measures of force. France and South Africa have been much more involved in military actions than they themselves have initiated. This is again good news, and shows sufficient variation in the separate measures.

To measure reliance on diplomacy two measures were used. The sum of international organisations of which a nation-state was a member in a given period, as found in the COW dataset, was used as an indicator of the willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy. As a second measure, the sum of diplomatic representatives a state had abroad in a given period, also found in the COW dataset, was used. Diplomatic representation is not necessarily support for multilateralism or acceptance of the loss of sovereignty. Given the manner in which COW measures it, however, diplomatic representation does reflect a willingness to bear costs, as staffing and providing infrastructure in multiple states is likely to be expensive. Not surprisingly, these two
measures substantially co-vary, with South Africa being the least diplomatically engaged in general during the post-war period (not surprising given the exogenous factor of Apartheid), while the Netherlands, the UK, Italy, and the US tend to have the most diplomatic engagement. Finally, the measures of diplomatic contact and IGO membership do not themselves correlate negatively or positively with the measures of military orientation (not shown).

Figure 5. Any Use of Military Force and Initiation of Military Force, 1946-2006

To explore how the above measures of loss and defeat in the Second World War relate to the post-war likelihood to use force and diplomacy, both the descriptive statistical relationships between national experiences and policy were considered. This is a necessary conceptual step given the lack of degrees of freedom to conduct an extensive regression analysis of the correlation. Still, the modest cross-section does provide room for such analysis. For that analysis we focus on a wide range of possible controls, variables that can be expected to be important sources of omitted variable bias in exploring the relationships between loss and defeat on the one hand and post-war propensity to use force and diplomacy on the other. Foremost, the controls include
measures of general material capabilities, alignment, and likelihood to be involved in conflicts that mask the influence of wartime experience on post-war strategy. Simply put, these controls recognize that force and diplomacy are part of complex calculations of grand strategy that preselect certain options, and, equally important, the use of force is particularly often driven by the exigencies of circumstances and the behaviour of other actors.

Figure 6. Diplomatic Representation and IGO Memberships, 1946-2006

The factors that prove important in terms of their conceptual and statistical significance and on which the baseline models are focused are three-fold. The first and most important control is for the greater opportunity of powerful states to use force (both measures) and diplomatic representation through the COW’s material capability index (CINC). The second is the inclusion of the number of colonies a state has lost since 1938, because this is likely to increase post-war conflict-prone behaviour, as states attempt to hold onto these territories. It is also likely to increase diplomatic contacts with their former possession, after independence. Finally, considering that most of the states in the dataset generally operate with likeminded states and under the condition of US
hegemony, another control was included for membership of the West in a Cold War context.³

In supplementary tests, a variety of other variables were considered, most importantly the conceptually important but statistically less significant loss during the First World War and losses during conflicts in the post-Second World War period.

Results of the regression analysis: Loss and defeat to force and diplomacy

A simple version of the war-weariness perspective expects that those nations experiencing more loss and defeat in the Second World War will tend to be less prone to use force and more prone to use diplomacy in its aftermath. This broad possibility is considered in two steps. First, descriptive statistics are used to visually consider the relationships between loss and defeat with the measures of force and diplomacy.

Figure 7 summarizes this descriptive -statistical relationship between Any use of military force and WWII casualties (left-hand panel) and WWII Defeat Index (right-hand panel). It shows modest relationships between the independent and the dependent variables but clearly in a direction that is consistent with the war-weariness perspective. A negative relationship between the measures of loss and defeat on the one hand and of military engagement on the other; and a positive relationship between the same measures of wartime suffering for diplomatic engagement.

The patterns suggest that a substantial clustering of the countries follow a negative pattern suggesting war-weariness among the bigger losers and defeated, but also a substantial clustering of countries among whom there is little variation in the measures of military engagement. The latter, interestingly, tend to be relatively smaller states. This suggests that the legacies of wartime experience for military engagement are different for smaller countries than for larger countries. Such a pattern, of course, is not very surprising given the literature on bandwagoning and balancing among small and great powers, respectively. It is also reassuring, as it means that the larger states that are less constrained by their position in the internal order are more likely to show the effects of defeat. Another important single outlier is France, particularly with respect to the implications of the WWII Defeat Index. We see that the French use substantially more force than other states and certainly more than a basic reading of the war-weariness theory suggest should be the case, considering the extent of loss and defeat France experienced.

³ These include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, UK, and US.
Figure 7. Second World War Defeat and the Use of Military Force, 1946-2006

Figure 8, in turn, provides a simple overview of the relationships between loss and defeat on the one hand and Diplomatic representation. Here the relationships are less strong than is the case for the bivariate correlations in figure 7. But the relationships are positive, particularly with respect to the implications of the Defeat Index (right-hand panel). This is interesting, because in the section above the measures of force-proneness and diplomacy were shown to be positively related with one another. A positive relationship between defeat and IGO membership is, however, what one might expect...
from the war-weariness perspective developed above. This means that there is no omitted variable that is causing the variation of these measures of force and diplomacy.

Figure 8. Second World War Deaths, Defeat and Diplomatic Engagement, 1946-2006

The relationships shown are what one would also find upon comparing the measures of loss and defeat with the other measures of force-proneness and diplomacy. In the very temporally aggregated measures of the entire post-war period used here, there appears to be little significant relationship between the war experiences and post-war diplomacy and force-proneness. But, as predicted, the direction of the correlation that does exist is negative for diplomacy and positive for force-proneness.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Any use of military force</th>
<th>Initiate military force</th>
<th>IGO memberships</th>
<th>Diplomatic representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII military and civilian</td>
<td>-0.103**</td>
<td>-0.13***</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
<td>0.026*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deaths (% pop.)</td>
<td>(0.047)</td>
<td>(0.048)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII Defeat Index</td>
<td>-0.504**</td>
<td>-0.262</td>
<td>0.097**</td>
<td>0.144**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.200)</td>
<td>(0.225)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material capabilities (COW</td>
<td>12.44**</td>
<td>12.0***</td>
<td>-0.230</td>
<td>3.075**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>index), 1946-2006</td>
<td>(2.764)</td>
<td>(1.887)</td>
<td>(0.434)</td>
<td>(0.560)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.053**</td>
<td>0.035**</td>
<td>0.007**</td>
<td>0.013**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonization, 1938-2006</td>
<td>0.063*</td>
<td>0.027**</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
<td>0.010**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>-0.929*</td>
<td>0.838*</td>
<td>0.515**</td>
<td>0.387**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.519)</td>
<td>(0.413)</td>
<td>(0.085)</td>
<td>(0.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.996**</td>
<td>2.158**</td>
<td>4.851**</td>
<td>5.253**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.496)</td>
<td>(0.403)</td>
<td>(0.371)</td>
<td>(0.585)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald chi-square (4)</td>
<td>33.79</td>
<td>56.68</td>
<td>84.74</td>
<td>161.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Countries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns 1-4: Negative binomial regression with robust standard errors (in parentheses); Columns 5-8: Poisson regression with robust standard errors (in parentheses); *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. Second World War deaths and defeat, and post-war force-proneness and diplomacy
All components of the dependent variables are standardized before combined. OLS coefficients with robust standard errors (in parentheses); *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Any force minus IGO membership</th>
<th>Any force minus diplomatic representation</th>
<th>Initiator minus IGO membership</th>
<th>Initiator minus diplomatic representation</th>
<th>(Any force + Initiator) minus(IGO memb. + Diplom. rep.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII military and civilian deaths (% pop.)</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.150***</td>
<td>0.273**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.057)</td>
<td>(0.05 3)</td>
<td>(0.0 51)</td>
<td>(0.05 0)</td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII Defeat Index</td>
<td>0.71***</td>
<td>0.77**</td>
<td>0.65***</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>-1.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.18 3)</td>
<td>(0.18 3)</td>
<td>(0.1 05)</td>
<td>(0.13 2)</td>
<td>(0.233)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material capabilities (COW cinc)</td>
<td>12.78**</td>
<td>8.29 2***</td>
<td>1.681 3.208</td>
<td>17.3 88***</td>
<td>6.288 1.706***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.3 85)</td>
<td>(2.7 68)</td>
<td>(2.1 75)</td>
<td>(2.6 49)</td>
<td>(5.2 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonization</td>
<td>0.02 3**</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.004 0.002</td>
<td>0.01 0.011</td>
<td>0.011 -0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.0 13)</td>
<td>(0.0 21)</td>
<td>(0.0 15)</td>
<td>(0.0 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>-1.79 2***</td>
<td>-1.422***</td>
<td>-1.046***</td>
<td>-2.16 7***</td>
<td>-1.482 1.036**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.5 61)</td>
<td>(0.5 33 1)</td>
<td>(0.5 60)</td>
<td>(0.4 01)</td>
<td>(0.5 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.50 5**</td>
<td>1.95 0***</td>
<td>1.384 1.812**</td>
<td>1.57 1.856***</td>
<td>1.459 1.719***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.5 29)</td>
<td>(0.4 17)</td>
<td>(0.4 86)</td>
<td>(0.5 08)</td>
<td>(0.5 58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Countries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.57 4</td>
<td>0.72 7</td>
<td>0.30 2</td>
<td>0.555 0.66 7</td>
<td>0.380 0.519 0.544 0.730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns 1-10: All components of the dependent variables are standardized before combined. OLS coefficients with robust standard errors (in parentheses); *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Second World War loss and defeat index and post-war mixes of force-proneness and diplomacy

For a more precise look at the relationships between measures of loss and defeat and those of propensity to use force and diplomacy, a range of statistical models of force and diplomacy were fitted. The baseline models focus on each of the measures of loss and
defeat, force-proneness and diplomacy, separately, along with controls for Material capabilities, Decolonization, and (aligning with the) West. In these models the dependent variables are all counts, making ordinary least squares an inappropriate estimator to generate consistent and unbiased estimates of the effects of war experiences. Both the two counts of force-proneness, Any use of military force and Initiator of military conflict, are over-dispersed (seen by how the mean is smaller than the standard deviation). For the force propensity estimates, hence, the negative binomial regression estimator is used. The two counts of diplomacy, IGO memberships and Diplomatic representation, however, are not over-dispersed, making Poisson regression the more appropriate estimator. In addition to these specifications and estimators, a range of others are also considered, and discussed below.

Table 2 above summarizes the baseline results. The table shows that controlling for material capabilities, West, and decolonization are important, captured by their significance in predicting post-war stances. It also shows that net of such controls, loss and defeat have, in these specifications, implications that are very much in line with the war-weariness hypothesis. However, the results are not consistent across all estimations, nor statistically highly significant. But most of the specifications do reach at least low levels of significance. We see, for instance, that estimates of Any use of force reveal both WWII casualties and WWII defeat index to be statistically significant in predicting lower incidence of force. And we see that particularly estimates of Diplomatic representation reveal both WWII casualties and WWII defeat index to predict higher incidence of diplomatic engagement.

To explore the sensitivity and robustness of these results, particularly important given the modest number of observations, a range of other specifications are considered. For example, fewer and different mixes of controls yield very similar results to those shown. Alternative controls, such as First World War loss, interwar force-proneness, and post-War loss, were also included, and all of these leave the reported patterns intact.

More importantly, different measures of loss, defeat, force-proneness and diplomacy are also explored. For instance, the separate influence of military casualties and of civilian casualties has also been considered (see the annex of this chapter). This specification suggests that particularly military casualties are important for Any use of force, while Civilian casualties are particularly important for Initiation of military force; that neither measure of loss is separately important in predicting IGO memberships; and that both are important in spurring Diplomatic representation. Further analysis in the annex of this chapter considers, likewise, the effects of the components of the WWII Defeat Index, suggesting that particularly being the Aggressor and being Occupied during WWII are important in diminishing Any use of force in the post-war period, while none of the components is individually statistically significant in reducing the incidence of Initiator of military conflict. However, this analysis (see annex of this chapter) suggests that all four components of the WWII Defeat Index (Aggressor, Fighting on losing side,
Occupation, Surrender) appear important to spurring the incidence of both IGO memberships and Diplomatic representation.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, table 3 considers various combinations of force-proneness and diplomacy by standardizing each of the four measures and taking the difference between either measure of force-proneness on the one hand and either measure of diplomacy on the other. Here we see that in all specifications the results are substantively and statistically stronger than the baseline models, in line with the view that greater loss tends to diminish reliance on force-proneness relative to diplomacy.

Two other patterns in the various estimations are worth further attention. As the descriptive-statistical comparisons showed, France appears to be a substantial outlier in the relationship between wartime experience and force-proneness. This also shows up in the controlled estimation, where the marginal effects of both measures of loss and defeat are substantively and significantly much larger should one remove France from the estimations. That the French case should prove a strong exception to the defeat thesis can be explained by the exceptional course of post-war French politics, as General De Gaulle, in spite of the devastating military defeat in 1940, managed to create and maintain the myth of an independent France that had resisted invaders (Gildea 2002; Wieviorka 2010). Furthermore, under the institutions of the Fifth Republic, foreign and defense policy became the exclusive providence of the President, where Parliament has little to no say, thereby diminishing scrutiny and debate in an otherwise polarized political system, and making societal approval fairly unimportant for the President. Step-wise removal of any of the other countries, in any event, do not substantially alter any of the baseline results. This means that the exclusion of such obvious extremes (see figure 3) as Germany, Japan, the UK, and the US does not remove the significance of the results.

Finally, consistent with the descriptive comparisons above, there does appear to be a stronger relationship among the larger powers between wartime experiences and the propensity to use force. This pattern is captured by splitting the sample by the mean of material capabilities, or by interacting this capabilities parameter with measures of loss and defeat. In either case, it shows that loss and defeat more strongly diminish force-proneness among larger powers than among smaller ones. Since the policy options of smaller powers are more limited – they are less able to project power, but also less able to deny requests from more powerful states - these results make sense conceptually. In other words, policymakers from larger states, who have more policy options available to them, are in the position to act on the legacy of war for their respective nation, whereas smaller states are more constrained.
Conclusion

These patterns should be considered significant, though modest, statistical evidence that experiences with loss and victory during the Second World War have had important and enduring implications for post-war foreign policy. Judging by cross-national variation in such experiences and policy, loss and defeat defined in various ways during the epochal Second World War appear to have diminished the incidence of post-war force-proneness and increased the incidence of post-war diplomacy. Considering the sheer range of possible, often contrasting, drivers of war and cooperation – ideology, domestic-economic interests, a dynamic international environment, alliance obligations, crises, etc. – it is in fact surprising that these patterns show up in such broad and inherently limited cross sectional comparison at all. The findings suggest that national historical war myths may create a momentum of their own that constrains and preselects policy paths.

The results are also relevant for the larger picture in that they reveal of the post-war global order and transatlantic relations. This suggests that the integration and pacification of Europe was not only tied together by the various post-war institutions – NATO, EU, etc. - but also by commonly accepted and institutionally embedded cultural beliefs on international politics. The results could be expanded in various ways. One of these is a measure to express how ‘easy’ the victory was – how little extraction and mobilization were needed to achieve victory – in relation to the magnitude of the victory – the magnitude of the threat defeated. Perhaps a series of easy victories against small opponents from the periphery emboldens policymakers to use force than a ‘one-time’ costly loss or victory. More victories might also make states not only more willing to use force, but to challenge larger, more dangerous opponents. The analysis could also be applied to a greater scope of major wars that includes the First World War, the French-Prussian War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Thirty-year war, and so on. It could even include the end of the Cold War. Though its conclusion was non-violent and therefore very atypical, in the perception of Western thinkers it was definitive and emboldening - constituting a sense that an ‘end of history’ had arrived. These are just a few of the important possible developments that can further test, clarify and deepen the present study’s view that loss and defeat shape grand strategic behaviour. However, there are always conceptual and empirical limits to applying large-N studies to such complex and nuanced strategic outcomes.

The next two chapters will therefore focus on looking at four case studies that represent both the extremes of victory and defeat, as more complex and ambiguous cases – respectively the US and Germany in chapter four, and the UK and France in chapter five.
Chapter Four
Strategic Beliefs, Domestic Relations: the United States and Germany
The fourth and fifth chapters examine how complex national experiences with war strongly shape both the strategic beliefs and the relations between state, society, and the armed forces. These chapters move beyond the comparative statistics of the previous chapters that were an attempt to nuance the nature of experiences, but were also still inherently limited by the demands of data collection and standardisation.

The central argument that is explored in chapters four and five pertains to expectations four, five, and six of the research. Together, they argue that wars shape the beliefs of civilian and military policymakers and the public, in two ways. The experiences teach ‘lessons’ to policymakers that can be divided into (a) core strategic beliefs on what should be the fundamental elements of their grand strategies and (b) peripheral strategic beliefs that deal with how these fundamental elements should be executed. Core beliefs pertain to: (1) the nature of threats and the importance of the distribution of power; (2) the efficacy of specific force postures in dealing with the environment - e.g. where the forces are positioned and for what tasks they are likely to be employed; and (4) the efficacy of alliances (or the lack of alliances) in dealing with it. Wars also shape the peripheral beliefs of policymakers on credibility, accommodation, national ideology, and so on. There is a hierarchical logic in this ordering. The assessment of the global and regional order, and beliefs about alliances and force postures, all precede and preselect specific combinations of external and internal balancing behaviour. Consequently, they lock the state into certain grand strategies.

Victories and defeats legitimate or delegitimise domestic actors, not only policymakers, by showing who acted capably and who did not. This in turn affects the post-war legitimacy and institutional influence of certain domestic actors relative to others, and the resulting autonomy of policymakers to make decisions.

This chapter discusses how the Second World War shaped both core and peripheral beliefs, and domestic relations in both the United States and (West)Germany. What are commonly referred to as the lessons of a war in fact are often the judgments on the years that preceded the war, and the failures and success of those pre-war decisions, on the heroes and villains, and the resolution of the war. This chapter shows how these beliefs and relations defined their Cold War and post-Cold War grand strategies: how they interpreted and responded to the Soviet Union, the reconstruction of Germany, their integration into collective defence alliances, their integration of conventional and nuclear forces, and conflicts in the periphery.

The two chapters are constructed as follows. First, I give a short historical overview of the actual grand strategies of the states, including their alliances, force postures, and behaviour during crises. For each of them, I offer what are the orthodox histories. The intention here is to summarise the major elements of the Cold War and post-Cold War international systems, and the specific implications for each state in terms of strategic trade-offs. Of the four histories, the American decisions get more attention, as they also
set the parameters for the decisions of the European states. These histories are conventional, and largely uncontroversial, and provide what are the commonly accepted facts. They mostly derive from the work of Costigliola (1992), Winand (1996) Trachtenberg (1998) and Gaddis (2005 (1982)).

Second, I show how core and peripheral beliefs, and domestic relations explain those strategies and decision. Chapters four and five lay the ground work in various ways for the chapters that follow. The decisions that are discussed in chapters four and five are reappraised in chapter six through the use of counterfactuals. By contrasting the actual grand strategies against the often equally or more plausible counterfactual grand strategies, the decisive role of beliefs based on experiences with war becomes apparent. The alternate histories show how different choices are likely to have created very different risks, costs and benefits, and the actual choices therefore show for each state the preferences and willingness to accept risks, costs and pursue benefits. The counterfactuals in chapter six largely follow the same construction of chapters four and five, in terms of decisions and crises. Chapters seven and eight also build upon these two chapters. They expand upon the strategic beliefs and the use of history through content analysis of policy documents in chapter seven, and through a historiographical discussion of behaviour during crises, and the manner in which policymakers used history to justify decisions during crises, in policy documents, speeches, and interviews, in chapter eight.

Chapters four and five are divided as follows: chapter four discusses the two extreme cases – the United States and Germany – and chapter five discusses the two complex cases – the United Kingdom and France.

**Histories: American and German grand strategy**

**United States**

American policymakers did not immediately arrive at the strategy that eventually became known as containment. From 1945 to 1947 the US did not commit itself to Europe or to Asia. It took several years in the aftermath of the Second World War for American grand strategy to adapt to the post-war environment. Instead, once war in the Pacific ended, the Truman administration largely demobilised the American armed forces. In the years that followed, a series of developments led American policymakers to the conclusion – or were reaffirmed in their pre-war belief – that the Soviet Union was a

---

1 Strategy or strategies? See Gaddis’ (2005) treatment of American Cold War grand strategy as developing dynamically over time, from administration to administration, albeit around a core group of principles and assumptions. (Gaddis’ title reflects this: Strategies of Containment).
significant threat to European security and stability. The inability to run a Germany divided into occupation zones together with the Soviets was one warning sign, another that the Soviet regime did not respect agreements on respective spheres of influence. The Soviet Union instead enforced direct control over Poland and over its occupation zone in Germany, and it attempted to apply pressure on key geopolitical points in northern Iran and the Bosporus. Finally, American policymakers saw the hand of the Soviet Union in the Greek Civil War to conclude that the Soviet Union was attempting to expand its influence through the use of subversion in the unstable post-war European nations. The presence of significant communist movements in France, Italy, and West Germany, suggested Western Europe and other parts of the ‘Free World’ could be close to falling to Communism. Consequently, they perceived the need for a cohesive policy to ensure European security and stability.

Three key texts signal that the American strategic shift towards containment. The first was Kennan’s 1946 Long Telegram from the American embassy in Moscow in which he dissected the nature of the Soviet regime, and underlined that it was inherently distrustful and aggressive. The second was Truman’s 1947 speech that advocated economic aid to Greece and Turkey to undermine Soviet subversion of the Greek Civil War, and formed the basis for the Truman Doctrine. The third was the 1950 NSC68 document the culmination of the emerging consensus among policymakers, and an attempt to encapsulate these ideas into a coherent policy.

The policy that took shape was a clear departure from the pre-war US strategy of non-interference in Europe. The situation in Europe was perceived as dire enough to warrant large numbers of American forces to remain stationed in Europe. The U.S began signalling its commitment to European security through alliances and extending its nuclear deterrence. However, the threats to Europe that American policymakers perceived were complex and intertwined. The post-war years had shown them that the dire economic conditions most European citizens faced had made them particularly vulnerable to the appeal of Communism. It was not only the continental powers, who had suffered occupation and destructive war on their territory, but also Great Britain, that had serious economic and monetary problems. The competing demands of economic recovery, infrastructural reconstruction, and military rearmament made the defence of Europe more difficult. American policymakers therefore instituted programs of military and economic aid – foremost the Marshall Plan – to jumpstart European reconstruction.

---

2 For Western Europe, the US sought a collective security organisation that eventually took the shape of NATO. A series of bilateral security commitments across the world, specifically in Asia, further shored up the containment of the Soviets. The Cold War force posture, which consisted of a forward military presence of American forces and the extended deterrence of the American nuclear weapon, underpinned the alliances built by the US in Europe and Asia.
Reconstruction and rearmament did not suffice, at least not at the speed they took place, as the security situations in Europe and Asia further deteriorated in the first post-war decade. From 1950 onwards, the assumption no longer held that, while it was rearming, Europe could be protected from Soviet conventional preponderance through American nuclear weapons. The US no longer had a nuclear monopoly as the Soviet Union gained nuclear weapons years earlier than expected. The loss of China in 1949 and the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 further signalled to American policymakers that they were headed towards an inevitable confrontation with the Soviets. Thus, with fits and starts, the basic parameters of the Cold War were set, as American policymakers created a system in which American leadership was considered essential for the survival of liberal democracy and free markets.

As a strategy, containment was not as straightforward to implement as it might seem in retrospect. While the general concept of containment of Soviet influence – as delineated by Kennan - might have become commonly accepted, the construction of NATO showed the practical difficulties of giving the policy actual shape. To begin with, American policymakers had initially protected Europe primarily by extending the protection offered by its nuclear deterrent. It was essential to assure European policymakers of the credibility of this commitment. Yet, this was inherently difficult as it implied that American policymakers were to be willing to endanger the US proper to secure Europe. Should they signal their intention too convincingly, they could provoke risk-seeking behaviour on the part of the Europeans, should they be perceived as unconvincing, the Europeans might defect. Second, there was the question how to reintegrate West Germany into Western Europe. They could not afford German alienation to lead to a policy of neutrality or a shift towards the Soviet sphere of influence, nor could they afford defending West Germany without it making its own contribution. The reconstruction of West Germany was hardly acceptable for its neighbours, however. France most of all feared a revanchist German that could reignite conflict on the continent. Third, German rearmament and the nuclear issue were related. Without nuclear weapons of their own, Europeans would be entirely dependent on the willingness of American policymakers to potentially sacrifice their own citizens to Soviet nuclear retaliation. With some hesitation American policymakers were willing to share nuclear weapons with Britain. Sharing them more broadly with the other European states seemed impossible, because excluding Germany risked alienating it, while sharing nuclear weapons with Germany risked provoking France and the Soviet Union.

NATO provided the solution to these interconnected problems. It embedded the US in Europe, signalled the credibility of its alliance commitments and allayed European fears of US abandonment. After the attempts at nuclear sharing through the Multilateral Force (MLF) failed to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, the nuclear issue was resolved through security guarantees towards Germany and the integration of American nuclear weapons into the NATO structure. European economic integration in the European Community of Steel and Coals (ECSC), and later the European Economic Community
(EEC), met the need for reconstruction of the European economies. It also further embedded and constrained Germany. American policymakers therefore supported the ECSC and the later incarnations, in spite of their own preferences for a more free-market orientated arrangement.

The Europeans paid a price for these American contributions, in the form of diminished policy autonomy and influence. The US pushed the UK, France, and the Netherlands to dismantle what remained of their crumbling colonial empires to avoid lending credence to Soviet appeals to anti-imperialism in these peripheral areas. The clearest illustration of the American pressure on the Europeans, is the 1956 Suez Crisis. Eisenhower threatened to withdraw American aid if Britain and France did not cease their joint with Israeli intervention in Egypt. The US was, however, increasingly drawn into, or it drew itself into, the peripheral areas to prove the credibility of its leadership, and it was there – and not in Europe, the Cold War’s central battleground - where the direct confrontations of the Cold War took place.

Credibility was considered the lynchpin of the complex alliance commitments of the US in Europe and East Asia. American policymakers considered the nationalist/anti-imperialist movements in the periphery outside of Europe and East Asia to be as part of a global Communist movement. Each defeat of a pro-American power would weaken the credibility of the US and embolden the Soviet Union, which in turn would precipitate the next collapse – the ‘domino theory’. The Vietnam War was the clearest and most destructive expression of this line of thinking, and one that, in terms of international and domestic consensus and legitimacy, ultimately ended up undermining American credibility to its allies.

After the retrenchment and repositioning of American policies and commitments in the 1970s, a more hesitant US began intervening militarily again during the 1980s, in Lebanon, Grenada and Panama. As the détente of the 1960s and 1970s came to an end, and the Cold War re-intensified, US relations with the European states were put under pressure. Specifically, the placement of intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe by both superpowers was feared and resented by large parts of the European publics and polities. It also recalled the concerns of the earlier stages of the Cold War that American forcefulness might lead to escalation or instead was interpreted as a sign of possible abandonment. Yet, the combination of the more confrontational approach to containment of the Reagan Administration, both in terms of rhetoric and increased defence spending, and the Gorbachev-led movement in the Soviet Union to open and rejuvenate the Soviet system, culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The end of the Cold War drastically changed the international system. It went from bipolar to unipolar, with the US the single remaining global superpower. What was unique about the American position in the first decade that followed the Cold War was the pre-eminence of the US in all dimensions of power – economic, military, technology,
cultural, and ideological. It no longer had a single credible competitor, let alone a direct threat to its national security. In spite of these drastically changes in the international system, American grand strategy did not diminish in scope. Instead, it focused on maintaining the unipolar moment, and ensuring the further spread of liberal democracies and free markets.

Strategic elements from the Cold War were refitted to this mission. Though decreased in size from the height of the Cold War, American forces remained in Europe in large numbers to maintain stability and security in Europe. NATO did not cease to exist after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In fact, the US, UK, and Germany supported the expansion of NATO eastwards, to include the states that had previously belonged to the Warsaw Pact in Central and Eastern Europe that sought to evade the Russian sphere of influence. The US also supported the parallel expansion of the European Union eastwards. It was argued that both moves would ensure enduring peace and stability in a Europe that included a reunified Germany and the newly democratic Central and Eastern European states. The US also maintained its troop presence in Japan and Korea. The 1991 Gulf War was a key moment for this era, as it showcased how much more advanced American military capabilities were relative to other states.

The post-Cold War American grand strategy was ambitious in its global scope. For one, policymakers maintained a global force posture. The 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) planned the force posture on two possible major regional contingencies (2MRC): the US forces must be able to simultaneously fight regional powers in the Middle East and in East Asia. American defence spending remained similarly high, in comparison to its major allies and to its possible competitors. The US invested heavily in maintaining and expanding on technological advantages that American forces enjoyed (and had shown in the Gulf War). Full Spectrum Dominance - dominance of the American military on air, land, sea, space, and information domains - demonstrated this desire. What is remarkable that there was no serious attempt of American policymakers to ameliorate this high spending by passing of costs to the Europeans.

Throughout the 1990s, successive post-Cold War American administrations discouraged any rival to NATO and resisted the European attempts to achieve an autonomous European defence capability. The foremost of the European attempts - the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – that followed after British-French agreement in St. Malo was severely limited from the start. The ESDP was prohibited from duplicating NATO capabilities, discriminating against non-EU NATO members such as Turkey, and from decoupling from the US and NATO - the (in)famous three D’s. Simultaneously, the US complained more and more that the Europeans were underspending on defence. That critique had already been prevalent during the Cold War, but became more prominent after the disappearance of the Soviet threat, as most European governments took a peace dividend and drastically cut their defence spending. The burdensharing debates became more vociferous when it became apparent that many European states
were incapable of intervening effectively in the Balkan Wars that took place right in the middle of Europe, and American leadership and military capabilities were proven to be crucial for the peacekeeping and intervention missions in Bosnia and in Kosovo. It also underlined the transatlantic capability differential already transparent in the Gulf War. Throughout the 1990s the US intervened in other instances, most prominently in Somalia - where it withdrew after sustaining casualties - and in Haiti. Policymakers argued that doing so maintained the credibility of American leadership. The US did not intervene in any applicable situation – for example, it remains uninvolved in the Rwandan genocide.

The post-Cold War decade also showed American administrations working to support and expand upon the multilateral frameworks set up in the early stages of the Cold War – the United Nations (UN), World Trade Organisation (WTO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) standing out as the most important ones. In essence, this represented the anchoring of and expanding upon the liberal global order of free market democracies that the US had already established in Europe and Japan during the Cold War. States that resisted these rules of the game – through the pursuit of WMDs, persecution, support for terrorism – were categorised as rogue states. The most prominent states marked as such by the Bush (41) and the Clinton administration were Iraq, Iran and North Korea. The decade represented the high-water mark of liberal internationalism and interventionism. Yet, US dominance triggered resentment and asymmetric responses.

The 2001 attacks could be considered such an asymmetric response against American post-Cold War preponderance and its presence in the Middle East. The response of the Bush (43) administration represented both the culmination of these liberal internationalist and interventionist ideas as well as their negation. The intervention in Afghanistan to destroy the organisation responsible for the attacks expanded into an attempt at nation-building. However, it was the invasion of Iraq in 2003 that proved most detrimental to the US. Based on what ultimately proved to be faulty intelligence that the Saddam Hussain regime possessed WMDs and had ties to Al Qaeda, the Iraq war was the event that most drove a wedge between supporters and opponents of US policy. Britain was the primary supporter, with Prime Minister Blair personally committing his own legitimacy and political capital, while other supporters included Poland, Spain, several of the Central- and Eastern European states, and the smaller Western European states. The invasion was primarily opposed by President Chirac’s France, and Chancellor Schröder’s Germany, together with Belgium and Luxemburg. The debate on whether or not to intervene in Iraq seemed to reveal transatlantic contrasts on the efficacy of force and the importance of multilateralism, as well as differences in acceptance of American dominance or multipolarity.

The occupation and reconstruction of Iraq proved to be more difficult and costly than its invasion. Together with Afghanistan, Iraq tied up American forces, strategic thinking
and foreign policy for the remainder of the decade. The Obama administration proved to be more reticent about intervening in the Middle East, and let Britain and France take the lead in Libya in 2011, following the uprising that was inspired by the Arab Spring protests across the Middle East. The domestic reticence towards interventions, specifically in the Middle East, was strong to impede action in the Syrian conflict in 2013. American policymakers are currently attempting to refocus US strategy away from the Middle East. There is a perceived need to free up resources to engage a rising China in Asia, the much-discussed ‘Pacific Pivot’ / ‘rebalancing’. Whether they will be able to do so, remains to be seen. The re-emergence of instability in the Middle East – in Syria and in Iraq – combined with Russian assertive behaviour in Ukraine – specifically its actions in the Crimea – will impede the pre-eminence of any single region in the calculations of American policymakers, unless they surrender the global ambitions of their strategy.

Germany

In the first decade after the end of the Second World War, West Germany could hardly be considered a truly independent state. It had been occupied, disarmed, and divided, and it was surrounded by states still fearful of possible German resurgence and destabilisation of security in Europe. Germany might have stayed that way longer had the Soviet Union’s dominance of the Central- and Eastern Europe, and the inability of the Western states to come to a durable agreement with it, not interfered. It became apparent to the Western states that the defence of Europe was unsustainable with a Germany that was unarmed and dependent. The loss of American nuclear monopoly further drove home the point that the imbalance of conventional forces in Europe needed to be readdressed. Germans could hardly be expected to accept that their territory would become the inevitable frontline in case of escalation, while they had no influence over the processes of deterrence and escalation.

NATO was the solution that allowed the rearmament of Germany and gave it a measure of control over its policy, while it still contained it through the formalised presence of allied forces on its territory. From the perspective of Britain, France and the Benelux states, and the US itself, NATO allowed the US to act as both a pacifier and protector of Germany. It secured Germany’s neighbouring former rivals against one another as much as the American military presence raised the costs of Soviet adventurism and enforced the credibility of its deterrence. West Germany could contribute its manpower through NATO, without provoking either its Western allies or the Soviets. The ECSC and its successors further embedded West Germany into Europe and tied its economy to that of France, its greatest former rival. These dual institutions allowed Germany to again play a role in Europe. Through the responsible behaviour repeatedly shown by German
policymakers in their dealings with their Western allies, they relegitimised a Germany that had been a permanent danger to European stability in the eyes of its neighbours. The nuclear issue underlined, however, that Germany was not like its neighbours despite its improved and improving record. Part of the reticence of the US to share nuclear weapons with France, and other European allies, centred on the difficulty of excluding Germany. Should it do so, it would demonstrate Germany’s unequal status. A nuclear Germany, on the other hand, would be unacceptable to both Western and Eastern states. Further American commitments eventually settled these tensions, but the issue underlined the limited autonomy of German policymakers in setting foreign and defence policy.

Post-war West German policymakers remained uneasy over their lack of autonomy and the inherently precarious security position of their geographic position, should the Cold War escalate. This led them in the late 1960s and 1970s to pursue de-escalatory and conciliatory diplomacy towards the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries that it had attacked and occupied during the war. Ostpolitik lessened some of the anti-German resentment, and opened the Cold War somewhat from what had seemed irreconcilable bipolar ideological and geopolitical clash. It also offered West German policymakers a measure of autonomy over their policy vis-à-vis allies. Those allies were sceptical and considered it a possible German turn towards neutrality, towards Finlandisation. That apprehension was further increased by the German public’s increasing reluctance throughout the 1970s and 1980s to accept the possibility of nuclear self-destruction inherent in the Cold War strategies. The increasing dependence on intermediate nuclear weapons by the two superpowers triggered massive protests throughout Europe, but specifically in West Germany.

The peaceful solution of the Cold War brought to an end the constant fears of German policymakers and public. It also set the stage for the reunification of Germany that brought to a fore the long-standing strategic dilemmas in European security, namely how the inherent economic and demographic dominance of a reunified Germany on the continent could be managed. The prospect of a reunified Germany reignited the fears of both Western and Eastern European states. The further integration of the European states through the European Union offered a solution, as it tied Germany even more intimately together with its European neighbours. Germany strongly supported the expansion of both the EU and NATO eastwards, to expand and solidify the area of peace within Europe.

German military action remained both domestically and internally problematic. The first Gulf War came too soon after reunification for Germany to play a role, though it financially supported the allied action to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. The wars in the Balkans were more immediate challenges for German policymakers to deal with. Germany unilaterally recognised Slovenia and Croatia in the early stages of the wars,
thereby breaking with both its allies and its own preferred multilateral approach. With great effort, German policymakers were able to overcome domestic resistance and join the peace enforcing efforts in Bosnia, marking the first time that German forces had operated out of territory – a departure from post-war constitutional constraints. The more direct intervention in Kosovo was even more troubling domestically, but also fit with the increasing calls within Germany for a policy that supported humanitarian interventionism. In many ways, this signalled what seemed a continued arc of normalisation of German foreign and defence policy in the decade after the Fall of the Wall.

The 9/11 attacks in turn seemed to break this trend of German normalisation. Germany supported the US in the aftermath of the attacks, but its policymakers and public became increasingly disenchanted with what they perceived as overly aggressive and unilateral rhetoric and policies of the Bush (43) administration. When the American pursuit of the war on terror expanded to include Iraq in 2003, Chancellor Schröder joined President Chirac in his opposition to the war. Germany also joined France, Belgium and Luxemburg in the attempt that spring to arrive at an (at least symbolic) alternative for NATO – the Tervuren initiative. The initiative failed when the US put pressure on Germany. After its failure, Germany participated alongside its NATO’s allies in Afghanistan. It did so, however, with strict rules of engagement for its forces.

The years after Iraq showed greater reluctance on the part of German policymakers to commit militarily and they broke rank with Germany’s allies more and more often. Germany opted out of the 2011 Libyan intervention, also abandoning France this time, as well as the US and Britain. This was remarkable, because Libya approximated a idealtypical case of a humanitarian intervention as closely as any since Kosovo. In spite of some steps at normalisation, such as the abandonment of conscription in 2011, Germany has been both hesitant to use force as slow to advance defence cooperation within Europe. It reticence drove France in 2010 to renew its cooperation with Britain. The financial crisis, more than any major development of the last decades, has demonstrated the innate power and the inherent dominance of Germany in Europe. Yet, German policymakers have been slow here as well to leverage German power, or take the responsibility commensurate with its position. German reticence was on display in the slow response to Russian actions towards the Ukraine, and demonstrated a real apprehension towards possibly provoking escalation of the Western-Russian tensions.
Beliefs and relations: the US and Germany

In the sections below the lessons and beliefs that the experiences of the Second World War left on American and German policymakers are examined and shown to have shaped the grand strategic decisions discussed in the previous section.

United States

At the end of the Second World War, the United States represented one extreme on the range from victory to defeat – it had achieved an unparalleled victory. Whether victory was defined in strictly materialist terms as the balance between military and economic power spent and gained towards other state, or, in moral terms, the US had come out of the war stronger than any other. The US had fought only defensively after it had been attacked, had in fact not been prepared or mobilised, but then, unprepared as it had been, the US had won against disciplined armies fighting an unrestrained war. There could also be no doubt that it had been on the right side of history when the American record during the war was contrasted against that of its adversaries, two fascist, imperialist, and genocidal states. Material outcomes validated the wartime cause. The war came at the end of, and became the end of, the Great Depression. It lifted out of poverty those who returned from the war, and those who had stayed, the ‘greatest generation’, rebuilt the US into a broadly middle-class, prosperous society. International success followed. Instead of losing an empire, as, excepting the Soviet Union, the other belligerents did, the United States had gained one, whether by design or by invitation. At the heart of the American myth sat the belief that the United States could not lose, in fact even that ‘the very idea of losing was hateful to an American’.3 Triumphalism dominated the post-war American self-image (Engelhardt 2007; Beinart 2010).

Or, at least, so the myth ran. Underneath such simple surfaces lurk complexities and contradictions. there is no end to history after all. Pre-existing societal pressures and fissures did not cease altogether with the advent of the post-war era, and in some cases, emerged ever more violently afterwards. Importantly though, the Second World War did represent a demarcation point, a baseline audit, of what the US was, of the best it could hope to be, both to its citizens and to the rest of the world. It offered a model of preferred domestic relations and a model for foreign policy decision-making, with sets of lessons for the post-war international environment.

---

3 General Patton, 1944, Speech to the US 6th Armored Division, May 31.
Core strategic beliefs

The Second World War left American policymakers with three core strategic beliefs.

Core belief 1. Balance of power: balancing threats is insufficient and the US cannot allow a state to dominate Eurasia

The first core belief was that the US could no longer afford not to involve itself in European or Asian affairs and only respond when threats had formed: power imbalances and instability elsewhere would inevitably impact American security and interests. The shocking and sudden successes of Nazi Germany against France and Poland had shown that the domination of Eurasia by a single power was possible.

In fact, what was previously a remote possibility had manifested twice in a generation: Wilhelmine and Hitlerite Germany offered two instances of a would-be hegemon to assert itself over the European continent in thirty years. In the tradition of the at the time influential geopolitical thinker such as Spykman, American strategic thinkers and military analysts insisted that any power or powers attempting to dominate the Eurasian landmass, whose power would stretch from the pivotal heartland to the coasts of the Atlantic and the Pacific, was arguably the only, the single greatest threat to American security (Leffler 1984; Layne 2006). The Soviet preponderance in men and material on the continent made the Soviet Union seem to be poised as the next candidate to attempt Eurasian hegemony. American policymakers considered such a development unacceptable. The experience of the reigniting competitions within Europe and Asia in the aftermath of the First World War drove home the point that most regions are inherently unstable and require the US to act as a stabilizer.

Such thinking offered a transparent break with a century and a half of tradition in American foreign policy. The claim that the US was isolationist before the two world wars is not true; it had intervened often and enthusiastically in its Caribbean periphery

---

4 Since 1917, the predominant goal was to prevent a dominant and hostile hegemonic power (Amb. R.H., 2013, interview with author, June 28).
5 Cited in Leffler (1984). From the closing days of World War II, American defense officials believed that they could not allow any prospective adversary to control the Eurasian land mass. This was the lesson taught by two world wars. This view was most explicitly presented in an army paper examining the State Department’s expostulation of US foreign policy. (See S. F. Giffin, ‘Draft of Proposed Comments for the Assistant Secretary of War on ’Foreign Policy’ [early February 1946], RG 107, HCPP 092 inter-national affairs (classified). Cited in Leffler (1984). In March 1945 several of the nation’s most prominent civilian experts (Frederick S. Dunn, Edward M. Earle, William T. R. Fox, Grayson L. Kirk, David N. Rowe, Harold Sprout, and Arnold Wolfers) prepared a study, ‘A Security Policy for Post-war America,’ in which they argued that the United States had to prevent any one power or coalition of powers from gaining control of Eurasia. America could not, they insisted, withstand attack by any power that had first subdued the whole of Europe or of Eurasia; see Frederick S. Dunn et al., ‘A Security Policy for Post-war America,’ NHC, SPD, ser. 14, box 194, A1-2.). Cited in Leffler (1984).
and Latin America, and expanded its influence over the Pacific in the fifty years that preceded the Second World War. American policy had, however, always been one of non-involvement with Europe. Washington and Jefferson had cautioned against entangling alliances with the European states, and the Monroe Doctrine had enshrined the non-involvement of the Europeans in both the American continents. The halting departure from this doctrine that the Wilsonian attempt at reforming the international system, exemplified by the League of Nations, represented, had collapsed after Congressional rejection.

**Core belief 2. Force posture: the US is vulnerable and must choose a forward presence and intervention capability**

The second core belief was that the US was directly vulnerable and no longer protected by two oceans and the absence of regional challengers, due to the introduction of nuclear weapons and long-range bombers (and later missiles). The experience of Pearl Harbor played to this fear.\(^6\) The American force posture should therefore be defined from henceforth as defence in depth.\(^7\) Future US security must start far from the borders before threats could form (Leffler 1984).\(^8\)

American policymakers recognised that the territorial security of the US could no longer be guaranteed (Leffler 1984) by the natural advantages it had so long relied upon.\(^9\) In its short history, most threats to American society, life and property had been internal – whether the native Americans or insurrectionist states - and Americans had become accustomed to the insulation of American territory from threats (Gray 1981). The US had been buffered from invasion by massive oceans to its West and East, and weak neighbours to its North and South. Already before Pearl Harbor, when Germany invaded Western Europe and Norway, President Roosevelt decried how ‘a false sense teaching of geography’ created the illusion for American of ‘some form of mystic immunity that could never be violated’, but that science’s ‘annihilation of time and space’ destroyed

---

\(^{6}\) The importance of Pearl Harbor cannot be understated: since then a heavy reliance on force (Amb. R.H., 2013, interview with author, June 28).


\(^{8}\) The importance of security far from the US’ border still prevails among American policymakers. See for example: (N.F., 2013, interview with author, June 26; Amb. R.H., 2013, interview with author, June 28).

\(^{9}\) ‘Our old allies of time and space – our vast oceanic and polar frontiers – have ... fallen before the headlong advances of science.’ Warned a 1947 official publication, the – War Department, National Security Program: Universal Military Training (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1947), p. 1.
that illusion. However, as the attack on Pearl Harbor underlined, Americans were living in a 'closed world' of interconnectedness (Shelly 1995, p. 85). In its aftermath, Roosevelt told the nation that 'there is no such thing as an impregnable defence against powerful aggressors who sneak up in the dark and strike without warning... We cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map any more'. Such habits of invulnerability suffered a further violent shock with the advent of expansive destructive power of atomic weapons and the advances in air weapons and ballistic to deliver these weapons. The ‘isolationists’ were painted as blind to American vulnerability. The pendulum of appreciation of the threat of the bomber swung to exaggeration, and panic and fear dominated (Shelly, 1995, pp. 65-66). While the threat to American territory was new and perhaps overstated, the psychological shock of its unfamiliarity was real.

Core belief 3. Alliances: the US cannot depend on allies and must act as leader

The third core belief was that the US should never pass the buck to allies to balance threats or rely on distant balances of powers. The Europeans lacked the morale and capabilities to independently withstand either external attacks by conventional military forces or internal appeals by extremist ideologies. The sudden collapse of Europe in 1940 to invasion or internal extremism demonstrated that the European states would not able to effectively contain a future Soviet threat or to maintain the peace among themselves. The US had an essential role to fulfil as an external pacifier in maintaining regional balances of power.

American policymakers were aware that European democracies had twice proven unable to generate effective alliances to restrain the expansive authoritarian threat of Germany. They had been unwilling, in the case of Britain, or domestically incapable, in the case of France, to organize and commit themselves to an effective collective defence of Europe. Any hope that the British, the French, and other European democracies would be able to deter and defend against German aggressions sank with the shockingly rapid Fall of France in June 1940 (Shelly, 1995, p. 55). The costs of the First World War, particularly the carnage wrought through an entire generation of young European men, had seen a defeatist attitude take root in Europe, which was seen as to blame for the French collapse in 1940 in particular. The aftermath of the Great War had also shown how susceptible the European states were to the appeal of ideological extremism, whether the

11 FRG, PP, 10 (1941): 528-529 (Dec. 9, 1941, Fireside Chat)
13 It had become clear after the war that Europe had to come first in American grand strategy, not only that it had to be protected, but also transformed (Amb. R.H., 2013, interview with author, June 28).
radicalism of the Russian Revolution or that of National Socialism in the case of Germany, or even that of simple nationalism in all European states that had prepared the way for the slaughters of both wars. It was no longer a given that a Europe ruined by war was going to be an enthusiastic supporter of a liberal economic order. A confrontation with Soviet conventional military pressure would therefore be likely to lead to the collapse of Europe, if its societies had not already been subverted by domestic Socialist and Communist movements. Both options would create the Eurasian hegemon that American policymakers were anxious to avoid.

American prejudices about the corrupt nature of European politics had been signalled as far back as Washington’s farewell address with its warning on entanglements in European affairs. They had re-emerged as Wilsonianism failed after the First World War and a radical communist regime emerged from in the Russian revolution. This provided a fertile basis for the image of a Europe staggering from the wreckage of the Second World War. Scores of refugees and immigrants escaping from extremism and war, first and second generation, with their own feelings of betrayal at the hands of European states, and often with the academic or intellectual position to express these, underwrote this damning assessment of the inability of European societies to maintain domestic and international order and justice. American observers, however, did make the distinction between the continent and the UK. In any case, there was certainly a large amount of respect for the figure of Prime Minister Churchill, who was popular and beloved during war - and remains so among American conservatives - for his stand against appeasement. For Europe as whole, however, an innate distrust of its morale and

---

14 ‘We could point to the economic benefits of Capitalism,’ commented one important War Department paper in April 1946, ‘but these benefits are concentrated rather than widespread, and, at present, are genuinely suspect throughout Europe and in many other parts of the world.’ ([Giffin] ‘US Policy with Respect to Russia’ [early April 1946].)

15 Draper firmly believed that ‘economic collapse in either [France or Germany] with probable political break-down and rise of communism would seriously threaten American objectives in Europe and in the world.’ (William Draper, Memorandum [early 1947], RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified)) Cited in Leffler (1984).

16 In October 1946 the Joint Planning Staff stressed that for the next ten years the major factor influencing world political developments would be the East- West ideological conflict taking place in an impoverished and strife-torn Europe and a vacuum of indigenous power in Asia. ‘The greatest danger to the security of the United States,’ the CIA concluded in mid-1947, ‘is the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe and the consequent accession to power of Communist elements. (CIA, ‘Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States,’ September 26, 1947.) Cited in Leffler (1984).

17 George Ball ‘Britain’s application to accede to the Rome Treaty is epic in its implications... For three hundred years Britain has been a stranger to revolution, while France has endured absolutism, two empires, five republics, two constitutional monarchies, and two dictatorships. In the ninety-five years since it became a nation, Germany has averaged one violent change of government every twenty-four years. The Weimar Republic and the Fourth Republic each saw twenty-two governments during their brief life spans, while in contrast, Britain has had only six governments. Intimate British participation... could moderate these latent instabilities and provide a permanent balance, securing democracy in Europe.’ Ball quoted in Winand (1993, pp. 273-274).
capabilities had become engrained in the minds of American policymakers, founded in fertile ground in earlier eras.

Peripheral strategic beliefs

Three peripheral beliefs underlined these core beliefs of American policymakers.

Peripheral belief 1. The US cannot survive in world filled with authoritarian regimes

The first peripheral belief was that the US was existentially threatened by the ideological nature of the threats it faced as policymakers considered the communists and fascists as essentially two sides of the same authoritarian coin (Adler and Paterson 1970; Maddux 1977; MacDougall 1999). The US was existentially threatened by the ideological nature of the threats it faced, and this consequently made all conflicts zero-sum. Policymakers such as President Truman and Secretary of State Dulles equated fascist and communist ideology in the early stages of the Cold War.\(^{18}\) In this view, the Soviet Union was not inherently different to that of Nazi Germany, or, as Secretary of the Navy Forrestal believed, the Soviet communist threat had in fact become more serious than the Nazi challenge of the 1930s.\(^{19}\) The US could not co-exist, not survive and thrive, with a world filled with states or actors that possessed ideological—political—economic systems whose totalitarian and authoritarian natures are anathema to that of the US (Layne 2006).

\(^{18}\) Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew sent President Truman a briefing paper in June 1945 stating that ‘Communists have the same attitude as Goebbels did—that the civil liberties of the democracies are convenient instruments for Communists to facilitate their tearing down the structure of the state and thereafter abolishing all civil rights.’ (Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin, 1945 [hereafter cited as FR, Berlin] (2 vols., Washington, D. C., 1960), I, 274.). Even before the war ended, W. Averell Harriman suggested to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal that the thrust of Communism was not dead and that indeed the United States might have to confront an ideological war perhaps as ‘vigorous and dangerous as Fascism or Nazism.’ Entry for Apr. 20, 1945, The Forrestal Diaries, ed. Walter Millis (New York, 1951), 47, 57. Dulles argued that Soviet communism was by its nature expansive: ‘the present-day Communist bible... [that] gives us the same preview that Hitler gave in *Mein Kampf*’. (Dulles speech at National war College, June 16, 1953, DSB, XXVIII, June 29, 1953, 895). Cited in Gaddis (2005).


Peripheral belief 2. The US is morally superior to other states

The second belief was that victory demonstrated that the US was on the right side of history. That view had been justified by the nature of starkness of its struggle with the transparently evil systems of Germany and Japan. Discovery (and rediscovery in the 1970s) of the death camps of the Holocaust, made clear, in Eisenhower’s words: ‘We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against’ (cited in Shelly, 1995, pp. 91, 357). The US should transform authoritarian societies into enlightened liberal states, and the US has the ability to do so. This lesson of moral righteousness dovetailed nicely into the pre-existing tradition of American exceptionalism, and the self-perception that Americans, by their escape from the old continent, had been able to start over and build a new, more just and more free order. In many ways, the ‘Good War’ was a myth, but it was one that grew in strength in the decades that followed (Bodnar 2010).

Peripheral belief 3. The US should uphold its credibility

The third peripheral belief is the need for credibility through shows of strength against adversaries, encapsulated in the (in)famous myth of appeasement at Munich (May 1973; Jervis 1976; Khong 1992). For the US to perform its leadership role, its credibility must be perpetually demonstrated. Authoritarian regimes or ideologies can only be constrained by shows of strength by the US, and attempts at negotiation will embolden them. The experience of the Europeans with dictators in the 1930s had demonstrated this to be true, and Americans were complicit in by their absence from the continent after the First World War, and considered this to apply to the Soviet Union as well.20 Threats and challenges must be met by credible resoluteness, which in turn depends on military preparedness, as had already become apparent to before the war.21

---

20 To the suggestion made at a cabinet meeting in September 1945 that the United States eliminate its monopoly of atomic bombs and nuclear information in the interests of peace, Secretary Forrestal replied that ‘it seems doubtful that we should endeavor to buy their understanding and sympathy. We tried that once with Hitler. There are no returns on appeasement.’ Entry of Sept. 21, 1945, Forrestal Diaries, ed. Millis, 96, 399. Responding to Roosevelt’s agreement at Yalta to allow the Soviet Union three votes in the United Nations General Assembly, Senator Arthur Vandenberg indicated that among the members of the American delegation to the San Francisco United Nations meeting ‘there is a general disposition to stop this Stalin appeasement. It has to stop sometime. Every surrender makes it more difficult.’ Diary entry of Apr. 2, 1945, The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (Boston, 1952), i6i.

21 Munich already figured as powerful lesson, before US entered the war. FRG ‘if you have enough airplanes you don’t have to go to Berchtesgarden’, ‘Had we had this summer 5000 planes and capacity immediately to produce 10000 per year’ (Shelly, 1995, p. 30) FRG’s attempts to get warplanes were slowed by a conservative military bureaucracy and by suspicions that his plans to
**Strategic beliefs, risks and costs**

In their appraisal of the post-war international environment American policymakers drew heavily from their experiences in the Second World War. The core and peripheral cognitive lessons that they saw in these experiences together formed a fairly consistent and coherent system of strategic beliefs and preferences around which US policymakers made their grand strategic decisions and policies in the post-war period and around which they continue making them. These beliefs can be hierarchically ordered. From the three core beliefs - the threat of a dominant power in Eurasia, the increased vulnerability of US territory, and the weakness and unreliability of the European allies – followed a fundamental shift to the foundations of American grand strategy that had clear consequences for strategic decisions, precluded certain strategic alternatives, and signified a radical shift in the cost-benefit assessment of US policy makers. The central paradigm shift in the beliefs of American policymakers pertained to the role the US should play in the world: the core grand strategic belief since the end of the Second World War is that US should take upon itself an internationalist and activist role, for without it taking such a role, the global order would likely collapse and fall to instability and extremist and authoritarian states and movements. The other beliefs revolve around this core belief. Each belief built on the momentum of the others, although in some instances they could clash.

The central lessons of the American experience with the war underwrote the belief that the US should act as a leader. The first set of lessons makes clear that there is a need for the US to act as the world was and is an inherently dangerous place for the US. This was belief founded on the existential nature of the authoritarian regimes, their proven ability to (come close to) dominate Eurasia, and the understanding that threats were no longer far removed from US territory. Without action by the US, authoritarian and extremist regimes are able to destabilise regional orders and the global order and cut off the US from the international system. That the US is the only actor suited to act decisively in this leadership role, becomes clear from the second and third component, that focus on respectively the presence and absence of the will and the ability to act. In the war, the US had proven to be more militarily capable and more reliable, and the most morally righteous and upstanding of the belligerents. In contrast, the third set of lessons taught that the European (or for that matter Asian) allies of the US were morally and militarily incapable to independently withstand the pressures from international and domestic threats. This meant that there is no reliable alternative to US leadership to contain and, if necessary, defeat mutual threats to the US and other similarly-minded regimes.

sell aircraft to Britain and France would ensnare American fortunes with those of weak-willed, duplicitous allies (whose steadfastness Roosevelt also doubted). (Shelly, 1995, p. 30)

97
The belief that the US should take an internationalist and activist role therefore became the central foundational belief around which the other beliefs were centered, it reprioritised strategic preferences, and that precluded alternative beliefs. The Second World War represented a sea change in the beliefs held by societal elites and citizens, and civilian and military policymakers.

From this central belief follow other strategic beliefs held by American policymakers. The first is that the US should support likeminded liberal democratic regimes and take the lead in organizing them in a regional and global order compatible with its preferred ideological, political, economic system. This implies a full range of diplomatic, military and other means to reassure allies and contain threats. The second is that these other regimes are incapable of organizing without the U.S and that the US should therefore avoid the decentralization of its authority, as this will lead to the re-emergence of conflicts between regimes, or attempts to achieve an alternative regional or global order. The US must act as an extra-regional pacifier. The third is that the US can only fulfil this leadership role if it is credible towards its allies and credible towards the states and actors that threaten it, and that credibility depends on American resolve. The fourth is that the liberal democratic regional and global orders that the US is pursuing will in the end collectively benefit all likeminded actors. Cumulatively, these beliefs push the US towards behaving like an extraregional hegemon, a term derived from Layne (2006), but one where I think the origins lie elsewhere. Chapter eight shows how these beliefs were maintained over decades, and how history was consistently invoked to validate the veracity of these beliefs.

The aftermath of the war and the opening stages of the Cold War, saw the US engaging in a series of diplomatic movements that sought to stabilize the emerging order. The US drastically expanded its alliance commitments. For Western Europe, the US sought a collective defence organisation that eventually took the shape of NATO. A series of bilateral security commitments across the world, specifically in Asia, further shored up the containment of the Soviets. The Cold War force posture, which consisted of a forward military presence of American forces and the extended deterrence of the American nuclear weapon, underpinned the alliances built by the US in Europe and Asia. NATO was the most important of these. That military presence served two purposes: it contained the Soviet Union and prevented it from threatening Western Europe; and it contained the re-emergence of intra-European rivalries or a possible unified and autonomous Europe. European economic unification could be considered a boon to American interests, as it solidified the advance of liberal democracy in a key

---

22 Richard Holbrooke’s contention that ‘Europe cannot maintain stability on its own. American power and presence remain essential.’ (Richard Holbrooke, ‘The Future of NATO and Europe’s Changing Security Landscape,’ statement before Senate Armed Services Committee, US Department of State Dispatch, vol. 6, no. 16 (17 April 1995): 319.) Warren Christopher’s argument that ‘American leadership is...a central lesson of this century.’ The simple fact is that if we do not lead, no one else will.’ (Christopher 1995).
A strategically independent Europe instead could turn against the stable global order American policymakers pursued. These two major diplomatic and military components of American grand strategy were further underwritten by other forms of statecraft. The United Nations were a renewed attempt at preventing conflict between the major powers. The stability and openness of the international economy were guaranteed by new institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF and GATT, and a reinvigorated ITO. Economic aid – most famously the Marshall Plan – shored up the functioning of the system. The appeal of American values, ideas, and institutions, facilitated by the global spread of American culture, supplement public diplomacy and relations efforts. Cumulatively, American policymakers pursued a grand strategy which made the US the central state around which nearly all international interactions centred.24

The strategy American policymakers pursued was coherent and cohesive, with separate parts that were complementary with, and often reinforced, the whole. It was, however, a maximalist strategy both in terms of its external and internal balancing behaviour. The diplomatic and military commitments of the US since the Second World War are global, and, with a near-endless series of frontlines in both core and peripheral areas. Each of these areas and issues supported the credibility of the whole and the core, but also the potential of challenges to US power. Consequently, this strategy presented severe risks of escalation, with potential costs should escalation be deemed necessary, and certain costs simply to maintain the status quo. The acceptance by American policymakers of the risk of entrapment in Europe over the risk of abandonment is remarkable. It betrays a willingness to accept the costs of such commitments, the risk of overbalancing, of overextension, rather than the risk of losing control of strategic developments. These risks will be further highlighted in chapter six, through the use of counterfactuals. They show why strategic beliefs mattered.

**Trinitarian relations**

This change in beliefs precluded a return to isolationism (or Western Hemispherism) or, alternatively, off-shore balancing, which had been the essential fall-back position of US

---

23 Kennedy: ‘A Europe beyond our influence – yet counting on us – in which we should have to bear the burden of defense without the power to affect events’, was not tolerable.(Notes of Kennedy’s meeting with André Malraux, May 11, 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, 13:696). Cited in Trachtenberg (1999, 303).

24 In the future, the US had to contain, through an assertive military posture and a belief in the surefire effectiveness of military strength in containing opponents, whatever their ability to threaten the United States. The US therefore needed to play the role of external balancer to stave off reemerging competition, and Europe’s weak morale suggested the need for a more ideological role for the US as an extraregional leader.
grand strategy. Previously, internationalist elites had pushed for a greater presence of the US abroad, its captures and interventions in the American periphery representing part of that, and in Europe in the interwar period (Snyder, 1991; Layne, 2006). Certainly, in the aftermath of the First World War, there had been such attempts. Yet, they had been unsuccessful, and US entry into the European theatre of the Second World War had been unlikely until Pearl Harbor. Before, there had simply been no popular support, nor executive autonomy, nor a broadly held consensus among the public to actively and consistently engage with the global or regional order (Lowi 1969).

Traditionally, the autonomy of the American foreign policy executive was institutionally constrained, though the President had and has several advantages over Congress - he is a unitary actor with a decisive informational advantage and greater capacity for secrecy (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 215). Though the Constitution designates the President commander in chief of the nation’s military forces and gives the chief executive the power to negotiate treaties, to recognize foreign emissaries, and to appoint ambassadors and consular officials, it also gives Congress important military and foreign policy powers, including the power to declare war, to raise armies, to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and, in the case of the Senate, the power to ratify treaties and concur in the appointment of ambassadors (Crenson and Ginsberg, 2007, p. 215). In such a divided and constrained system, the American head of state does not necessarily have a majority in the legislative. The executive therefore does not have the ability to pursue activist policies abroad is impeded by a Congress, steeped in anti-statist and anti-corporate ideology, and building and maintaining a cohesive internationalist strategy is not a given.

The enduring nature of these beliefs lies in the increased institutional strength of civilian and military policymakers after the Second World War. Yet, state legitimacy was not dramatically increased by extensive wartime mobilisation and extraction efforts, because, unlike that in other states, wartime victory came at relatively low societal costs for the US (Friedberg 1992; Wilson in Kier and Krebs, 2010, p. 164-166, 173). The US therefore has an executive that is paradoxically nearly unrestrained, but also highly sensitive to partisan attacks. Policies intended streamline and centralize decision-making capability institutionalised the executive autonomy (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, pp. 243, 246). This gave civilian policymakers the means to institutionally override the more insular constituencies within the US, and rely less and less on popular mobilization and congressional approval, a marked departure from the American tradition. Whereas the loss of China (Truman) and the Iranian hostage crisis (Carter) reinforced what happens when resolve fails, the Cuba Crisis (Kennedy) and the end of

---

25 These changes specifically include the 1947 National Security Act that reorganised the military services and placed all three within a single Department of Defence (DOD), created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and established the National Security Council (NSC). This included the merging of the State Department and the Foreign Service into a single organisation in 1946 through the Foreign Service Reform Act (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 246).
the Cold War (Reagan) were perceived to demonstrate the power of American values and strength of character. Due to their rapid growth and US wartime experiences (Cable 1986, pp. 25-26; Gray 1981; Shelly 1995), the autonomy and legitimacy of the armed forces is stronger in many aspects than that of the state. This can often undermine the ability of US civilian policymakers to assert themselves over the military.

The Second World War significantly shifted this momentum and accelerated a process that was underway since the end of the nineteenth century. During each previous war Presidential executive power had been expanded, although Congress regained ground in the post-war periods. In the lead-up to the Second World War, the incorporation and normalisation of increased state power and legitimacy, and the usage of war as a metaphor had already become more dominant, through the institutions and policies of the New Deal. In the impoverished American tradition of governmental action, the military stood out as the oldest, biggest, best-trained bureaucracy for taking large actions, with its long record of building dams, coping with natural disasters, mobilizing men, and processing paperwork (Shelly, 1995, pp. 17-22).

Indeed, after the Second World War, Congress attempted to rewind the clock on several Presidential advances into their authority. Congress savaged President Truman’s domestic program, limited the President to two terms, and enacted a number of major pieces of legislation, including the 1947 Taft-Hartley Labor Act and the 1950 McCarran Internal Security Act, over the president’s veto. Such steps were ultimately to be undermined by the shifting outlook on the world due to the war. Wartime experiences with victory created the narrative for a maximalist grand strategy. As Roosevelt phrased the future for the US: ‘the one supreme objective for the future is security. And that means also economic security, social security, moral security – in a family of Nations’.26

State

In the aftermath of the Second World War, several institutional changes intended to streamline and centralize decision-making capability strengthened the autonomy of the foreign policy executive vis-à-vis the legislative specifically, and society more broadly. This included the merging of the State Department and the Foreign Service into a single organisation in 1946 through the Foreign Service Reform Act, the establishment of the department’s policy planning staff was established in 1947 as an instrument through which the secretary and the president would be able to evaluate long-term foreign policy goals. The most important piece of legislation, the 1947 National Security Act reorganised the military services and placed all three within a single Department of Defense (DOD), created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and established the

26 President Roosevelt, State of the Union Message to Congress, January 11, 1944
National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the president and including the major cabinet secretaries, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the three service secretaries, and a number of other high-ranking officials (Crenson and Ginsberg, 2007, p.246).

In the decades that followed, Presidents utilised and expanded upon these institutions. With the CIA the President had an important tool to not only gather information, but to act in other countries without informing Congress or the Public. While Truman and Eisenhower had relied on their State Department’s policy-planning staff and the JCS staff for policy analysis and advice, Kennedy further transformed the NSC staff into an important presidential instrument. The NSC staff expanded to nearly two hundred professional employees and the national security assistant. The President could command executive agencies through National Security directives, drafted by the NSC staff, bypassing the State Department, and, due to their classified nature, avoiding the oversight of Congress that often remains unaware of their existence, let alone their content (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, pp. 254, 256). Such institutional developments strengthened now-established wartime myths of and preferences for Presidential decisiveness and credibility, which fit poorly with the day-to-day practice of diplomacy of the State Department. This increased the dependence on force as an option and the Defense Department and the military as actors.

Congress may have intended the NSC to streamline national security decision making in the light of wartime experiences and exigencies of the brewing Cold War, while averting Roosevelt style presidential unilateralism, in practice it decisively concentrated power over national security in the hands of the executive. Consequently, since the end the Second World War presidents have achieved enormous freedom of action in the realm of foreign and security policy through institutions for making war that rely less and less on popular mobilization and congressional approval (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, pp. 243, 246).

**Armed Forces**

The aftermath of the Second World War represented a prodigious increase in the autonomy of the armed forces that strengthened the role of military force in American grand strategy. Again, several developments intersect here.

The 1947 National Security Act reorganised the military services and abolished the historical division between the War Department and Navy Department, transforming it into a single Department of Defence (DOD). Rather than two secretaries – one for War (the army) and one for the Navy – in the future a single civilian cabinet officer – the Secretary of Defense - who was responsible for all defence planning and the overall
military budget, while the two other secretaries (after 1949) were no longer members of
the president’s cabinet or the National Security Council, instead only tasked with
manpower and procurement responsibilities. No longer could the War and Navy
Departments petition Congress with competing and separate budgets and strategic
perspectives, with emphases on their own military contributions, or undermine
presidential control. The 1949 amendments further centralised decision-making by
creating the position of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who was to become
the principal military adviser to the President and the Secretary of Defense. This
unification and centralization of military planning and budgeting, undermined the
ability of Congress to oversee and possibly intervene in Presidential decision-making
(Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 248).

However, these developments also strengthened the overall position of the armed forces.
The war had driven a rapid and massive growth in the size of the armed forces and the
scope of tasks assigned to them. Demobilisation after the war was only temporary. The
permanent peacetime tasks in Europe and Asia and the increased defence budgets
transformed the military into an enduring political actor within the political system.
Cumulatively, within the national security apparatus this set the American military at an
informational advantage vis-à-vis the state’s civilian policymakers - whether civilian
policymakers with the Defense Department, the State Department as a whole, and even
the executive.

The myths of the war further underlined the strengths of the armed forces, specifically
the wartime myth of the superiority of the American warrior. The American army that
consisted of hastily conscripted citizens soldiers had been able to succeed against
experienced and disciplined German and Japanese forces. Conveniently ignoring the
abundant material advantages that American production capability, technological and
raw numbers of able-bodied men it could draw from society, the political fact of victory
delivered the message that American fighting men were able to fight and win any large-
scale conventional conflict (Cable 1986, pp. 25-26; Gray 1981). This signalled a
significant shift in social perception, and allowed for an increasing militarisation of
foreign policy (Bacevich 2013). Traditionally, while respected, military officers did not
gain great social prestige before, certainly in comparison to the elevated status of their
counterparts in most of Europe (Shelly 1995, p. 1). Vietnam may have briefly challenged
this consensus, but, as discussed in chapter eight, the legacy of Vietnam was quickly
 politicised and military policymakers largely avoided the blame.

The wartime lessons learned by American policymakers and public as a consequence of
the conduct and outcome of the war with regards to the efficacy of force, and the
importance of force for credible diplomacy, were solidified by these ideational and
institutional lessons. They made the actors tasked with ordering and executing force
more central and more legitimise within the state-society-armed forces complex as a
whole.
Society

The wartime experiences of American society, the final part of the trinity, explain how the ideational lessons, the autonomy and the renewed activism of civilian and military policymakers could be brought into practice and sustained.

The key is that victory in the Second World War in the US had come at relatively low societal costs. This was unlike the experience of any of the other major participants, who had suffered either massive civilian or military casualties, or both, and occupation or the humiliation of surrender. The latter was certainly the case for the states that had been defeated at the beginning of the war, or, for the Soviet Union, which had lost swathes of territory and suffered horrific casualty rates, before emerging victorious. Even the UK, the other victor that had avoided invasion, had still experienced civilian casualties and been massively mobilised. In spite of considerable absolute human and financial costs in achieving victory, in relative terms American society had been impacted little. As Wecter realised: ‘Lacking a Nanking, or a Coventry, or the abattoirs of Kharkov, we Americans have not felt the same passionate defence of our soil and skies that our Allies know’ (Wecter 1944, pp. 485, 482). Unlike Britain, American state-society ties were not strengthened through extensive mobilisation and extraction efforts. Whereas Britain placed most significant powers over economic mobilization in the hands of new civilian-led ministries, in the United states much authority remained on the military side of the national state and in the hands of private business, or was at least perceived as such (Wilson in Kier and Krebs 2010, p. 164-166, 173). This decision was complementary to the anti-state ideological bias of American society. A more forcible industrial mobilization would have led to unnecessary confrontation with business interests whose influence had diminished by the Depression and the New Deal that followed, but were still among the most powerful in American society (Friedberg 1992). The war ended the hardships of the Depression and led to an unprecedented growth in domestic prosperity, suggesting that American citizens could have their cake (prosperity and a global role for the US) and eat it (low human and financial costs) too.

In short, the American state had been able to achieve victory in the Second World War at relatively low costs, without mobilizing society or industry, or forcibly extracting resources, and without being perceived as unduly interfering with the domestic economy or providing societal goods. Through doing so, policymakers avoided confrontations, but did not build the necessary legitimacy to demand costs from society in the future. The result has been to give the state abundant freedom of action in terms of grand strategy making, vis-à-vis society - whether the latter is defined as public opinion or as its representatives within the legislative (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 243) – as long as it could avoid directly passing the costs on to American society.
Germany (FRG to 1990)

Germany represented the other extreme on the range from victory to defeat - at the end of the Second World War there was little doubt that Germany had been both utterly defeated and thoroughly, unambiguously discredited for the horrific behaviour of the Nazi regime. It was clear that Germany had singlehandedly initiated the war in which its military had been handed a series of decisive defeats. These defeats had resulted in a tremendous loss of life in Germany itself, with over six million Germans casualties. Perhaps in other circumstances there might still have been a celebration of the German military’s string of brilliant battlefield victories in the opening stages of the war against France, Poland, and Russia, and of the German soldiers who had fought relentlessly until the very end. In the shadow of the total defeat, it would probably have been only a minority willing to glorify these accomplishments, but these might have provided the basis myth of tragic but honourable and heroic defeat. After all, the German military had taken on all the major powers in Europe and nearly won, and later generations who had not experienced the costs of the defeat, or some of them at least, might have found the basis for a renewed German nationalism there. Other states and societies that had come to ruin had been able to create such myths.27

Honourable defeat was impossible, however, when the facts about the brutal nature of the German occupations, where specifically the Eastern Europeans had been treated brutally, and when the true scale of persecution of Europe’s Jewish citizenry came to light. The mass killings of civilians could hardly be justified, except by the most ideologically committed. The Holocaust - which became the predominant term for the genocide only from the 1970s onwards –became the central symbolic event of the war. This process took decades, until the generation directly responsible faced the judgment of a new generation of Germans that emerged in the 1960s. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the war’s costs to German society itself negated any celebration of the early, easy victories. The war had ended in an approximation of the apocalyptic fever dreams of an existential struggle for survival of the German people that the Nazi regime had propagated before the war to necessitate its policies. The fighting had become fiercer as it came closer and closer to Germany proper, until it reached the climax in the heart of Germany (Wette 2006, p. 183). The every-increasing rate of casualties on the Eastern Front and in the bombed-out German cities had reached a fever pitch in the last stretch of the war, when every month between 300000 and 400000 Germans, soldiers and civilians alike, died.

Unlike as had happened in the aftermath of the First World War, the blame could not be placed on any single scapegoat: the state had utterly failed in its task of ensuring national survival, both the civilian and the military policymakers, the armed forces had

27 For example, the Confederacy after the American Civil War, and Germany after the First World War.
been unambiguously defeated, and the civilian population had suffered immensely. The Nazi regime may have been treated as if it had been a parasite infecting a healthy body, albeit one weakened by the economic stress of the Depression body. There were attempts to forget, a forgetting culture. There were attempts to absolve certain actors – like the regular army (Wehrmacht) – of blame. Regardless of these attempts, it was impossible to negate the totality of the failures of all parts of the German state, society and armed forces. That totality of defeat – both moral and military - delegitimised the entire pre-war domestic system that allowed the rise of National Socialism and the horrors of the Holocaust to take place (Kansteiner in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006).

Core strategic beliefs

The Second World War left (West) German policymakers with three core strategic beliefs.

Core belief 1. Neither balance of power or threats: Germany cannot solve problem of encirclement, it had created its own destruction

The first belief was that neither maintaining a balance of power or one of threats had served German interests well, as these were indistinguishable from one another given Germany’s precarious geographic position. Historically Germany faced threats both from the West (France) and the East (primarily Russia). Forming Germany’s encirclement (Einkreisung) had made Germany both too powerful to not provoke adversaries into countervailing measures, but not powerful enough to emerge victorious in the conflict that inevitably would result (Citino 2005). Alliances had been difficult to sustain and military force had proven insufficient to deal with dual threats, both driven by the same causes. Attempting to maximise German power or German security through traditional means, had brought on exactly the destruction policymakers had sought to avoid.

Germany had perceived itself as inherently insecure, and its leaders had therefore given absolute priority to the security of the state (Primat der Aussenpolitik). During the nineteenth century, first Prussian and then German civilian and military policymakers had been primarily focused on the threat of France, and they remembered imperial France from the Napoleonic Wars. In the twentieth century, during the decade before the First World War, the dominant obsession of German shifted to its geopolitical East. Nationalist and Imperialist groups in Berlin began speaking of ‘an inevitable final struggle’ for land between Slavic and Germanic peoples. The basic structural weakness of Russia, despite its immense size, suggested an opportunity for expansion of German territories eastwards –the German ‘striving towards the East’. Simultaneously, the Slavic nations were presented as Eastern hordes, and Germany as the last bulwark of Western
civilization against them. The Soviet Union amplified this threat, as it also contained the revolutionary threat of Bolshevism (Wette 2006, pp. 11-12, 14). During the Nazi era these complementary notions came together through the Jewish-Bolshevist conspiracy. The dagger legend, the so-called betrayal of the German soldier by Germany’s political left and its Jewish citizens, equated the Bolshevist regime to the Jews. These fears fit perfectly with this notion of encirclement. The eradication of the Jews and the seizure of Lebensraum in the East were strains of the National-Socialist thought complementary with longer-lasting nationalist-imperialist ideas of Germany’s place in the world and with prevailing attitudes among the German military elites. The war Germany had initiated then brought about exactly the horror the Nazi regime had prophesised before the war, as the Red Army’s conduct on German soil painfully confirmed the propaganda of the ‘Asiatic hordes’. The Russian invasion and occupation in the East seemed to justify Western German fears, which were further underlined by the streams of refugees of German speaking communities expelled from the East. The totalitarian regime founded in East Germany reinforced the rapidly spreading anti-Communism in West Germany during the post-war period.

Core belief 2. Germany cannot solve insecurity of perpetual encirclement through military force

The second core belief was that in the past the highly offensive force posture had overwhelmed German strategy and that this necessitated a reversal of policy towards a constrained defensive posture with strict conditions on the use of force. This was an inversion of the established strategic preferences of German and Prussian policymakers since even before the unified German state was founded. These preferences had been based on the fear of encirclement, namely that Germany had enemies on both its Western and its Eastern borders that it would be unable to fight simultaneously. Should it split its forces across both borders, each force would be insufficient by itself to stave off the respective French and German attacks. Military and civilian policymakers had therefore been in agreement that the only way to ensure German survival in the inevitable continental war to come was to take either Russia or France out of the conflict at the start.28 This necessitated a force posture that emphasised the speed and initiative of preventive attacks. All potential and actual offensive wars were framed as ‘wars of defence’, no matter what the circumstances, who invaded whom, or regardless of the fact that German soldiers were occupying foreign land. Germans, at home as well as at the front believed that, in war, the smallest misstep, the slightest hesitation, would have led to annihilation of Germany (Citino 2005). As conflict was deemed inevitable by German

---

28 As established, they believed Russia to be the greater threat, both before the First and before the Second World War, and the initial attack plans therefore focused on knocking France out of the war a quickly as possible to then concentrate on Russia.
planners, whatever their political creed, it made little sense to spend resources on any other strategic element.

German isolation had left it unable to shape the regional order beyond the threat of force. Germany was unable to generate the legitimacy, whatever its size and potential, to convince other states to accede to its wishes in any domain without recourse to threat of, or the use of, military force. This highly aggressive behaviour provoked exactly the counterbalancing behaviour by Germany’s neighbours policymakers feared. The failure of this line of thought, and whether the circumstances fit the specific German context or not, the interpretation came to dominate that force by its nature unavoidably leads to escalation. Force could only be conceived of defensively, and under strict conditions. It could no longer be considered as an extension of policy. The country that produced Clausewitz, rejected a key tenet of his beliefs.29

Core belief 3. Germany should never again be alone and isolated on the continent

The third belief pertained to encirclement and the need for strong alliances, to prevent German isolation on the continent, without strong allies among its neighbours. This represents the other side of the coin of the risk of force being insufficient to ensure German security, since it provokes countervailing alliances. Since the late nineteenth century Germany had been too innately powerful not to dominate the European continent, yet not powerful enough to defeat the counterbalancing coalitions its power provoked. Pre-war German policymakers, partly because of German actions, partly because of Germany’s innate potential, had only had access to weak allies. This increased the attractiveness of strong series of alliances for Germany after the war, and multilateralism proved a low cost solution.

German integration into the transatlantic alliance and the US acting as an outside power that protected (West)Germany and prevented revanchist policies from the other European powers. European integration embedded (West)Germany into Europe and allowed Germany to avoid the re-emergence of the traditional competition that its power provoked in the past. American leadership offered (West)German policymakers a way out of this enduring problem and dampened dynamics of uncertainty inherent to the continent.

The transatlantic alliance and European integration also showed a way in which (West)Germany could shape the regional order in an accepted manner. This demonstrated that, international organisations and multilateral cooperation in a

broader sense allowed (West)German policymakers to first regain and then maintain German credibility and legitimacy.

**Peripheral beliefs**

The war also left peripheral beliefs that underlined the core beliefs of German policymakers.

**Peripheral belief 1. Germany should never again exalt nationalist and militarist values**

The first peripheral belief for German policymakers and society more generally was that wartime defeat and the moral depravity of genocidal politics of the Nazi era had made German nationalism or exaltation of martial values impossible.\(^30\) The totality of the defeat, and the moral depravity of wartime Germany's genocidal politics, denied any rescue of these martial values. The militarist obsession with the threat of the 'Asiatic horde' had been inseparable from the racist obsessions of National Socialism.

**Peripheral belief 2. Germany cannot consider politics as inseparable from economy**

The second peripheral belief the war left was that political solutions to conflict were inseparable from economic development. The extreme ideologies that had taken over the German state and society had only been able to do so because of the economic deprivations experienced in the interwar period. (West)German policymakers perceived the threat of resurgent nationalism, but also a possible turn to Communism, to depend on their ability to ensure economic stability - if not prosperity – in post-war society. The integration of (West)Germany into Europe, and American aid for reconstruction, underlined the importance of economic development. The successes of the post-war decades – the *Wirtschaftswunder* – reinforced this lesson. These beliefs were consequently considered by policymakers to be universally applicable, both to prevent and to solve to crises and conflicts (Berger 1998).

---

\(^{30}\) For example, such escape were possible for the Confederacy after the American Civil War, and Germany after the First World War.
Strategic beliefs, risks and costs

The Second World War cast an unavoidable shadow for post-war (West)German policymakers. The core and peripheral beliefs they drew from these experiences together formed a fairly consistent and coherent system of strategic beliefs and preferences around which German policymakers made their grand strategic decisions and policies in the post-war period. They still do so until this day. These beliefs can be hierarchically ordered. From the three core beliefs - the precarious German position in Europe, too powerful and yet not powerful enough to avoid confrontation; the failure of force to ensure German security in these circumstances; and the lack of available allies - followed a fundamental shift within the foundations of German grand strategy that had clear consequences for strategic decisions, precluded certain strategic alternatives, and signified a radical shift in the cost-benefit assessment of German policy makers.

The central paradigm shift in the beliefs of German policymakers pertained to the manner in which German should position itself in Europe and the world and to the means with which it should do so: the core grand strategic belief since the end of the Second World War is that Germany should never act alone, but should always be firmly embedded in the multilateral frameworks, and that it cannot use military force in any manner, unless defensively and if very clearly described conditions have been met. The other beliefs revolve around these core beliefs. Chapter eight shows how they were iterated again and again over the decades that followed.

At their heart, German policymakers came to the conclusion that only a radical near-inversion of its pre-war policies could safeguard German security and interests. A drastic shift in beliefs took place in the decades following the war, though the challenges inherent to the structure of the international environment remained largely the same for Germany before and after the war. German policymakers solved the inherent dilemmas present in Germany’s geopolitical position through the rejection of force and the acceptance of severe constraints on German national sovereignty. The acceptance of this loss and the lack of resistance to the occupation of Germany cannot only be understood by fear of the Soviet Union or by the benign nature of the American presence. Rather, they must be understood as the escape from the previous destructive dynamics they represented. The US acting as an outside balancer contains the dynamics inherently present on the European continent, and prevented the re-emergence of old rivalries. Accepting American leadership therefore offers German policymakers a way out of this enduring problem.

Yet, this went beyond the geopolitical, but touched upon the nature of what the German state and society had come to be perceived as due to the wartime experience. The overriding goal West Germany’s first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, was to keep Germany firmly anchored in the West, and by integrating Germany in Europe and keeping it closely allied with the United States, making it possible to protect the
The idea of national sovereignty has been de-emphasised, since the national identity of Germany is no longer based on its traditional precepts. Germany is itself a federal state, and quite comfortable with multiple layers of elected government. In the sense, the European political union would just be another layer. National identity instead moved towards pride in economic accomplishments (Berger 1998).

The (West)German armed forces were reconstituted in 1955, but with a force posture that was explicitly designed for only territorial defence in the NATO framework. Again, German policymakers accepted those constraints without real resistance. In exchange for a permanent US presence, they also abandoned any claims for an independent German nuclear weapons – which would likely have provoked the Soviet Union – or for shared control over the NATO nuclear weapons (Trachtenberg 1999). These constraints were not matter-of-fact: in doing so, German policymakers accepted an extreme dependence on the US and its other Western allies for its security. Such dependence had been unacceptable for France, although France was in a less precarious position.

In the German case, it must be acknowledged that the shifts in strategic beliefs, though more radical than those of the other three states, were not only cognitive in nature. They were heavily reinforced by the constraints placed upon both German states after the war by the war’s victors. The embedding of Germany into NATO and (the previous iterations of) the EU was driven as much or more by the victorious powers to prevent the re-emergence of a hostile Germany at the heart of Europe. Germany therefore not only presents an extreme in terms of experiences here, of the four cases it is also the state with the clearest external constraints.

The underlying beliefs, however, seem to be deeply integrated into contemporary German thinking and for the following reasons. Now that the restraints of the Cold War system have been removed, a reunified Germany could either position itself more independently or, conversely, more vigorously support the collective defence system upon which its foreign policy is dependent (Berger 1998; Duffield 1998). Post-war German policymakers seem to accept the loss of autonomy for Germany in political-military matters, also after the end of the Cold War, and consequently a great of vulnerability and dependence on the US, rather than risk renewed German isolation or abandonment on the continent. Rather than establishing the possibility of German force being used as one of the many instruments available to a state, Germany has maintained strict restrictions on its force posture and employment, although the concept of collective defence now incorporates extraregional crisis management. It can therefore only reluctantly and incompletely supply the force commitments that it is requested to make (Berger 1998), and only under very specific conditions. Any possibility to conceive of the force as just another instrument of politics has been negated. German policymakers are therefore limited in their ability to actual uphold the collective defence agreements they are party to, and, in a more general sense, they are limited in their
ability to support the maintenance of the collective defence system, upon which they
depend to ensure their preferred liberal and democratic order. Chapter six discusses the
decisive roles further, through the use of counterfactuals.

These manner in which these trade-offs have been settled can be understood by looking
at the relationship between the German state, society, and armed forces.

**Trinitarian relations**

The utter defeat of the Second World War presented an existential judgment on the pre-
war German political, social, and military institutions that had allowed the capture of
the state by an extremist and militaristic ideological group. Forgetting the war remained
a possibility. Indeed, large segments of German society engaged in a process of wilful
forgetting in the decades that followed the war, a large-scale effort of the ‘mastery of the
past’ (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). What had become impossible was to deflect the
blame for the defeat to an identifiable group within society, as had happened after the
First World War. Then, the sudden armistice had sent an unexpected shock across
German society, and the terms of surrender therefore seemed unreasonable. This gave
birth to the stab-in-the-back legend (*Dolchstosslegende*) that had drawn attention away
from how the army, bureaucracy, industry, churches and universities - the social,
cultural, religious and political pillars of the Wilhelmine empire – had enthusiastically
supported the disastrous policies of the First World War. The events in Russia
strengthened the conspiratorial fantasies that Jews were behind a massive and secret
transnational organisation that promoted revolutionary movements in several countries,
first Russia in 1917 and then, after the defeat, Germany in 1918. Their support for the
legend in the interwar years distracted attention from their own roles (Fischer 1985, p.
72).

In contrast, after the Second World War, an alternative belief emerged that instead
argued that ideological elements present at the birth of the German nation-state and
woven into its very fabric had made the Nazi regime likely, if not inevitable. It had been
a militaristic and aggressive Prussian state that had unified Germany in 1871. The
Prussian-German elites had treated war as the natural state of affairs, and the National
Socialist regime had been able to tap into these established beliefs.31 The disturbing
continuity from the Wilhelmine Empire, the Weimar Republic, to the ascendance of the
Nazis demonstrated the centrality of military thinking within the German state, and its

---

31 From the sequel to Mein Kampf: ‘politics is in truth the implementation of a people’s struggle for
survival. ... life is the eternal stake for which it fights and struggles.’ The constant task of ‘all truly
great legislators and statesmen of this earth was never the limited preparation for a war but rather
the unlimited inner development and education of a people’ for war. Unpublished transcript, 1928.
societal and military elites. This was an argument about German uniqueness, a German Sonderweg. Yet, as Nicholls points out, arguments about the German Sonderweg really date from after the Second World War: how was it possible that a society which had exhibited so many signs of ‘modernisation’, including a high level of industrialization and urbanization, very high levels of literacy and educational attainment, a bureaucracy which prided itself on incorruptible efficiency and a constitution which apparently combined monarchical authority with parliamentary influence at the Land and Reich level; how could such a society have blundered into two world wars and the extremes of the Nazi dictatorship? (Nicholls in Buffett and Heuser 1998, pp. 210-211).

The reconstruction of German state and society, its institutions and practices, and the creation of a new, more positive national identity to replace the one that the war had so thoroughly polluted must represent one of the most complete acts of political transformation in modern history. It required accommodation of many contrasting impulses: the sincere acceptance of guilt and responsibility alongside the selective forgetting of certain aspects, together with the contemplation of the possibly essentialist nature of German atrocities as originating from within German culture or the view that the Nazi regime had infected an otherwise healthy body, the wishes of younger generations to refute such notions of hereditary shame and also the stigmas still invoked by critics of contemporary German policies. Yet, since the end of the Second World War, with intervention by the US and other Western powers, German policymakers, citizens, and the military have managed to forge a new Germany within Europe.

Absolute defeat drastically changed German Trinitarian relations and these reinforced the core and peripheral beliefs drawn from the war. It left Germany with a weak foreign policy executive, a severely constrained role for the armed forces, and a strongly institutionalised role for parliament.

**State**

The Second World War left German policymakers constrained with regards to foreign- and defence policy. This institutional arrangements of the Bundesrepublik for foreign- and defence policymaking reflected this directly. The Head of State as a position no longer implies a concept of comprehensive power to command over the military and

---

32 Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke summed up his metaphysical vision of the place of war in the world in a 1880 letter: ‘Peace is a dream, and not even a good one; war is a link in God’s world order. War develops the noblest human virtues, such as courage and renunciation, devotion to duty, and the willingness to make sacrifices, even at the risk of one’s own life. Without war the world would degenerate into a swamp of materialism’. From a letter to the international law expert, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, December 11, 1880.
instead retains mostly ceremonial and symbolic powers.\textsuperscript{33} The armed forces are part of the executive under the command of the Minister of Defence, who is necessarily a member of the Federal Government (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte 2003, pp. 357, 359).

The supreme command over the armed forces lies with a member of the Government in peacetime (Article 65a), the Minister of Defence, and with the Chancellor once the Bundestag has determined that ‘a situation requiring defence’ has arisen (Article 115b). However, in post-war Germany, the legislative has many advantages regarding the use of force. The Bundestag decides whether ‘a situation requiring defence’ has arisen (Article 115a (1)) and whether ‘peace should be made’ (Article 1151(3)). The situation is further complicated by a standing parliamentary defence committee with special investigatory powers exists (Article 45a), and an ombudsman who investigates and reports on the situation of the soldiers (Article 54b). Finally, parliament possesses the usual budgetary powers, meaning it sets the parameters within which defence policy can be articulated. Though it must be noted that in a parliamentary system can use its majority in Parliament to bypass criticism (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte 2003, pp. 347-348, 359).

\textit{Armed Forces}

In post-war Germany, policymakers and society both had a greater level of distrust of the armed forces based on the fear of a renewed attempt to achieve a ‘state within the state’. The armed forces are further restrained by being neither independently allowed to develop force posture, instead the structure and future development of the armed forces are set by the Bundestag (Article 87a (1) (2), further evidence that the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) conceives the armed forces to be a ‘parliament’s army’ (Parlamentsheer) (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte 2003, pp. 347-348, 357-359). Before the war, the military possessed the power of command vis-à-vis the personnel and supply administration, while today the power of command is restricted to the sphere of the military proper. The Minister of Defence is restricted to giving the usual administrative orders and directives to the members of the military administration, and may not issue commands (with their specific legal implication). This is part of a functional differentiation which enables the armed forces to concentrate on their mission, but which also limits their capacity for self-organisation. In the absence of a General Staff, or any other strong institutional role for security professionals and members of the armed forces, debates on the possible uses of force can hardly take place, leading to a strong informational asymmetry on the part of the legislative and executive, and a lack of influence of the military.

\textsuperscript{33} The German President kept the powers to appoint and dismiss public officials (including members of the military), the power to pardon (again including members of the military), and representative functions such as conferring honours and choosing the uniforms and insignia of the ranks. However, all the functions are subject to counter-signature from the government (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte 2003, pp. 356-357).
Antimilitarism lies at the root of widespread popular and elite concerns about the possible reconstitution of professional armed forces and a German General Staff that could form a ‘state within the state’, as the Prussian military caste did, and that might be unaccountable to German political authorities. The government has been forced to proceed with caution in its efforts to enhance Germany’s planning and command capabilities, even though such improvements have been necessitated in large part by Germany’s multilateral commitments (Duffield 1999). Strict parliamentary controls over the armed forces and constitutional constraints were therefore put in place. Discussions on the deployment of force are consequently marked by a methodological, legalistic, and deliberative approach (see also the interviews in chapter eight).

The armed forces are further constrained vis-à-vis German state and society, by consisting (until 2011) mainly of conscripted forces. Members of the armed forces received civic education (*Innere Führung*) that emphasised their role as a ‘citizen in uniform’, treated according to his inherent right to human dignity (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte 2003, p. 343), but also to act within the constraints of democratic society and values. It is tempting to see the Federal Republic as a kind of anti-Prussia. Mirabeau once remarked that Prussia was not a state that possessed an army at all but an army that possessed a state. In contrast to this, the Federal Republic insists that its soldiers are first and foremost citizens. Instead of the militarization of the state, we have the civilianization of the army (Cooper in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 233). However, it must be acknowledged that the unease with military affairs that drove this transformation was not at all universal after the Second World War, and reconstructing German forces was complex, as discussed at greater length in chapter eight.

The use of force is therefore strongly constrained and de legitimised by the internal context. The authority of the state is similarly tarnished after the war and distrusted in terms of foreign policy choices. Society is in the ascendance and democratic values are strongly established. These further constrain the width of risky policy choices that state policymakers have at their disposal.

---

34 In contrast to the militarized nature of Prussia, the Federal Republic insists that its soldiers are first and foremost citizens. Instead of the militarization of the state, we have the civilianization of the army (Cooper in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 233).

35 Bismarck’s famous dictum, ‘the great questions of the time will be decided not by speeches and majority decisions, but by blood and iron’ is precisely reversed in the Federal republic. The world is seen almost wholly in terms of speeches and majority decisions; blood and iron are anathema. The GDR, by contrast, could be cast as a sort of disfigured successor to Prussia. Its location was partly coincident with Prussia; like Prussia the GDR was a non-national state, which its ethos as an authoritarian, rather puritan and militarized society, bears a passing resemblance to at least one part of the Prussian myth (Cooper in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 233).
Society

Society, in a broad sense, became the most central of the three parts of the post-war German trinity. The war similarly tarnished the authority of civilian policymakers in matters of foreign policy and this resulted in adding to the slow and deliberative approach to crises and changes in the international environment. The strong emphasis on democratic representation implies that German policymakers, despite their internationalist leanings and the importance of international frameworks to German objectives, are deferential to domestic preoccupations. As the Cold War ended the sense of threat strongly diminished, and therefore the perceived need to think in terms of political-military strategy. Without a strong institutional role for security professionals and members of the armed forces, such debates are less central to policymaking, and without the autonomy of the executive, as in the French case, it is difficult to establish an assertive long-term policy. In post-war Germany, political constraints to prevent extremist movements entering politics, let alone government. Political parties could not operate legally unless they were certified as democratic, strict press and media controls prevented antidemocratic forces from maintaining support (Merritt 1995, p. 94). The strong emphasis on democratic representation implies that German policymakers, despite the importance of international frameworks to German objectives and their own possible internationalist leanings, are deferential to domestic preoccupations and priorities. Together this severely constrained the autonomy of the foreign policy executive to engage in activist diplomacy and especially made the decisive use of military force by the German executive for all intents and purposes impossible.

Conclusion

In victorious states, the strengthened autonomy of the executive and the legitimacy of the armed forces enables more ambitious and activist policies while in defeated states, the opposite takes place. The US has arguably overbalanced since 1945, first against the Soviet Union, and by the extension of the area of competition to peripheral areas removed from hegemonic threats to the Eurasian heartland. It also overbalanced the Europeans by not encouraging autonomy either during or after the Cold War, when it could have attempted to pass responsibilities and costs off onto the European states. The US possesses enough military, economic, geographical, and technological advantages to seriously consider doing so. The US continued to overbalance, and post-Cold War interventions were again based on the equation of peripheral to core threats. Policymakers are more willing to accept the risk of entrapment in Europe (and Asia) rather than the risk of abandonment. Retrenchment of American grand strategy during and especially after the Cold War has consistently been dismissed by referring to the isolationist politicians of the interwar era as a cautionary tale. Instead, the US positions
itself as the global leader, the ‘indispensable nation’\textsuperscript{36}, who must act as both the lynchpin of such a containment strategy and as an external pacifier towards re-emergent intra-European conflict.

In short, the beliefs held by German policymakers have delegitimised military force, seek to avoid provocation and isolation, and rely on the US to act as an outside balancer and contain the dynamics inherent to the European continent. German policymakers accepted the risk of entanglement over that of isolation. Consequently, for the past decades, Germany has essentially underbalanced its Western allies, through its large dependence on the US, lack of autonomous military capabilities, and lack of support for an autonomous European defence identity. Moreover, it has underbalanced the threat of a resurgent Russia, and new, emerging threats – a departure from its encirclement driven aggression.

Chapter six will show that neither American nor German strategic choices were obvious, given the constraints of the international environment. One is a great power surrounded by other states that barely responds to those states or other powerful or threatening states, the other a superpower safe behind two oceans that pursues security against threats across the globe.

\textsuperscript{36} At the 2014 commencement speech at the West Point Military Academy, President Obama referred to the US as the indispensable nation, repeating the go-to phrase from the Clinton administration. He also referenced the need for American leadership throughout the speech. Obama did qualify it: ‘Since World War II, some of our most costly mistakes came not from our restraint, but from our willingness to rush into military adventures without thinking through the consequences -- without building international support and legitimacy for our action; without leveling with the American people about the sacrifices required’. Yet, he rejects isolationism: ‘It is absolutely true that in the 21st century American isolationism is not an option. We don’t have a choice to ignore what happens beyond our borders. If nuclear materials are not secure, that poses a danger to American cities’. \textit{White House, 2014}. Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony. May 28.
Chapter Five

Strategic Beliefs, Domestic Relations: the United Kingdom and France
This chapter discusses how the Second World War shaped both core and peripheral beliefs, and domestic relations in France and the UK - the two nation-states whose experiences were more complex and ambiguous than simply victory or defeat. This holds true especially for the French case. The chapter is constructed as follows. First, I give a short historical overview of the actual British and French grand strategies, including alliances, force posture, and behaviour during crises. These histories are conventional, and largely uncontroversial, and provide what are the commonly accepted facts. Second, I show how core and peripheral beliefs, and domestic relations explain those strategies and decision.

Histories: British and French grand strategy

United Kingdom

The post-war British grand strategy was a uneasy departure from established patterns. The war had brought to the fore the tension between the traditional maritime force posture and one that was predominantly land-based. The former would enable the UK to maintain its imperial commitments. The latter risked the empire, but would enable it to maintain European security. In the first five to ten years after the war, British policymakers attempted to do both. Despite the Soviet threat, strong institutional interests within the Royal Navy, and force of habit, exerted their pull on British strategy towards the maritime posture. The trade-off was not immediately apparent, as the Commonwealth was also considered crucial to contain the Soviet Union. The argument went that if Britain could retain control over the Middle East and its possessions East of Suez, it could prevent Soviet encirclement of Europe. It was a line of thought that was, at its core, the continuation of Britain’s traditional peripheral strategy. Moreover, Churchill considered British post-war power to be located at the intersection of three spheres of influence: the Commonwealth, Europe and with the US By maintaining British influence in one, the UK could leverage greater influence in the other two spheres, and so on. The growing difficulties in arriving at a successful accommodation with the Soviets over Europe and the UK’s poor financial situation, made such a three-dimensional strategy problematic. British policymakers therefore made great efforts to tie the US to the European outcome.

NATO was the solution to keep the US committed to European security, to contain and to reconstruct West Germany, and to protect Europe against possible Soviet expansion. The loss of the Suez Canal had already signalled the end of the attempts at maintaining a maritime, empire-oriented ‘East of Suez’ strategy. Suez had been considered a key geopolitical area by British policymakers and they considered Nasser’s nationalisation of the Canal as bringing Egypt into the Soviet sphere of influence. The 1956 joint British-
French-Israeli intervention to capture the Canal had failed when the US used its financial leverage and pressured the UK into abandoning its French ally. Suez had forced the UK to choose between Europe and the US, and in its aftermath, the understanding was that British policymakers should never again directly oppose American policy. After the Suez failure, British policymakers – foremost Prime Minister Macmillan – redirected their efforts on sustaining and strengthening the transatlantic ‘special relationship’, and moved away from their bilateral cooperation with France.

The early Cold War era had introduced nuclear weapons into strategic calculations, and the nuclear issue again showed the UK giving preference to the special relationship over its European allies. British policymakers attempted to gain assistance from the Americans to acquire or develop a nuclear weapon, which the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations was willing to grant, though the Kennedy administration sought to avoid the risk that the UK would draw the US into a war with the Soviet Union through a dual-key agreement. After controversy in British parliament over the cancellation of the near-outdated Skybolt missiles, Macmillan managed at the 1962 Nassau accords to persuade the US administration to offer it Polaris missiles instead. The British had consistently been willing to bypass the French during these attempts.

In concrete terms, British policymakers essentially forwent an effective independent deterrent, and settled instead for the limitations inherent in dependency on the US. British policymakers, long sceptical of the European Economic Community (EEC), attempted to enter it to improve their position with the US. The 1963 veto of British accession to the EEC by De Gaulle, who had not forgotten the nuclear episode, and another veto in 1967, rebuffed the British attempt, and delayed British accession until 1973. From the British perspective, a foothold in Europe allows leverage in the special relationship, as the US preferred a British presence in Europe as a way of avoiding the dominance of Europe by either France or Germany.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the slow and gradual shedding of British colonial possessions. In many ways, Britain was becoming a strictly European power, as it was also diminishing the strength of its navy in favour of the continental army (as articulated in the 1981 Nott Defence Review). The drift towards Europe was arrested by the 1982 Falkland War, a response to the Argentinian regime’s invasion, where the British navy managed to quickly and successfully intervene and repel the Argentinian forces. The conflict’s outcome was considered a major success for Prime Minster Thatcher, who consequently was able to continue her pushback on the post-war British welfare state. She further strengthened Anglo-American ties with the ideologically proximate Reagan administration, sharing a preference for a more assertive stance towards the Soviet Union.

As the Cold War ends, the UK lessened its strict focus on the collective defence of Europe. Their participation in the first Gulf War signalled the limits of the capabilities of
the British and other European armed forces compared to those of the US. The British force posture was remodelled towards expeditionary missions. The European inability to intervene without American assistance in the Balkan Wars, reinforced to British policymakers that European capabilities must be developed. At their 1998 talk in St. Malo, Prime Minister Blair reached a deal with President Chirac that led to the ESDP. However, British support, as they refused to let the ESDP undermine NATO.

The British policymakers had viewed the widening of the EU through expansion eastwards positively, and they believed expansion would strengthen liberal democracy in the wake of the collapse of the Central and Eastern European communist regimes. However, they resisted the deepening of the European institutions that, for example, the ESDP also represented. The expansion of NATO eastwards was also considered as the means to solidify these new European democracies.

After the attacks of September the 11th Blair immediately offered his support for the Bush administration. During his time in government he had advocated and applied the doctrine of humanitarian intervention, in the Balkans (Kosovo in 1999) and in Sierra Leone (2000). The decision for British forces to join the American forces in Afghanistan (2001) followed from that same doctrine that targeted failed states as sources of instability. The Blair government used the same arguments to strongly support the Bush (43) administration’s 2003 intervention in Iraq. This policy pitted Britain against France and Germany, the other two major states within Europe.

The simultaneous actions in Iraq and Afghanistan proved costly for the British government. It strained financial resources for the British armed forces and it cost legitimacy, especially when the allegations of Iraq’s possession of WMDs proved to be invalid. Regardless, the UK joined France in its intervention in Libya (2011). British policymakers had restarted their bilateral cooperation with the French that had been damaged after Iraq but ameliorated by the French return to the NATO integrated structure under President Sarkozy in 2008. This resulted in the 2010 Lancaster House Agreement to improve defence cooperation, intended to compensate for European military decline due to the austerity cuts. The Cameron government was, however, unable to convince the British parliament to join the US and France in a proposed intervention in Syria in 2013. This parliamentary resistance, unprecedented in modern British history, undermined the special relationship. The Cameron government’s claim to hold a referendum on whether to remain in the EU did further damage. Together, these two developments currently leave Britain with limited means to shape its environment and achieve its perceived national interests. Attempts at redeveloping an East of Suez – like strategy have become more apparent, as the UK is reinvesting in naval capabilities, but its future is uncertain, now that renewed assertive behaviour by Russia necessitates a European focus.
France

French grand strategy after the Second World War underwent several shifts to deal with its international and domestic problems. Foremost, France’s insecurity on the European continent necessitated that policymakers found solutions for post-war Germany and Soviet preponderance. Consequently, in the first post-war decade French policymakers frantically sought to prevent an American exit from Europe, as they considered continued American military presence a necessity for containing both a possible resurgent Germany and the Soviet Union. It was partly for that reason that in 1954 the French parliament refused to ratify European Defence Community (EDC), as it is feared that the EDC would be dominated by Germany and precipitate an American retreat. French policymakers were apprehensive about the reintegration of West Germany back into Europe, and even more so about its possible reunification. NATO ensured both the containment of Germany and the Soviet Union, and enforced it with the military presence of the U.S and its nuclear weapons. The ECSC represented a further attempt to bind West Germany and its innate industrial potential to France in order to prevent the rekindling of their inherent continental rivalry.

France, similarly to the UK, attempted to hold onto its colonial empire in the post-war period. There was a substantial domestic consensus to retain Algeria. At the same time, the French political climate was polarised between left and right, as tensions remained after the war. The communist movement was particularly strong in this period. The issue of Algeria mobilised the right, who linked the insurrection to a broader struggle against Communism. Should Algeria fall, the Soviet Union would be able to surround and choke off the access routes to France in particular, and to Europe in general. It is for these reasons that France planned – together with Britain and Israel – the 1956 intervention in Egypt, to recapture the Suez Canal nationalised by Nasser. When Britain withdrew its support after American financial threats, it was considered by French policymakers another failure in collaboration with the British and the Americans (Wall 2002). French policymakers had already been frustrated by their inability to achieve an agreement with the Americans on attaining nuclear weapons.¹

Upon his accession to power in 1958, De Gaulle instituted or furthered a series of policies to bring cohesion and coherence to French strategy. After the disappointing failure to gain access to a collective allied deterrent through the MLF, French policymakers accelerated the development of a national nuclear weapon. De Gaulle then managed to extract France from Algeria, surviving multiple assassination attempts and coups d’états from right-wing elements within the military to do so. As a result, he unified and legitimised executive power within the French national security apparatus.

¹ De Gaulle in 1958 had unsuccessfully attempted to achieve equal footing with the US and Britain by suggesting a tripartite directorate to Eisenhower and Macmillan.
In 1963 De Gaulle further cemented French security in Europe, by conducting the bilateral French-German treaty that tied the two former rivals even closer together. In the same year, De Gaulle vetoed British accession to the EEC, against the wishes of the other member states, to prevent the UK entering the EEC as a Trojan horse for US interests.

The fundamental decision of De Gaulle, however, was the 1966 withdrawal of French armed forces from NATO’s integrated military command. Foreign forces were also asked to leave French territory, and NATO headquarters were relocated from Paris to Brussels. Reassurances were left in place: French forces remained stationed in Germany and agreements were signed to ensure a smooth and effective French contribution to the defence of Germany should hostilities commence. Regardless of the nuances, these policies decisions set France apart from the other Western states. French policymakers were able to lessen the risks to French security through the development of the independent deterrent. French depended on weak-to-strong deterrence, meaning that its weapon was not intended to match the abilities of the superpowers, but simply raise the costs of any action that threatened French territorial integrity. The deterrent and the extraction from NATO’s command decreased French dependence on the US for its protection. France was ‘allied, but not aligned’. France intended to play the role of a third force between the two superpowers, and offer a third independent centre of decision for Soviet policymakers to take into account in their deterrence calculations.

The end of the Cold War changed the calculus upon which French policymakers had designed French grand strategy, and put pressure on a set of policies that had remained remarkably consistent throughout the Cold War, despite changes in presidencies and governments. It was primarily the reunification of Germany that upset the balance of power within Europe and thereby renewed France’s traditional European security problem. The deepened integration that the European Union presented was the solution to further embed and constrain Germany within Europe.

The unipolar post-Cold War era exposed the extent to which European militaries had deteriorated relative to the US. French armed forces participated in the first Gulf War, but policymakers limited their involvement to not expose the fact that they had missed 25 years of joint conceptual and doctrinal development, and technological innovations. Having become the sole superpower, American preponderance worried French policymakers, and they referred to the US as a ‘hyperpower’. The limits of European military capabilities were further demonstrated by the European inability to independently and effectively intervene to halt genocide in the Balkans. After Bosnia, President Chirac met in 1998 with Prime Minister Blair in St. Malo. At this meeting they laid the foundation for the ESDP, though its potential was hampered at the outset when
the British resisted the French attempt to use the ESDP to create a rival organisation to NATO.²

The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks underlined that France remained allied, but not aligned. The transatlantic clashes over the 2003 Iraq war exposed the pre-existing distrust on the part of French policymakers towards American unipolarity. It was specifically the unilateral behaviour of the Bush administration that unsettled the French policymakers, as it devalued the international organisations that strengthened French status and influence. In the spring of 2003 France attempted to redirect European dissatisfaction with American unilateralism into an European alternative to NATO, together with Germany, Belgium, and Luxemburg – the Tervuren initiative, named after the Belgian town that was to house the organisation’s headquarters.

The French attempt failed. It set the stage for the reintegration of France into the NATO integrated command in 2008, during the Sarkozy presidency. France had already joined NATO's Afghanistan mission. The continued underperformance of European defence capabilities led France to reinitiate the bilateral cooperation with Britain that culminated in the 2010 Lancaster House Agreement. Seemingly contradicting its earlier resistance to the US intervention in Iraq, in 2011 France took the lead alongside Britain and the US and intervened in Libya, during the Sarkozy presidency. France intervened in the Ivory Coast, and in Mali in 2012. Unlike the US and Britain, France was ready to intervene in Syria in 2013. The Hollande presidency did not face the domestic resistance against interventions of his counterparts. Through doing so, France has maintained – and in some way regained – manoeuvre space vis-à-vis its allies and reinvigorated its relationship with the US. The 2014 Ukrainian crisis have put these under strain again, at least in the short term.

Beliefs and relations: the UK and France

In the sections below the lessons and beliefs that the experiences of the Second World War left on British and French policymakers are examined and shown to have shaped the grand strategic decisions discussed in the previous section.

²The end of the Cold War did not signal the end of French actions in Africa, its traditional sphere of influence, despite President Mitterrand’s 1990 claim that France should and would redirect its attentions.
United Kingdom

The United Kingdom was a more ambiguous case of a victor than the US. It had avoided invasion during Second World War, let alone the humiliation of occupation and collaboration. This made Britain unlike any of the European belligerents on the continent. Compared to other Europeans, Britain had been on the right side of history in the 20th century and British policymakers continued to consider Britain as distinct from Europe. The British wartime experience was far different than that of the U.S for victory had been far from complete for the UK. Before the war, for centuries, Britain’s self-image and identity had been that of a global power that ‘ruled the waves’, and it had been in possession of an empire upon which the sun never set. Yet, before the war, class cleavages had been exposed and the pre-war Tory government had been unable to address either domestic conflicts or check the rising tide of fascist governments threatening the continent. The events of 1940, as France fell and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) barely escaped had exposed these weakness, and left Britain isolated. In contrast, it had also set the stage for the Churchillian myth of heroism and bravery, and the social-democratic myth of solidarity, of a ‘people’s war’. On the one hand, 1940 offered a clean break with the past, but on the other, it did not dramatically recast institutions in the manner that the war did in France, and especially in Germany. The war proved that nothing was wrong with the character of the British, or with Britain as a nation, only with the men who had run it for the previous decade (Smith 2000, p. 50).

Core strategic beliefs

The Second World War left British policymakers with four core strategic beliefs.

Core belief 1. Balance of threat: the UK cannot afford not to focus on continental threats

The first was to abandon traditional British balance of power politics and buck-passing as this had failed to prevent the rise of a continental hegemon, when the European balance of power had been irretrievably upset during the war.3 In the interwar years,

3 ‘From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. [...] Last time I saw it all coming and cried aloud to my own fellow-countrymen and to the world, but no one paid any attention. Up till the year 1933 or even 1935, Germany might have been saved from the awful fate which has overtaken her and we might all have been spared the miseries Hitler let loose upon mankind’. Sir Winston Churchill’s ‘The Sinews
British policymakers had badly underestimated exactly what kind of threat they were facing with Nazi Germany. British air and naval capabilities had not deterred Nazi Germany’s intentions and capabilities, nor had attempts at accommodation, nor had half-hearted attempts at alliance building. Passing the majority of the costs on to the continent had proven to hold significant, unacceptable risks and costs more massive than those that Britain had suffered in the First World War. In 1940, for the first time in its history, Britain had been suddenly and totally isolated towards the continent and had risked being cut off from maritime access routes to its empire. The future of the European continent had to become the preeminent concern of British policymakers.

**Core belief 2. Force posture: the UK is no longer invulnerable and it should make a continental commitment**

The second was the sudden sense of insecurity. The Blitz had fulfilled pre-war fears of the ‘shadow of the bomber’ (Bialer 1980, p. 1; Smith 2000, pp. 10, 14, 15) and led to the realization that British territory and citizens were now vulnerable to attacks from a continental power, especially one armed with nuclear weapons and air power. Britain’s traditional geographic advantages were considered nullified. The fear had been of disruptions to the balance of power or that a continental hegemon could choke British maritime routes. For centuries, British naval superiority had guaranteed uninterrupted communications between Britain and the various parts of the empire, and it had protected the British Isles themselves (Bialer 1980, p. 1). However, advances in aerial and ballistic technology had exposed the vulnerability of the British Isles on a level hereto unseen. Like the US, Britain had essentially been territorially secure, while still being consistently involved with military action and empire-building across the globe. Unlike the US, the ‘shadow of the bomber’ had already played a terrifying role in the interwar imagination, after the 1917 raid on London had in one fell stroke ended nearly nine hundred years of British immunity from foreign attacks on their soil (Bialer 1980, p. 1; Smith 2000, pp. 10, 14, 15). In the future, threats on the continent would have the ability to strike British territory: the frontiers were no longer the White Cliffs of Dover but the Rhine. British policymakers had not illusions and understood already during the war that they had to make a post-war commitment to the continent.  

---

4 The wartime pounding British cities had received from European based bombers caused Attlee to note in a cabinet memorandum in July 1943 that ‘we cannot afford to take risks in Europe, particularly in an age of air power) and rockets (which seem a year later to have completed his conversion, for the time at least, to the continental commitment): this had made it clearer than ever that Britain could ignore what went on in Europe only at its own peril: 19 July 1943 and 26
The ‘shadow of the bomber’ had had an immense impact on interwar planning assumptions towards war with the continent (Bialer 1980; Smith 2000), and British planners had spent the interwar years preparing for an apocalyptic war (Smith 2000, p. 10). The most quoted phrase on air war in the interwar years came from Stanley Baldwin: ‘The bomber always gets through’. The only way to win such a horrific war was ‘to kill more women and children’ with one’s own attacks than did one’s enemy. Strategic bombing fit the era of total war: striking at the heart of the societies and economies that enabled the functioning of the frontlines had suddenly become possible.

The traditional British sense of security was dramatically upset. The seat of government was no longer secure from a ‘knock-out blow’: due to its relative closeness to French, German, Dutch, and Belgian territory, formerly secure London was more open to attacks than Paris and Berlin (Smith 2000, p. 15). The fear of such a knock-out blow also informed the British Government’s attempt at accommodation of Germany in 1938. As Chamberlain flew back home from Munich he imagined a German bomber flying the same course as he did, and he asked himself what degree of protection he could afford for the thousands of British homes he saw stretched out before him (Smith 2000, p. 23).

British air theory of the interwar era pre-echoed the 1950s theory of massive retaliation and assumed the only credible preparation against air attack was the overpowering counter-offensive (Bialer 1980, p. 22). The British belief in the decisive role an aerial weapon in the coming war, led to decisions early on to base interwar rearmament predominantly on the air weapon rather than the army or navy. However, this ‘limited liability’ formula also bled essential resources away from the British ability to intervene by land in a continental war and fulfil its alliance commitments with France (Bialer 1980, pp. 4-5, 143; Posen 1984, pp. 144-163). It fit perfectly with the traditional British preference for off-shore balancing. However, in the year before the outbreak of the war it became clear that the planned deterrent of the Royal Air Force (RAF)’s bomber

---


5 Stanley Baldwin, House of Commons Debates, 10 November 1932.

6 Stanley Baldwin, House of Commons Debates, 30 July 1934. Baldwin was widely considered most honest and astute politician of his generation, and the speech was planned as an appeal to Europe to rally support for the scheme of air disarmament (the MacDonald plan for the Geneva Disarmament Conference).

7 ‘If one considers the subjects of security and the dangers to peace, it is quite clear that there has arisen during recent years a new and special danger which is due to the possibility of the misuse of modern developments in the air. Armies have to be mobilized, and however swiftly armies may act, they cannot strike a mortal blow in a very short time. Navies have to be concentrated and move under [certain] conditions, and what they are doing or are likely to do can hardly be kept secret. But this new invention of movement in the air with its latest development of machines and vast range, tremendous speed, high power and possibility of rapid and secret manoeuvre, this new development undoubtedly fills many people with a new foreboding of a danger which might conceivably threaten town and country alike.’ (Sir John Simon, The Foreign Secretary in a broadcast, February 1935) cited in Bialer (1980, p. 76).
command had failed. The fighter command took over from bomber command, and the mission became protection from bombing instead of deterrence (Smith 2000, pp. 23-24; Posen 1984, pp. 167-173).

The British wartime experiences as both victims and perpetrators of strategic bombing, British society and its civilian and military leaders entered the nuclear age with a vivid awareness of their inescapable vulnerability, the moral problems of deterrence, and strong doubts about its basic effectiveness (Quinlan 2004, pp. 261-262). Consequently, the weapon that seemed to most complement traditional British strategy, had been made unappealing through wartime experiences.

**Core belief 3. Alliances: the UK cannot depend on European allies to pass the buck to**

The third was to avoid dependence on European powers to balance continental threats, a departure from the UK’s traditional buck-passing strategy. Its European neighbours had proven to be either aggressors, susceptible to the appeal of extremist ideologies or unable to stand up to German aggression. This attitude carried on through to the post-war period when the French were considered defeatist and ready to collapse under Soviet pressure.8

Had the Fall of France not been so sudden, but had the German invasion through the Lowlands instead ended in a similar stalemate as the First World War, and had the British thereby been forced to rub shoulders with the French for years, British policymakers might have reconsidered their traditional policy towards Europe as no longer being viable. In early 1940, the Foreign Office was even considering a radical change of course with a strong and permanent British-French coalition to act as an enduring counterweight to Germany in the West after the war (Smith 2000, p. 8). On Dunkirk, Harman (1981) argues that the retreat was a British collapse, not the result of Belgian or French inaptitude, and that Operation Dynamo of the retreat represented a ‘methodological’ deception by the British of the French which were tricked into providing cover for the evacuation by their perfidious allies.9 Regardless of the realities

---

8 ‘What France lacked was morale and in his view the moment had arrive when it lay within our power to stimulate that morale. It was not that the addition of a corps of two divisions would make much practical difference... [or] that the promise of a corps would satisfy the French. The simple point was that it would help to remove existing suspicion and encourage the French to press on with their own preparations for defence:’ (Public Record Office, London, CAB 131/8, DO(50)5th mtg, 23 March 1950)

9 The British abandoned their allies, starting their retreat, without informing the French, (27-29 May), while French units were providing cover.
of the experience, British policymakers believed that the Europeans could not be trusted to maintain European security.

Core belief 4. Alliances: the UK needs the US to act as outside pacifier

The fourth was the acceptance of dependence on the US, as it was the US entrance in the war that ended British isolation from June 1940 to December 1941. That dependence created a greater sense of solidarity, of the ‘English speaking peoples’ (Churchill’s words) 10, who shared a joint destiny and global role. A sense of superiority towards Europe was mirrored by a mix of superiority and inferiority towards the American. 11 British policymakers assumed that the US was too powerful to ignore 12, but also that it could be shaped and moulded to also serve British interests - they could act as the ‘Greeks to the American Romans’. 13 Prime Ministers invoked the ‘special relationship’ to Presidents when attempting to shape American policy. 14 This attempt to achieve a ‘special relationship’ led to the further alienation with the French. At the heart of these British overtures towards the US was the conviction that British security depending on the US acting as an outside enforcer to maintain European peace, security and stability.

11 As early as 1946, Prime Minister Attlee had accepted that the British Isles could be considered an easterly extension of a strategic area the centre of which is the American continent rather than as a power looking eastwards through the Mediterranean to India and the East. (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 68). Attlee’s great fear was that the United States might not go along with such an arrangement, and that America might instead try ‘to make a safety zone round herself while leaving us and Europe in No Man’s Land.’ (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 68).
12 ‘They have enormous power, but it is the power of the reservoir behind the dam which may overflow uselessly, or be run through pipes to drive turbines. The transmutation of this power into useful forms, and its direction into advantageous channels, is our concern. ... If we go about our business in the right way we can help to steer this great unwieldy barge, the United States of the US, into the right harbour. If we don’t, it is likely to continue to wallow in the ocean, an isolated menace to navigation.’ (PRO, FO371 / 38523, ‘The Essentials of an American Policy’, 21 March 1944.) Cited in Baylis (1998, p. 123)
13 ‘In Washington Lord Halifax, Once whispered to Lord Keynes, It’s true they have the money bags, But we have all the brains.’
14 During the Polaris debate, Macmillan, in a highly emotional speech, referred back to the halcyon days of the Second World War and the foundation of the ‘special relationship’ between the two countries. Macmillan warned that there might be a wave of anti-US feeling in Britain and that the anti-US faction might assume the leadership of the Tory party, which would lead to the end of the close and harmonious relationship between the two countries. In response to this emotive appeal, Kennedy gave in and the British received the requested Polaris missiles (Baylis 1998, p. 129).
Peripheral beliefs

The war also left British policymakers with peripheral beliefs that underlined the core beliefs.

Peripheral belief 1. Britain was exceptional to continental Europe

The first is in the exceptional and superior nature of Britain relative to the continent, the only European state that remained unconquered. The UK, despite the hardships that it suffered was the solitary state resisting fascism in Europe from the Fall of France in June 1940 to the American entry into the war in December 1941. The other traditional great powers of Europe had been occupied, such as France and (large parts of) Russia, or defeated, such as Germany and Italy. Yet, while the English Channel no longer guaranteed complete security, its existence had prevented a German invasion of Britain. ‘Very well, alone,’ shouted David Low’s cartoon soldier from the White Cliffs of Dover, shaking his fist across the Channel. Whatever the benefits of geography, the enduring myth of 1940 was that Britain alone, a single courageous island state, had bravely resisted invading powers and stood against fascism in Europe and that it should be considered the only truly victorious European power (Varsori in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 139; Heuser 1998, p. x; Smith 2001, pp. 8, 32). This exceptional European experience created a sense of British superiority towards the continent. Britain could not give up the assumption of leadership in Europe or moral authority in the world, and this was based on a mistaken assumption of what she had done in 1940 (Smith 2000, pp. 131, 136).

---

15 L.R. noted that the sense prevailed that ‘European cooperation is for defeated states’ (L.R., 2012, interview with author, May 25).
16 The circumstance of the French campaign in 1940 underlined nationalist prejudices in both countries. To xenophobes in Britain, the rapid defeat of France simply confirmed French effeminacy, while for French patriots the self-seeking strategy of the British seemingly confirmed the traditional perfidy of the Anglo-Saxons. Incipient French Anglophobia was deftly played on by the contemporary Nazi taunt that Britain would fight to the last Frenchman.’ (Smith 2000, p. 132).
17 ‘[..] although Europe has had a great and glorious civilisation, although Europe can claim Goethe and Leonardo, Voltaire and Picasso, there have been evil features in European history too - Hitler and Mussolini and, today, the attitude of some to the Congo problem. We must be clear about this; it does mean, if this is the idea, the end of Britain as an independent European state. I make no apology for repeating it. It means the end of a thousand years of history’. From a speech on the 3rd of October 1962 by Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party, at the annual conference, where he revealed his opposition to Britain joining the EC.


**Peripheral belief 2. Britain should show resolve**

The second was that the experiences with dictators in the 1930s had shown that authoritarian regimes are innately aggressive and unlikely to reciprocate deescalating behaviour. Munich represents the most commonly applied and influential political myth and one that has hounded British prime ministers, governments and other policymakers through the second half of the twentieth century (Chuter in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 65). It played a role for British policymakers in interpreting Soviet intentions in Europe. No real debate took place on the wisdom of the decision of Chamberlain and the European allies to attempt to appease Hitler considering the European and domestic contexts of 1938. Yet, the decision was largely considered reasonable and wise at the time, and applauded. That discussion did not take place, because the Munich myth was and is understood in an effectively unanimous manner, because the outcome was so transparent and so impactful, so abrupt, so violent and so massive. It is also didactic and seemingly easy to apply (Chuter in Buffet and Heuser 1998, pp. 66-67).

**Strategic beliefs, risks and costs**

In their outlook on the post-war international environment British policymakers drew heavily on their experiences in the Second World War. The core and peripheral beliefs that resulted from these experiences together formed a fairly consistent and coherent system around which British policymakers planned their post-war grand strategy. These beliefs can be ordered hierarchically. The four core beliefs of the war – the suddenly real possibility that the European continent could be dominated by a single power, the direct threat to British territorial security from the continent now possible, the failure of European allies to resist such hegemonic powers, and the dependence on the US to defeat Germany - led to fundamental shift to the foundations of British grand strategy. Together they had clear consequences for strategic decisions, precluded certain strategic alternatives, and signified a radical shift in the cost-benefit assessment of British policymakers.

The central paradigmatic shift for British policymakers was that Britain could no longer afford the risk of events on the continent slipping beyond its control and for it become

---

18 ‘Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be removed by a policy of appeasement’. Sir Winston Churchill’s ‘The Sinews of Peace’ speech, from Robert Rhodes James (ed.), Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897-1963 Volume VII: 1943-1949 (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974) 7285-7293.

19 ‘We do not believe that Russia will feel like that or take the chance that Hitler took in 1939, as long as the Allies do not weaken.’ (Public Record Office, London, CAB 131/9, DO (50)45, Report by the Chiefs of Staff on Defence Policy and Global Strategy, Top Secret, 7 June 1950.)
isolated again, and that as a consequence, in the future, British and European security were to be linked through an enduring British commitment to foremost the US and then European allies. In the years that followed the war, British reticence towards entangling continental commitments crumbled, starting in the foreign office (Smith 2000, p. 132). Within a decade Britain accepted the permanent stationing of British forces on the continent which ensured that Britain would not be able to extract itself from a possible future European conflict. The new continental commitments ensured that Britain would not have the resources to maintain its empire in the long term, although it at first attempted to do so. This began what was called the 'long retreat' from East of Suez (Bartlett 1972). Britain accepted the sacrifice of a significant measure of sovereignty and manoeuvre space and the risk of entanglement to guarantee the continued presence of the US in Europe. Britain forewent the development of a completely independent nuclear deterrent, demonstrating an acceptance of American leadership and a lack of faith in the deterrence of the Soviet Union by these weapons. Chapter eight shows how these beliefs were maintained over decades, and how history was consistently invoked to validate the veracity of these beliefs.

The manner in which the commitment to European security was made is significant, and reveals how the peripheral beliefs shaped the execution of the core belief. British policymakers indeed made the radical departure from existing strategic preferences, by accepting a permanent military entanglement on the continent, at the cost of strategic autonomy and, eventually, at the cost of the British Empire (or 'East of Suez'). This was clearly a reverse from the interwar period where the choice for maintaining British global possessions took precedence over ensuring the continental balance of power. The relationship with the US revealed these shifting beliefs. British policymakers were willing to accept greater constraints and entanglement with US interests, because they believed a permanent American presence in Europe was crucial to maintaining peace and security there. British governments actively sought to convince the Americans of this commitment.20 This was emphatically not an attempt at buck-passing: Britain paid a great price for its own commitments to European security. The search for an independent nuclear weapon was sacrificed because British policymakers did not want to risk an American exit. A similar willingness to sacrifice sovereignty to European institutions did not exist, because British policymakers could not accept a Britain that was simply ‘one of Europe’. British policymakers believed that British interests were far more global, and this belief was not exclusive to the political right but shared by the British left. 21 Consequently, Britain was consistently overextended between its commitments to Europe and the remaining commitments to the Commonwealth.

20 ‘Such a policy, it was believed, rested on demonstrating to the United States that Britain was a worthy partner. Bevin had denied in 1947 that Britain had ‘ceased to be a great power’ (Baylis in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 126).
21 Labour’s 1947 pamphlet ‘Cards on the Table’: ‘... our dependence on overseas trade makes us a world power by necessity, and we will remain as much part of the Atlantic as well as of the
The decisions that British policymakers took after the Second World War reflected these beliefs. NATO was the primary instrument to both maintain an American presence in Europe and a way to reintegrate Germany into Europe. As Macmillan explained to the French ambassador in early 1959: ‘France and England suffered a great deal in the past from the Germans cutting loose, and his own feeling was that one of the great advantages of NATO and other European institutions was that they mixed the Germans up very thoroughly with the West and made it difficult for them to escape’. Policymakers expected the UK to be treated as a leading power in Europe, as a power that still had a global role to play, one that could not be merely constrained to Europe. The British therefore kept a permanent military presence on the European continent to ensure European security as well as the American commitment to Europe, while simultaneously they attempted to hold onto British (post)imperial commitments East of Suez. In contrast to its interwar reliance on strategic airpower, or the centrality of British naval power, both attempts to underpin the British off-shore balancing strategy, British policymakers did not seek a truly independent nuclear weapon even though this seemed a natural continuation of its previous defensive or deterrent doctrines.

The British post-war grand strategy presented an semi-maximalist attempt that brought together the varying interests vis-à-vis the constraints and realities that Britain experienced in Europe and the world, and it showed a very specific combination of external and internal balancing behaviour. British policymakers accepted different risks of dependence and entanglement in the cases of US and Europe. British policymakers did not seriously attempt to buck-pass the responsibility for European security to the US. Yet, they actively resisted the organisation of Europe as an independent counterweight to Soviet power, and they were reticent to accept closer ties to Europe. Britain paid the cost in terms of autonomy: the prioritization of the new continental commitments ensured that it could not maintain its empire in the long term. Chapter six further illustrates these costs and risks, through the use of counterfactuals, and it shows why strategic beliefs mattered.

Trinitarian relations

The Second World War was fundamental for the strategic beliefs of British policymakers, but the reasons for the longevity of these beliefs were underpinned by changes in British Trinitarians relations. These should be seen in light of the developments of the interwar period, when the fears of British societal elites were aimed...
at communism and the possibility of a violent working-class revolution rather than at fascism. These fears had been brought on by the collapse of Russia and the emergence of the Soviet Union (Smith 2000, p. 13). In the interwar period, empire was an elite project, while the welfare state was a populist one.

State

The British wartime experience highlighted the distinctions between the political right and left and alternatively highlighted their pre-war failures and fears, their respective wartime successes in foreign and domestic policies, and their emphases on the Empire or the welfare state. The war did not dramatically recast these relations in the UK, or at least not to the extent the war reordered domestic relations in France and especially in Germany. British wartime democratisation and economic mobilization reinvigorated the legitimacy of the British state to a disenchanted society and welded that legitimacy to a popular consensus and strong leadership that was able to continue many of the pre-war imperial ambitions (Wilson in Kier, Krebs, 2010, pp. 164, 168). The values of sacrifice, solidarity and egalitarianism associated with the ‘people’s war’ - and exemplified by Dunkirk and the Blitz - found their culmination in the post-war welfare state (Smith 2000, p. 11; Eley 2001). While blame for the economic collapse and appeasement of the 1930s was placed with the ‘guilty men’ from the Conservative Party (Smith 2000, p. 50), the alternative and Conservative myth focused on Churchill’s foreign policy leadership in the nation’s hour of need and the role of empire in keeping Britain free and secure (Deighton, 2002, p. 100). British political leaders have resorted to the Churchillian myth to secure domestic support for foreign policy, and Churchill was invoked by Eden in Suez, Thatcher in the Falklands, and Blair in Kosovo and Iraq (Barnett 1982; Smith 2000, p. 8; Eley 2001; Deighton 2002, p. 101).

For the left, the interwar conservatives were the ‘Guilty Men’ who had failed to address the unemployment and deprivations of the 1930s, who had attempted to appease an insatiable Hitler, but failed, leaving the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) ill prepared for the German Blitzkrieg, and eventually stranded, dirty, tired and helpless on a French Beach (Smith 2000, p. 39). Dunkirk was a powerful symbol and the evacuation served as a potent image of the core identity of Britain as an embattled island, a maritime nation, where the people pulled together the ‘miracle of the little boats’ that evacuated the

---

23 Journalists of the Beaverbrook press (the ‘Cato’ group) wrote a book on the appeasers of the 1930s, the ‘Guilty Men’ published just a month after Dunkirk, the book opens on the French beaches with the evacuating troops, with ‘story of an Army doomed before it took the field’ (Smith 2000, p. 41). There followed a record of the failures of the 1930s, of unemployment and appeasement, ‘essentially a domestic drama that had been brewing for eleven years’ (Smith 2000, p. 39). The ‘Cato’ group consisted of Michael Foot (who makes a reappearance in the debate over the Falklands), Frank Owen and Peter Howard.
British army after the elite had failed. It was no surprise that the left and its governments originally invoked the ‘lessons of Munich’ as mistakes made by the right (Chuter in Buffet and Heuser 1998, p. 66). However, Britain’s entry into the war put her directly in the front line against fascism. It even made that figurehead of the national struggle, the war-loving imperialist Churchill, acceptable to leftist authors, erasing the direct association of the Conservatives with appeasement. This underlined the message that there was nothing wrong with Britain as a nation, only with the men who had run it during the previous decade (Smith 2000, pp. 43, 50).

Alternatively, the conservative wartime experience built exactly on the image of Churchill as the strong leader who had been ignored during his wilderness years but then had stood up at Britain’s darkest hour. The Churchillian myth stressed the need for decisive and principled leadership, for the resistance of a brave island state in an uncertain world. For the conservatives, 1940 was therefore primarily a foreign policy lesson about the strength of empire (Deighton, 2002, p. 100) rather than a domestic one. Similar to the role General De Gaulle played in French narratives on the war, the British wartime experience became associated with a single man. Both had also substantially shaped the telling of the war in their biographies. Churchill played a crucial role in publically recording and personally interpreting Britain’s history, and his public statements reflected an undiminished ambition for Britain to play a global role (Deighton 2002, p. 104).

Labour had led the country through war on the domestic front, as the need to run a war economy necessitated closer collaboration with the working classes. The concessions that the government was forced to make in turn drastically changed the antagonistic pre-war relations between the social classes (Smith 2000, p. 11). This offered a sharp contrast with the US; whereas in the US much authority remained on the military side of the national state, Britain placed most significant powers over economic mobilization in the hands of new civilian-led ministries, where the key posts were occupied by Labour politicians. Labour was thus much better positioned to reap the benefits after the war than the Democrats were. For example, Ernest Bevin, the wartime Minister of Labour and National Service, who later became the Foreign Secretary, on the eve of election extended the wartime lessons to peacetime: ‘Labour does not believe in leaving our economy to chance. During the war we have witnessed great developments, many of which can be turned to the advantage of the community in times of peace’. Consequently, for the public, and especially the working class, war mobilisation and state provision of public goods became directly tied to party politics and democratic governance with Labour (Wilson in Kier and Krebs 2010, p. 164, 168).

The duality of the experiences shaped the executive autonomy and legitimacy of the state in ways crucial to the ability of policymakers to set policy. It reinvigorated state legitimacy to a disenchanted society, and welded that legitimacy to a popular consensus
that contained many elements of the pre-war imperial ambitions and placed a strong emphasis on personal leadership by British Prime Ministers.

**Armed Forces**

The British armed forces related to this mythologised wartime relationship between state and society in two ways, which has affected and continues to affect the ability of British policymakers to use force. In the empire narrative, the British armed forces are presented as the cool and competent professionals, often deployed abroad to safeguard the corners of the empire (Smith 2000, pp. 125-127). British society, like that of the French empire, has therefore long been conditioned to accept the use of the armed forces and the possibility of casualties. They had been used continuously, whether in Northern Ireland, in Africa, in the Gulf, or in Hong Kong. Certainly, the deployment of British forces for decades in Northern Ireland left its own institutional legacy. The armed forces were part of the maritime tradition, meaning that unlike those of the continental powers, the UK had a professional force, led by upper-class officers. During the Second World War, the manpower from the empire seemed to validate their possession. The RAF pilots who fought the Battle of Britain were (mis)represented in popular culture as predominantly upper-class and this reinforced the idea of cool, competent professionals, whose deaths were tragic, but also heroic. In the second narrative, the British armed forces are part of a strong working class tradition. The massive wartime mobilization meant that, during the war, it was truly a ‘people’s army’. This underlined the legitimacy of the armed forces, which had been in question after the slaughters of the Great War and the sacrifices the working class made in it. This re legitimisation further cemented a popular consensus about the armed forces, even when conscription ended in 1957.

The British armed forces related to the mythologised wartime relationship between state and society in two ways. British armed forces continue to be presented as cool and competent professionals constantly deployed abroad (Smith 2000, pp. 125-127), but also part of a strong populist tradition. While Parliament is not required to vote in favour of the deployment of British armed forces, in practice, statements are made by ministers and debates conducted in Parliament to secure support (Rowe in Nolte 2003, p. 836). The consequence of the more populist attitude towards the use of force and the armed forces then requires that some sort of popular consensus is reached on the necessity to

---

24 The role that Northern Ireland played in shaping the British armed forces as an organisation was mentioned by several interviewees (M.C., 2012, interview with author, June 26; J.D.W., 2012, interview with author, June 27; D.O., 2013, interview with author, May 20; J.T., 2013, interview with author, May 22).
send ‘our lads’ in harm’s way. It is then that national myths of a specifically British responsibility are most useful.

The autonomy of the armed forces themselves is fairly large, since the military can bypass the executive. While the Chief of the Defence Staff is responsible to the Secretary of State for Defence who, in turn answers to Parliament for the actions of the armed forces, the service chiefs have the right to discuss their concerns over the head of the Secretary of State with the Prime Minister (Rowe in Nolte 2003, p. 842). This gives the armed forces various options to appeal to other actors within the state, the legislature, or to seek recourse to public opinion when they are dissatisfied with the tasks that are demanded of them.

**Society**

The experiences of British society during the Second World War, the final part of the trinity, explain how and why the lessons learned by civilian and military policymakers were sustained and reiterated over time. Like the US, the other Western victorious state, the war did not leave radical domestic losers and victors. The war, however, did impact the sense with which British society after the war, its outlook on the legitimacy of the state’s policymakers and their national ambitions. The ‘people’s war’ had distinct consequences for domestic social-democratic policies, but it did so without changing the nationalist impulses within Britain’s outlook, and without a complete working class revolution. For some authors, the war represented a missed opportunity (Calder 1969). In this, there were noticeably parallels with the aftermath of the First World War, where military victory had ‘brought a sharp recrudescence of the meanest forms of [British] working class chauvinism’ (Waites 1987, p. 223).

However, the war also produced another component that had an impact on the room for manoeuvre of the state’s policymakers. The radical newness of the experiences during the Second World War for the British was that it had directly impacted civilians, and it did so on a large scale. Not until 1942 did total British uniformed casualties in the war exceed civilian casualties (Smith 2000, p. 70). The Blitz killed over 40000 civilians between September 1940 and May 1943, bringing to fruition pre-war fears of strategic bombing. For a society accustomed to wars, but only in ‘far-off places’, in countries about ‘which it knew little’, this was another reason, why this was in the most literal sense a people’s war.

British elites feared that the bombed British cities and the disintegration of morale would lead to social unrest, and possibly even revolutionary uprisings, considering the revolutionary Socialist and Communist movements of the preceding thirty years (Bialer 1980, pp. 32-33). Yet, the indiscriminate nature of air bombing was profoundly unifying:
it killed old age pensioners and babies, middle class and working class, and even the odd aristocrat (Smith 2000, p. 70). Such a method made war more total, and made the need of elites and policymakers to acknowledge the working class majority more astute. The Blitz had also perhaps made the British business association more aware of basic national solidarity. They were less resistant to measures that aimed at improving conditions for the working class, such as those found in the Beveridge Report (Wilson in Kier and Krebs, 2010, p. 180). The caring state replaced an uncaring state, as the war against fascism produced the New Jerusalem of the welfare state and Keynesian interventions in the economy.

The war may not have revolutionised the sense of priorities of British society, but it did ensure the ascendance of Labour, the party most associated with leading the country through the war on the domestic front. How else to explain that the Labour Party won in a political landslide in the 1945 elections against Winston Churchill, the saviour of 1940? It is a telling fact that the most Blitzed cities all supported Labour over Churchill’s Conservatives.

The experience of the Blitz also lay at the root of the societal resistance to nuclear weapons, even though such a weapon fit the British tradition of off-shore balancing, naval power, and the pre-war faith in strategic bombing. The British wartime experiences as both victims and perpetrators of strategic bombing meant that British society entered the nuclear era with a profound awareness of the moral problems of deterrence, and strong doubts about its basic effectiveness (Quinlan 2004, pp. 261-262). Post-war British society therefore saw a strong tradition of protest against the incorporation of nuclear weapons into national policy, of advocacy of arms control and even nuclear disarmament, as illustrated by success of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). This tradition was especially profound in the Labour party, impeding the manoeuvre room of its political leaders in government. The introduction of the H-bomb in 1955 split Labour, with part advocating unilateral disarmament.

British nationalism was left undiminished by the Second World War, if not strengthened. The closeness of that tradition to an imperial tradition - one that was sometimes articulated as a particular British responsibility - meant that British policymakers could draw from a great deal of de facto manoeuvre space. This autonomy depended on their ability to articulate their strategic choices in the form of these established narratives.
France

France presents an even more ambiguous case than the UK. It was one of the nominal victors of the Second World War, but the French military defeat during the Fall of France in June 1940 was absolute and catastrophic. This was a shock to French self-perception: the French had always celebrated their martial tradition; France had considered itself, and been considered as, a great military power and the premier power on the European continent. Yet, the French armed forces were defeated in a mere six weeks, suffering losses of 60000 to 85000 men. The ignominy of surrender and collaboration followed on the humiliation of defeat.

The First and the Second World War offered also a wide difference in terms of the victims. In the Great War, only a minority of the French victims were civilian, whereas during the Second World War the minority consisted of combatants compared to deported Jews, politicians, bombed civilians, forced labour, and executed resistance members. The variety of the experiences was utterly incomparable and incompatible (Wieviorka 2010, pp. 20-21). The lessons on grand strategy learned by French civilian and military policymakers were played out in this domestic setting, and reflect the difficult and contradictory manner in which France had emerged victorious, but in name only.

Within France, the war laid bare the vicious fissures which had plagued the country since the end of the nineteenth century, as the left – the Republicans, social-democrats, socialists – and the right – the Monarchists, the Catholics – had struggled over the direction of the country. Their mutual distrust had impeded strategic integration in the interwar years (Kier 1997). The invasion and subsequent collaboration by the fascist Vichy regime emphasised how these domestic conflicts had crippled pre-war policy and how they were further fought to the bitter end during the war years (Wieviorka 2010, pp. 16-17). Tragically, France’s greatest hero from the First World War, Marshall Pétain ended up leading the Vichy government that preached collaboration with the Third Reich. Conservatives felt vindicated in their interwar assessments of the failings of the republican left, and they told the French people that the defeat was their own fault (Gildea 2002, pp. 59-60). Yet, in contrast, during the dark days of June 1940, De Gaulle reminded the French from his exile in London of their long history of heroism and greatness in order to recall them from the path of ‘surrender and despair’ to that of ‘honour and hope’. However, that heroic myth had its own trappings of failure: France was forced to depend its Anglo-American allies to liberate French territory. That loss of autonomy and decision, the helplessness of the French state in the wartime years,

25 This settling of domestic scores was illustrated by the regime change of the Third Republic motto - ‘freedom, equality and brotherhood’ (liberté, égalité, fraternité) – to ‘work, family, fatherland’ (travail, famille, patrie).
haunted French policymakers in the post-war years (Girault 1986, p. 56). The experiences shaped French beliefs on alliances and force posture.

**Core strategic beliefs**

The Second World War left French policymakers with three core strategic beliefs.

*Core belief 1. Balance of power: France cannot narrowly focus on threats alone*

The first core belief for French policymakers was that France remained permanently vulnerable to threats from all sides, due to its geographical centrality on the European continent. This was likely to remain so, and France could therefore not afford to plan only for specific threats. In the course of eighty years, France had three times faced invasions, and twice been occupied. French policymakers were therefore pessimistic when they contemplated the new distribution of power that emerged in the early Cold War. More than any other state, France was in need of the double containment of both the Soviet Union and a possibly revanchist Germany (David 1989; Harrison 1981, p. 11). However, unlike their counterparts in the US and Britain who were accustomed to wars being a matter of maintaining respectively distant or near balances of power, for French policymakers upsets in the balance of power on the European continent meant a direct threat to France itself. In practice, in the preceding decades this had primarily meant Germany. However, when it came to the Second World War, narrowly planning on a defence against the German threat had led French policymakers to underappreciate the greater distribution of power at play, and its effect on the behaviour of other states. The errors of the pre-war period had cost France everything. As General de Gaulle expressed in 1943: ‘we must want the existence of France. Never again will it be self-evident’. In the last analysis French national security should depend on France, and France alone (Mendl 1968).

*Core belief 2. Balance of power: France should never again depend on other states*

The second core belief was that France should avoid dependence on foreign powers. The balance of power mattered and France should possess the means to shape the behaviour of its allies, as well as its adversaries. The Fall of France in June 1940 represented not

---

26 ‘Harvey to Foreign Office,’ 1 October 1950, DBPO, German Rearmament, calendar 54i. In the years after the war, the French were convinced ‘that in two years Germany would have the largest army in Europe and would be in a position to dictate to us once more’.

only a significant military defeat, but it had resulted in the loss of France’s autonomy and its dependence on other states for its liberation. These states had then been able to shape the future European order without it. For French policymakers, steeped in historical lessons on the greatness of France, this was a bitter pill to swallow (Gildea 1996; 2002, p. 60). French autonomy consequently became the preeminent concern for French policymakers.

Yalta was the experience that symbolised the humiliating French dependence (Heuser 1998, p. 170; Wieviorka 2010, p. 40; Gildea 2002, p. 61). De Gaulle claimed that, unrestrained by a moderating French influence, the Anglo-Saxons together with the Soviets had forced ‘the states of Central Europe and the Balkans [...] to serve the Soviet Union as satellites’, whereas France would have been the true champion of European interests and the chosen leader of a Europe ‘between the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon camps’ (De Gaulle 1959, pp. 179, 212). In light of French post-war weakness, and considering the privileges that France received after the war – a share of the occupation of Germany and membership of the UN Security Council – the exclusion at Yalta was not an entirely legitimise complaint. However, as France began positioning itself as a third force between the US and the Soviet Union, Yalta became a rallying point also to other states. At least that is how French policymakers attempted to present French strategy to other Europeans (Heuser 1998, p. 170).

Core belief 3. Force posture: France should assure military preparedness and integrate new military technology

The third core belief was that pre-war domestic divisions had impeded effective internal balancing efforts, and hindered the integration of new military technology into strategic doctrine. The absence of the means to signal the credible use of force had led to disastrous results in 1940 (David 1989, p. 9; Kier 1997). The Maginot Line was the most obvious illustration of the pre-war failure of strategic thought. Pre-war planners had ill understood the greater mobility now possible with armoured units, tactical air power and communication, even though French military thinkers – among them De Gaulle – had alerted them to this shift and advocated doctrinal change. The distrust between the French political left and right, however, had presented obstacles to successful

28 De Gaulle resented that France had to ‘beg’ for allied support between 1942 and 1944 (Lacouture 1986, p.466). De Gaulle would emphasise the fact that twice in the past decades, ‘the Americans have waited 3 years before deciding to land [in Europe]’, quoted in Lacouture 1986, p. 707 (See De Gaulle 1971, Memories of Hope. The renewal, p. 1068).
29 France had carried little weight with Roosevelt and Stalin near the end of the Second World War, and even Churchill, who sought to have France reconstructed as a future bulwark against Soviet preponderance on the continent, was not very well disposed towards De Gaulle when the war came to an end (Marcowitz 1998, pp. 85-86).
integration of military technology and (Ambler 1966, pp. 7, 25, 35; Kier 1997). The defensive pre-war force posture had then left France unable to fulfil its commitments to its Czechoslovakian and Polish allies (Posen 1984, pp. 121-130). Post-war critics blamed the defeat on the divisiveness and indecisiveness of interwar French planners (Bloch 1946). After the war, the decisive outcome of the Fall of France meant that in the future, France could not afford to fall behind in acquiring military technology, nor integrating it into its grand strategy. As General Juin expressed it: ‘The first idea which should be kept in mind is to have an intervention force. It is essential, to avoid a recurrence of Munich’. It was even more important to appreciate the implications of the introduction of nuclear weapons. To acquire a deterrent and integrate it into French strategy was deemed essential to safeguard French survival.

Core belief 4. Alliances: France should never again be rely on alliances (specifically Anglo-American allies)

The fourth core belief of policymakers was that external balancing was insufficient to ensure French security, as pre-war alliances had failed to protect France, and its allies had then abandoned it to its fate. Dunkirk was the symbol of the abandonment of France by unreliable allies, the ‘most traumatic’ (Imbert 1989) of the lessons of French history. In the 1930s French doctrine had centred on defence, on grinding down the inevitable German assault until allied support arrived (Kier 1997, p. 12). Yet, that support was incomplete, and, through what the French perceived as duplicity, British forces made their escape from the continent. Pétain reminded Churchill on 11 June that he had committed forty divisions to save the British army at the time of the German spring offensive in 1918, and asked where the British divisions to save the French were now (Smith 2000, p. 40). Coupled with the later humiliating dependence of French leaders in exile, France’s abandonment by Britain reinforced the existing distrust of ‘perfidious Albion’ (l’Albion perfide). In fact, the British were perceived to have contributed to French defeat to nearly the same extent as Germany (Heuser 1998, p. 162).

The French experience between the agreements in Versailles in the aftermath of the First World War to the abandonment in Dunkirk had demonstrated that relying on

31 At Dunkirk, the British had taken three days to inform the French that they had started their retreat, disguising it as a maneuver while unaware French units provided cover (Smith 2000, p. 40.)
32 The title of Heuser’s (1998) chapter: ‘Dunkirk, Dien Bien Phu, Suez or why France does not trust allies and has learnt to love the bomb’ says it all. These wartime myths were reinforced in the post-war decades: the perceived American failure to fully support France in Indochina and in Algeria, and specifically its opposition in Suez, convinced French policymakers that the United States had morally and materially turned against France and violated the Alliance by actively undermining French anti-communist actions (Heuser 1998; Harrison 1981, p. 48).
ambiguous and elusive Anglo-American security guarantees against aggression would leave France’s future uncertain.\textsuperscript{33} The sense that France had been sacrificed as part of Anglo-American buck-passing strategies cast in doubt the value of post-war trans-Atlantic alliance commitments (Mendl 1968; Gallois 1976; Harrison 1981, p. 11; Heuser 1998, p. 162). Hence the feeling among post-war French policymakers that in the last analysis French national security should depend on France alone.\textsuperscript{34}

During the Cold War, based on these past experiences, French policymakers feared that in the case of a possible escalation the US would abandon it in favour of its own security. They therefore did not consider the extended nuclear deterrence that the US offered to be credible. Agreements for German demilitarisation were understandably also met with scepticism by French policymakers, given the failure of such promises after the previous world war. In 1947, the French foreign minister Bidault explained to Marshall that a demilitarisation treaty worried French policymakers, because it ‘be considered a sort of ‘substitute’ for other guarantees’, such as more costly American troop presence in Europe. The placement of American forces, specifically in Germany, was deemed necessary by the French government to contain both Germany and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{35} In fact, such fears of abandonment of the continent by the US and Britain to Soviet designs, eventually began superseding French fears and resentments towards (West) Germany. During a 1956 visit to Chancellor Adenauer French prime minister Mollet cited the danger that the Anglo-Saxons would return to their traditional ‘peripheral strategy’. Mollet agreed with Adenauer that there was a need for European unification, which shows that French policymakers preferred betting on the Franco-German axis rather than on an alliance with the unreliable maritime powers.\textsuperscript{36}

When De Gaulle became president, this lack of confidence in American and British willingness to act to uphold European security became more prominent as a belief in French grand strategic thinking. De Gaulle would emphasise the fact that twice in the past decades, ‘the Americans have waited three years before deciding to land [in Europe]’.\textsuperscript{37} He remarked that ‘perhaps we shall end up with a new Western retreat. If so

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} De Gaulle perceived the willingness of the US to come to the assistance of France in both world wars only when American interests were threatened. Treaties with American and British security guarantees had been signed in June 1919, but proved useless in 1939 (Peyrefitte 1994, p.349).
\item \textsuperscript{34} In 1943, De Gaulle, traumatised by the humiliating 1940 defeat, ‘we must want the existence of France. Never again will it be self-evident’ (Tertrais 200, chapter 2).
\item \textsuperscript{35} Bidault-Marshall meeting, March 13, 1947, FRUS 1947, 2:247.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Telegram, Paris to Représentants diplomatiques de la France à l’étranger, October 2, 1956, DDF 1956, 2, pp. 493-496; Carstens, ‘Kurzprotokoll über die Besprechungen zwischen dem Herrn Bundeskanzler, dem Herrn Bundesminister des Auswärtigen und dem Herrn Staatssekretär Faure am 29, September 1956’, October 1, 1956, PAAA: Abt.2. bd.VS-3666. Mollet argued for the Franco-German cooperation both in completing the negotiations on the EEC and Euratom, the success of which would encourage British participation in European affairs, and in reviving economic cooperation. French
\item \textsuperscript{37} See De Gaulle, Memories of Hope. The renewal, p. 1068, quoted in Lacouture 1986, p. 707).
\end{itemize}
France will take no part in it. France will remain firm on the position which she has never ceased to defend and for the future this is a very important thing.’

Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, in a 1964 speech to celebrate the liberation of Calais, focused on the lessons of 1940, which he attributed to De Gaulle: ‘Alliances, as necessary, as strong, as loyal as they may be […] alliances can make possible the liberation: but they cannot guarantee the initial success, and, in our day and age, that means they cannot assure our survival.’

The fear of abandonment set in motion the French quest for autonomy. Rather than attempt to permanently bind the US and Britain to continental Europe France withdrew its forces from NATO’s integrated command in 1966 and acquired an autonomous nuclear weapon. De Gaulle does not deserve exclusive credit for the development of the nuclear program, but he certainly made it the core element of French strategy. Already in 1954, General Guillaume, France’s Chief of Staff, had warned prime minister Mendès-France that European dependence on American-controlled nuclear weapons effectively deprived France of her hold over US security guarantee and rendered western defence ‘completely dependent on American wishes’ (Harrison 1981, p. 36). Such fears that US and other allies would abandon France, ensuring a nuclear Munich, were common and gleaned from multiple opinion pieces in the 1950s and 1960s, including some written by former policymakers (Heuser 1998, p. 167). Post-war experiences in Indochina, Algeria, and specifically Suez, reinforced the belief that French policymakers could not depend on the Americans and the British (Heuser 1998; Harrison 1981, p. 48). Should the Cold War escalate, French policymakers feared US abandonment of France, extended deterrence guarantees were therefore not considered credible. From now on, France was allied, but not aligned.

38 Account of de Gaulle remarks to MRP representatives, quoted in Rumbold to Shuckburgh, September 27, 1961, FO 371/160554, PRO.
40 ‘If it was de Gaulle who in ... 1940 proclaimed that France had lost a battle but she had not lost the war, he has nevertheless not forgotten that the loss of that battle has cost the country fifty months of occupation, and that more than twenty years later, France still shows the psychic scars of that defeat. He hope to eliminate the possibility of a similar defeat by giving to the nation a strike-force with nuclear weapons.’ (Guy Ponce de Leon, ‘L’espion Charlie’, Combat, 17 July 1963, cited in Heuser 1998 163)
Peripheral beliefs

The core beliefs of French policymakers were supported by peripheral beliefs.

Peripheral belief 1. France should assume France is insecure on the European continent

The first peripheral belief was that France’s position on the continent was inherently insecure. France had experienced three invasions and two occupations in eighty years, the last of which resulted in the loss of national sovereignty. Defence of national territory should be prioritised.

Peripheral belief 2. France should never again fail to use force decisively

The second peripheral beliefs concerned the risk that France would again be unprepared to back diplomacy with force when dealing with authoritarian regimes.  The capitulation at Munich was to become the first step towards French defeat. The French were understandably pessimistic when contemplating Soviet behaviour in an uncertain future (David 1989; Girault 1986, p. 56; Harrison 1981, p. 11). Not only Anglo-American policymakers were haunted by Munich; French policymakers also referred to it as a cautionary tale for appeasing expansionist authoritarian regimes. However, the French lesson on Munich had aspects that were particular to the French experience: pre-war domestic political divisions; the failure to incorporate new military technologies; the failure to establish credible alliances; which all culminated in the loss of autonomy. A single executive with the legitimacy to decisively use military force – whether this pertained to the nuclear weapons that ensured French security or the intervention forces that allowed France to play a role – would prevent France again becoming the victim of circumstances.

41 Not only Anglo-American policymakers were haunted by Munich, as French policymakers referred to it when justifying the need for strong action in Indochina and Suez.
42 French policymakers referred to it when justifying the need for strong action in Indochina, Suez and Algeria.
Peripheral belief 3. France should maintain its power and rank, for without it France has no means to shape order

The third peripheral belief was closely linked to the previous, namely that France must have sufficient status to shape the international environment. France must prove itself a power of the first rank. An independent nuclear weapon, interventionary forces, the membership of key international organisations (specifically France’s position as one of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council), and key bilateral relations (foremost the Franco-German one) provide France with such status.

Strategic beliefs, risks and costs

French policymakers drew heavily from their experiences in the Second World War in their appraisal of the post-war international environment. Those experiences formed a fairly consistent and coherent system of core and peripheral strategic beliefs around which French policymakers made their grand strategic decisions and policies in the post-war period and around which they continue making them. These beliefs can be hierarchically ordered. From the four core beliefs – the French need for autonomy and the means to shape the balance of power; the need to adapt to and incorporate new military technologies; the failure of alliances in protecting France – laid the post-war foundations of French grand strategy. These had clear consequences for subsequent post-war decisions, and they precluded certain strategic alternatives. They also signified a radical shift in the cost-benefit assessment of French policy makers.

The central paradigm shift in the beliefs of French policymakers pertained to the manner in which France should position itself in Europe and the world: the core grand strategic belief since the end of the Second World War is that France should be strategically autonomous, both in terms of its alliances and its force posture. Without autonomy, France would entangle itself and limit its strategic options. That would endanger its security, its manoeuvre space, and its influence. This is the core beliefs around which the other beliefs revolve.

The experiences of abandonment leading up to the war and dependence during the war meant that French policymakers lacked the faith in American and British post-war guarantees, and they could not let France’s survival depend on those allies. Instead of pursuing the full integration of American and British interests and forces with continental European interests and forces, France alienated the US and Britain, undermined transatlantic unity by leaving the integrated political-military command of NATO, and spent prodigious amounts of resources acquiring an independent nuclear weapon. These weapons could be aimed in all directions – tous azimuts – to maintain
the balance of power. These core strategic beliefs enforced renewed focus on the protection of French territory in the face of all invaders, a recalibration of French policy towards Europe, the need to be technologically advanced, and the ability to operate independently from France's allies. Chapter eight shows how these beliefs were maintained over decades, and how history was consistently invoked to validate the veracity of these beliefs.

In the aftermath of the war, French policymakers were forced to reconcile contrasting risks and threats. Post-war France, more than any other state, was in need of the double containment of both the Soviet Union but also a possible resurgent revanchist Germany. France needed strong allies to contain both, yet these allies had been proven not to be reliable in the past, able to disappear behind seas and oceans. France could not accept dependence, but neither could it accept isolation. To protect France, it was essential that Europe as a whole must be protected against the Soviet Union. The Atlantic Alliance served as the means to achieve this, but French membership could not be allowed to compromise its independence. Moreover, a possible resurgent Germany must also be contained, because, after all, it was Germany that had critically damaged France three times in the past eighty years. A strictly European solution had the risk of allowing German dominance. Yet, decreasing any one of these risks could not be done without increasing another. More than half a century removed from these judgments, it is easy to underestimate the complex interconnected trade-offs that French policymakers faced.

The profound fear of another abandonment of France by its allies after the war was not abstract. French policymakers experienced a profound uncertainty whether the US would risk its own security in the case of a possible escalation in Europe – for example, over West Berlin – in a world where escalation implied the use of nuclear weapons. French policymakers therefore did not perceive the extended deterrence that the US offered as credible, nor were they convinced that France would not be entangled in American adventurism. Yet, while dependence on the US was problematic, so was the notion that Europe would be left to fend for itself, which partly explains the serious French discomfort in the aftermath of the Second World War that the European project would attain a military dimension; the dismissal by the French parliament of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1954 represented a decision of the Fourth Republic that De Gaulle was unable or unwilling to reverse (Harrison 1981, p. 4). Without the presence of the Americans and the British to keep them in line, Germany

---

43 De Gaulle declared the ‘tous azimuts’ position at a speech at the Ecole Militaire on 3 November 1959: ‘The view of a war and even of a battle in which France would no longer act on her own behalf, and in accordance with her own wishes – such a view is unacceptable. The system that has been ‘integration’ has had its day’.

44 ‘Harvey to Foreign Office,’ 1 October 1950, DBPO, German Rearmament, calendar 54i. In the years after the war, the French were convinced ‘that in two years Germany would have the largest army in Europe and would be in a position to dictate to us once more’.
might defect from the EDC, or, the other extreme, dominate it.\textsuperscript{45} An American presence was necessary to hedge against Germany. However, such an American role was only acceptable to French policymakers if France had the ability to shape US policy. That ability depended on France's strategic autonomy, which in turn depended on incomplete integration and a national deterrent. The balance of power could not be neglected, even when dealing with allies.

The solution for French policymakers during the Cold War was one where France was allied with the US and the other Western allies through NATO, but not aligned. The outcome of this position was disengagement from the integrated political-military planning structures of NATO in 1966. For De Gaulle, France should act as interlocutor between the Anglo-Saxon and Russian spheres (Harrison 1981, p. 8). Yet, though primarily associated with President De Gaulle's actions under the Fifth Republic, his pursuit of autonomy represented a broader consensus among French policymakers. It was the result of the wartime experience and compounded by generally unrewarding Alliance experiences after 1949 and a particularly profound estrangement from the United States and NATO that began in 1956 (Harrison 1981, p.7). To achieve autonomy, the force posture abandoned any attempt to hold onto a more and more untenable French empire, and instead prioritised the defence of French territory through nuclear weapons, the \textit{Force de frappe}. The need for the weapon was transparently and continuously linked to the experience of 1940.\textsuperscript{46} French policymakers believed the survival of France and its territorial integrity could ultimately only be entrusted to French policymakers, and preferably a single and decisive executive: ‘The defence of France must be French’.\textsuperscript{47} De Gaulle and Gallois, his advisor on nuclear issues, thought that any deterrent which was not strictly national could not be credible: ‘Democracies can really practice the deterrence strategy only at the service of an absolutely vital cause’ (Gallois 1961, p. 197). There was little illusion within France that the nuclear doctrine itself elevated France to the level of the American or Soviet superpowers: the doctrine was always considered weak-to-strong-deterrence (\textit{dissuasion de faible au fort}). But, because France would have little left to lose in the case of invasion, it was all the more credible.


\textsuperscript{46} ‘If it was de Gaulle who in ... 1940 proclaimed that France had lost a battle but she had not lost the war, he has nevertheless not forgotten that the loss of that battle has cost the country fifty months of occupation, and that more than twenty years later, France still shows the psychic scars of that defeat. He hope to eliminate the possibility of a similar defeat by giving to the nation a strike-force with nuclear weapons’. Guy Ponce de Leon, ‘L’espigle Charlie’, Combat, 17 July 1963, cited in Heuser (1998, p. 163). Thought reiterated in interviews (D.D., 2012, interview with author, September 11; C.L., 2012, interview with author, September 12).

\textsuperscript{47} De Gaulle, speech at the Ecole Militaire, November 3, 1959, p. 71.
From the French perspective the European project reflected the same fears of a resurgent Germany. France consistently opposed efforts to centralize the political and economic administration of Germany. As de Gaulle explained in 1945, ‘a central government would inevitably tend to the restoration and strengthening of Germany,’ and ‘a revived Germany would certainly eventually invade France.’ 48 In 1950 the French were convinced ‘that in two years Germany would have the largest army in Europe and would be in a position to dictate to us once more.’ 49 German power could never be allowed to assert itself over Europe again, and must therefore be contained. The European unification project – beginning with the ECSC, then the EEC, and finally the EU – accomplished the reconstruction and reintegration of Germany into Europe without giving it real autonomy. The deterrent also offered France leverage towards Germany. 50 For De Gaulle and his Fifth Republic, nuclear weapons were the ‘symbol of independence in Paris, of dependence in Bonn’ (Boniface, 1988). 51 The development of an independent nuclear force could establish an enduring difference between defeated Germany and victorious France (Haine 1992). 52

Once it had taken shape, French Cold War grand strategy was internally consistent and each part of it was complementary with and strengthened the whole. Yet it is important to emphasise that this was in no way an inevitable outcome. It suggests the persistent willingness that French policymakers were willing to accept certain risks over others. While there was no doubt among them that the Soviet Union was the primary threat to French security, and there was no denying the even more visceral fear of a possible resurgent Germany they felt, French policymakers did not design their policies towards those threats, even though the option to do so was available to them. Chapter six further illustrates these costs and risks, through the use of counterfactuals, and it shows why French experiences shaped the strategic beliefs that proved to be decisive in settling these trade-offs.

48 ‘The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the SecState,’ 3 November 1945, FRUS 1945, vol. 3, 890.
49 ‘Harvey to Foreign Office,’ 1 October 1950, DBPO, German Rearmament, calendar 54i.
Trinitarian relations

These beliefs are deeply embedded in French post-war relations between state, society and the armed forces, and the emergence of a de facto presidential system during the Fifth Republic. The highly polarised, unstable, and divided politics of the Third Republic, marked by mutual distrust between the left and the right, the politicisation of the armed forces and a constant turnover between governments, were widely considered the root cause of the catastrophic and traumatic Fall of France in June 1940 (Bloch 1946; Ambler 1966, p. 25; Girault in Becker and Knipping 1986, p. 56; Kier 1997, p. 35; Wieviorka 2010, p. 16). These divisions had created a crippling indecisiveness that prevented the integration of new military technology with its alliance strategy (Bloch 1946; Kier 1997; Ambler 1966, p. 7).

The Fourth Republic of the immediate post-war period had not offered a solution to the structural problems, as the blame for the defeat could be - and was – attributed to a broad array of actors. Here, France differed from Britain, where the blame for the failures of 1940 and the years that preceded the war, could be assigned to a small group of ‘guilty men’, and the war itself produced a more solidaristic national myth. In contrast, after the war French society remained divided against itself. The years following Liberation did not offer stability, with the French communist and socialist parties mobilised and legitimised through their prominence in the wartime resistance against the fascists. Their strength in the post-war elections provoked the real fear that France would voluntarily fall to the communist bloc, as was Italy. The army remained conservative and anti-communist, and it viewed the postcolonial revolutionary warfare outside the hexagon, in Indochina and Algeria, as part of one long expansive conflict against the communist threat. The fear of authoritarian state takeover by the extreme right-wing elements concentrated within the army, and supported by the French Pieds-Noirs in Algeria. Under threat from both the right and the left, France seemed poised for civil war.

The Fifth Republic represented a transformation of these dynamics. It treated the French President as autonomous with regards to foreign-and defence policy vis-à-vis both the armed forces and parliament. Grand strategy became the French President’s ‘reserved domain’, and enabled him to act decisively and coherently.

State

The lessons of the Second World War about executive power and domestic divisions were reflected in the founding of the Fifth Republic, called out after the De Gaulle came to power and the Fourth Republic ended. The Fifth Republic transformed France into a de facto presidential system with the executive clearly in charge of formulating foreign-
and defence policy as his ‘reserved domain’. This transformation was a deliberate political act to overcome the structural problems with the armed forces that overlapped with the left-right polarisation of the Third Republic, which were carried on to the Fourth and the Fifth Republics, and were exemplified in the Algerian conflict. The French project in Algeria that had begun as a transformative mission, but was reframed by de Gaulle as a hindrance to France’s destiny and to the reconstruction project begun when the Resistance arose to defend the nation during its darkest days. The smooth extraction from the Algerian war helped consolidate unparalleled presidential authority, thereby creating a ‘republican monarch’ that endured after De Gaulle left the scene. (Krebs in Kier and Krebs 2010, pp. 188, 196, 204) The exit from Algeria also forced the armed forces towards threats from the European continent, where it was easier to maintain control over them. The external and the internal elements of French grand strategy complemented each other here: French government had to be independent both from a demoralised army and from unreliable allies; the nuclear weapon, in the hands of one sole, determined decision-maker provided a single solution to all these problems (Heuser 1998, p. 162).

The impetus that De Gaulle gave the Fifth Republic was not strictly constitutional, but primarily political. Strictly speaking the government is not subordinate to the president in the constitution (Bell 2000, p. 25-26; Gerkrath in Nolte, 2003, p. 293). In many ways the 1958 constitution – essentially fighting the last battle as Constitutions are often designed to do - was intended to rebalance powers in the executive's favour. It would solve France’s endemic instability by bolstering the power of the Prime Minister and thereby enabling the government to take firm and effective action. As the Head of State, the Presidency would support the Prime Minister, but not supersede him, reflecting Republican fear of dictatorial executives (Bell 2000, pp. 9, 15, 29, 30).53

Once he became President, De Gaulle rapidly expanded presidential authority and power, and this power carried over onto his successors (Krebs in Kier and Krebs, 2010, p. 206). The principle of direct and universal elections of the President was introduced by a strongly criticised constitution-amending referendum of 28 October 1962, which had been held at de Gaulle's request (according to the procedure of Article 11 which normally applies only to the statutes) (Gerkrath in Nolte, 2003, p. 282). Consequently, Presidential autonomy over the ‘reserved domain’ of foreign and defence policy became nearly total. Though ostensibly defence policy was the province of the Prime Minister, in practice the main defence decisions are made by the President of the Republic in

53 Article 15 gave the President a dignified – formal and ceremonial – role. With regards to matters of strategy, his role was intended to be fairly constrained. Article 52 states that the President, as in the Third Republic, ‘negotiates and ratifies’ treaties, though this is again set against Prime Ministerial countersignature (article 19) (Bell 2000, p. 26). Still, the president’s formal constitutional powers were few but important – expansive emergency authority, the right to dissolve parliament and call new elections, the power to appoint the prime minister, and a substantial executive role in legislative processes.
councils chaired by him (Gerkrath in Nolte, 2003, p. 292). The President is the only person empowered to give the order to engage nuclear forces, through a decree dated January 14th 1964 that gives the President the power over the nuclear trigger, in effect creating a nuclear monarchy.\(^{54}\) Considering the centrality of nuclear weapons to French strategy, this Presidential control over the deterrent further undermined the armed forces.\(^{55}\) The 1964 decree could be taken as unconstitutional, since it conflicts with Article 34 that gives Parliament the power to make laws concerning national defence. Moreover, the decision to deploy the armed forces is an executive prerogative in which French Parliament does not have an important role to play.\(^{56}\) It is true that, in practice, the Parliament sets the all-important budget for defence and the armies and that means that a determined government can over time deprive the Élysée of effective oversight of the ‘reserved domain’ (Bell, 2000, p. 25). However, the shift of authority to the executive largely removed strategic matters from parliamentary debate, media attention and wider societal debate, thereby negating the need for the executive to actively argue his case.\(^{57}\) What is striking that the presidential prerogatives towards strategy were accepted and maintained, even during period of cohabitation, without an unchallengeable basis in the 1958 Constitution.

Even without a clear constitutional basis, the President of the French Fifth Republic became one of the most powerful of Western executives - more so, in fact, than the US President. The explanation for how that happened, and how the spirit and letter of the ‘Prime Ministerial’ (or parliamentary) Constitution have been so fundamentally turned away from their original purpose, has to be sought in the ‘non-political’ nature and non-political source of Fifth Republic authority. This was essentially an act of ‘political self-levitation’ (Bell 2000, pp. 10-11) by De Gaulle and his successors that fitted with the Gaullist view of the President as that of a sovereign, beyond the role strictly foreseen in the Constitution.\(^{58}\)

General de Gaulle was able to play such a crucial role in the post-war environment due to his wartime role. De Gaulle’s call to continued resistance of 18 June 1940 was the

---

\(^{54}\) ‘la pièce maitresse de la stratégie de dissuasion en France, c’est le chef d’état, c’est moi’ : Mitterrand, 1983, television interview, November 16.

\(^{55}\) The decree giving the President the power over the nuclear trigger is one dating from 14 January 1964, could be taken as unconstitutional as it could conflict with Article 34 giving Parliament the power to make laws concerning national defence. The powers defined by Article 16 and the engagement of nuclear forces are special cases. (Gerkrath in Nolte 2003, p. 293

\(^{56}\) Article 35 of the Constitution provides that ‘A declaration of war shall be authorized by Parliament’, but since 1945, no such authorization has ever been required. In the field of external military operations, the role of the Parliament is very limited (Gerkrath in Nolte, 2003, pp. 294-295).

\(^{57}\) Point made by B.J. (2012, interview with author, September 10).

foundation of his personal myth, as well as that of France, and he had no need to establish his patriotic credentials after the war (Utley 2000, p. 12; Gildea 2002, pp. 59-60; Harrison 1981, p. 7). At the Liberation, de Gaulle’s claim to represent the Republic was based on his refusal to capitulate, as were his claims to know where the French interest was (Bell 2000, p3). De Gaulle offered a redemptive vision of unity, a myth of himself as above the divided parties, above ideologies, and as interchangeable with the Republic, underlined by periodic appeals to the populace for support through referenda (Bell 2000, pp. 3-6). This vocation was passed on to successors who all maintained their sovereign responsibility for foreign affairs and defence often - as with De Gaulle - to the point of mystification (Bell 2000, p. 66). The powerful figure of the general and the myth of resistance were cherished after the war. In spite of considerable polarisation between right and left, challenges to the myths of resistance were met with outrage, or sometimes even banned.60

The President’s position was strengthened by the democratic legitimacy conferred upon him by his direct election. This degraded the role of the Prime Minister, who could be replaced by the President whenever he wanted (Gerkrath in Nolte, 2003, p. 282). Since the 1986 experience of cohabitation, the Constitution is interpreted in a way which puts the accent on its parliamentary elements. (Though public expectations preclude openly challenges to the President’s predominance, the three ‘cohabitations’ after 1986 show that the substance of presidential autonomy can be removed (Gerkrath in Nolte 2003, pp. 282-283; Bell 2000, p. 26). However, the fear of divisions explains why, even in the periods of cohabitation, the majority party has made some effort to maintain illusion of presidential power in the reserved domain.

**Armed Forces**

The French army emerged from the Second World War neither as the bane nor as the saviour of France. The Free French were of insufficient size to liberate French territory or to truly represent a ‘people’s army’. There was no national army of unity: the French colonial army had remained largely loyal to the Vichy government, and only hesitatingly joined De Gaulle. The eventual acts of liberation took place with French colonial units, supplemented with those members of the Free French who had effected their escape from France following the defeat of 1940. Distrust between the different armed French elements was rampant, and the French army was confronted with its new role as servant

---

59 As evidenced in the famous opening to his memoirs (‘all my life I have had a certain idea of France’).
60 ‘The 1971 film The Sorrow and the Pity, which exploded the treasured French myth of a strong French resistance by showing that many French acquiesced to Germany’s World War II occupation, was banned from French television’ (Anthony P. Adamthwaite, 1977 in Van Evera, 2002).
to an ungrateful and disinterested nation (Ambler 1966, p. 80). French soldiers were left embittered by the experience. The war had damaged the ‘great mute’s unquestioning obedience to civilian authority. Partly due to the Vichy government, but also partly due to De Gaulle controversial claim to continue the war after the surrender had been signed (Ambler 1966, pp. 56, 64-65). But 1940 had revealed what was already present before the war. During the interwar period the armed forces had failed to challenge civilians more sharply on such matters as modernization of equipment and strengthening of the professional contingent. In its search for autonomy in doctrinal and budgetary manners– as armed forces as organisations are prone to do – the French armed forces predominantly found these in colonial policing for the French empire (Ambler 1966, pp. 7, 10-11). The army considered Communist movements both within and outside as the main threat, more important even than Germany before the war. It was extremely disquieted if not disgusted by the constant push and pull of party politics – e.g. ‘parliamentarism’ - the instability, the inconsistency, and essential weakness of French parliamentary democracy in the face of external and internal enemies (Ambler 1966, p. 33-35). Even in the post-war era, the first generation of French military planners saw the threat as being infiltration and revolutionary warfare within France and the colonies, rather than the threat of the Soviet Union.

The extraction from the Algerian war helped consolidate the unparalleled presidential authority of De Gaulle, thereby creating a ‘republican monarch’ that endured long after he left the scene (Krebs in Kier and Krebs 2010, pp. 188, 196, 204). The exit from Algeria also forced the armed forces towards threats from the European continent, where it was easier to maintain control over them. The nuclear deterrent played a decisive role here too. The French government could no longer rely on a demoralised army (or unreliable allies): the deterrent, in the hands of one sole, determined decision-maker significantly shifted power away from the forces (Heuser 1998, p. 162). The armed forces themselves were not interested in nuclear weapons. It was only after they realised the deterrent meant a partial disengagement from NATO, that they began to resist the new policy. De Gaulle gave the army tactical nuclear weapons partly to compensate for the post-Algeria crisis in morale among French armed forces after the loss of Algeria. Further compensation was given to the army, by awarding more attention in commemorations from the 1960s onwards to military victims and military combatants of the Second World War, rather than the resistance (Wieviorka 2010, pp. 52-53). Moreover, to commemorate the Second World War, the government incorporated the experience of the war into that of the First World War, a more successful example of French military prowess and domestic cohesion. National pride could be better funded by associating the symbols of the second with the first and transforming it into a single thirty year war (‘Guerre de Trente Ans’) (Wieviorka 2010, pp. 33, 36).

61 De Gaulle had set a bad precedent when he disobeyed. It took the military until the 1980s to overcome this legacy (B.J., 2012, interview with author, September 10).
This meant that in the Fifth Republic, through De Gaulle’s policies, the armed forces had become again subservient to the executive, as well as defanged and depoliticised. Yet, in the public imagination they were relegitimised, and, in practice, reinvigorated by their new missions. It is ironic that General De Gaulle – considering both his profession and his fateful decision in 1940 - consigned the French armed forces to subservience to the French state and thereby to democratic control. It speaks in his favour. The constitutional rights of the armed forces (or lack thereof) underline this subservience (Gohin 2002, pp. 43-48). By emphasising their role and safeguarding their professional status, it was possible to maintain the French armed forces as instruments of the politics, in the Clausewitzian sense, as tools of statecraft.

Society

The lessons of the Second World War legitimised the pre-eminence of the French President and the need for unity with regards to direction of grand strategy. The French Parliament (National Assembly and Senate) does not play an important role in terms of the decision to deploy the armed forces in this field. Article 35 of the Constitution provides that ‘A declaration of war shall be authorised by Parliament’, but since 1945, no such authorization has been requested. Deployment has consequently been a prerogative of the executive. The role of Parliament is similarly limited in terms of the overview of external military operations (Gerkrath in Nolte 2003, p. 294-295). Here again, the informal institutions, meaning a broad societal consensus, have favoured decisiveness on the part of the executive. Similarly, the centralization of defence policy in the hands of the President (even during cohabitation), through the Secretariat-General for National Defence and Security (Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale), means that long-term defence policy is subject to little oversight or external influence even from Parliament (Gerkrath in Nolte 2003, p. 298).

This has consequences for the importance of society in the broader strategic discussion, where the diminished formal controls strengthen the agreement on executive prerogatives regarding the reserved domain. Simply put, the lack of public debate deemphasises the need to justify many of the larger strategic decisions. Consider the fact that French governments from the left, once in power, never challenged the need for the nuclear deterrent, while in Britain, Labour continued with its anti-nuclear position in and out of power.

Taken together, the relations between the French state, society, and armed forces, themselves a result of the Second World War and its aftermath, strengthen the pre-eminence and autonomy of the state, specifically the President, allowing for decisive action and cohesive strategy. These relations reinforced and legitimised the grand strategic policies of French autonomy, the nuclear deterrent, and European integration,
meaning that the manoeuvre space of the French president domestically enhances the manoeuvre space of France on the international stage.

**Conclusion**

As this chapter has shown, different patterns emerge for the states that had more complex experiences in total wars. For the UK and France, their experiences were particularly relevant to the specific lessons they drew on alliances and force postures.

These beliefs and institutions therefore explain several puzzling features of British grand strategy. The core beliefs of British policymakers led to the UK overbalancing the Soviet Union during the Cold War and underbalancing excessive US power. British policymakers instead preferred to accept the risk of entanglement in US interests, rather than that of abandonment in Europe. This is a departure from the traditional British reticence towards entangling continental commitments. British policymakers no longer felt they could afford the risk of continental events slipping beyond its control. That meant that Britain would not depend on an autonomous nuclear deterrent in order to pass the buck for continental security, while in fact it should have made offshore balancing more attractive. Instead, British planners accepted the permanent continental presence of British forces, which ensured that Britain could not be able to extract itself from a possible future European conflict, nor have the resources to maintain its empire in the long term.

British policymakers, however, simultaneously considered Britain distinct from the defeated continent and were therefore reticent to accept integration into Europe. Even with the disappearance of direct continental threat after the end of the Cold War, British policymakers accepted dependence on the US, and made no attempts to redress the distorted balance of power that existed under American unipolarity. Britain undermined the rise of an independent European security identity, supported US led interventions, and continued its bridging role between the US and Europe.

The core beliefs of French policymakers and the institutional relationships within which they operate also explain the puzzling features of French strategic behaviour. During the Cold War, France risked underbalancing against the threats of a Soviet Union and a resurgent Germany due to its attempt to avoid dependence and balance US power by partially leaving NATO. The choice to focus resources on internal balancing by building the deterrent is telling. Full integration in the transatlantic structure seemed the best avenue to achieve the dual containment of the Soviet Union and Germany\(^62\) – imminent threats due to France’s geographic positions - and enabled France to focus its resources

\(^{62}\) Containment of Germany was instead accomplished by the European institutions, the French German accord, and the fact that France had a nuclear weapon, but Germany did not.
on its domestic reconstruction. The French disengagement from NATO demonstrates a preference for the risks of abandonment by the US over the risks of entanglement. After the Cold War, France again attempted to balance excessive US power\textsuperscript{63} by building a European defence identity. This stands in marked contrast to the choices of British planners. France has only fully reintegrated into the NATO structures more than a decade after the end of the Cold War, seeing it as another force multiplier for France as the European security identity failed to develop further.

Chapter six will show that neither British nor French strategic choices were obvious, given the constraints of the international environment. The failures of 1940 led the traditional maritime off-shore balancer to choose entanglement rather than nuclear independence, while the continental power that was directly under threat the Cold War risked abandonment.

\textsuperscript{63} For example, French foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine referred to the US as a hyperpower in 1999. ‘To Paris, US Looks Like a ’Hyperpower‘, New York Times, February 5, 1999
Chapter Six

The Illusion of Inevitability: Counterfactual Thought Experiments
The illusion of inevitability of the chapter’s title refers to the human tendency to see the present as strictly determined by the events of the past. Complexity is ordered into a clean narrative that makes eventual outcomes seem inevitable. It becomes difficult to imagine a world where the construction of NATO in the early years of the Cold War was not inevitable, or at least only imagine the alternative to be the outbreak of war. It becomes equally difficult to imagine the transatlantic relationship ending when the Cold War did. Yet, these outcomes depended on the policies of multiple states aligning. Policymakers were able to overcome the isolationist tendencies in American society, at great cost and fully accepting the risks. Their British counterparts chose continental commitments over the maintenance of the empire. In France, policymakers gambled on independence without this leading to the collapse of the alliance. German policymakers were never tempted to redress Germany’s position in Europe.

The previous two chapters argued that these outcomes are explained by national experiences in the Second World War, which shaped their core beliefs on the alliances, force posture, and the balance of power and threats. However, there is an abundance of orthodox explanations that explain the same outcomes, which would make my argument redundant. These assert that Western Cold War strategies were largely appropriate responses to the structural conditions of the Cold War in Europe – the threat of the Soviet Union, and the German problem (Waltz 1979; Trachtenberg 1999; Mearsheimer 2001; Gaddis 2005). Alternative explanations emphasise the role of ideology or of political-economic interests within the US that shaped the Cold War outcome in Europe (Snyder 1991; Bacevich 2002; Dueck 2006; Layne 2006), and that they caused American policymakers to inflate the Soviet threat – whether economic internationalist elites (Snyder 1991), liberal ideology (Dueck 2006), or a combination of both (Bacevich 2002; Layne 2006). Yet, in their focus on American policymaking, these do not address why American allies enabled US strategy, if they did not perceive the Soviet Union at least as great a threat as the US did. Alternative sets of domestic level explanations for each of them would have to do so. Assuming that Western Cold War strategy was indeed the appropriate response to the structural conditions, we cannot only look at failures of states responding to the structural conditions, but we must equally examine appropriate responses (Schweller 2006; Rathbun 2008).

This chapter seeks to demonstrate the uncertainty and range of options open to key policymakers over multiple decades, and that their eventual choices and the resulting outcomes were far from inevitable. Their policies cannot be sufficiently explained by the incentives and constraints from the international environment alone.

In this chapter I construct four counterfactual grand strategies to probe the larger argument of the book, which is that had the US, the UK, France, and Germany not experienced what they did during the Second World War, their strategic behaviour is likely to have been very different. The chapter specifically seeks to address arguments which reappear throughout the book, on how policymakers perceive and prioritise...
between risks, costs, and benefits. It argues that lessons of the past shaped core strategic beliefs that exercised a gravitational pull on policymakers to interpret and act upon their environment. The illusion of inevitability of the policy outcome choices can only be challenged through counterfactuals; only when choices are denormalised does it become clear how remarkable the roads taken are in some cases.

The counterfactual thought experiments seek to clarify why the puzzles of American, British, French, and German grand strategy raised in the introduction and the theoretical chapter are in fact puzzling. Why did the US pursue costly hegemony in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere? Why did the UK entangle itself in NATO, but not in Europe, instead of relying on its nuclear deterrent and geographical advantages? Why did France prioritise strategic autonomy, alienate the US, and risk abandonment, in spite of continental risks from unrestrained Germany and Russia? Why did Germany accept both external and internal restraints, not attempt to assert its innate potential - especially after the Cold War, and why did it risk free-riding accusations within the liberal order upon which it depends?

This chapter is structured as follows: a discussion of the of counterfactuals in international relations; a discussion of the theories that inform the scenarios; why these reveal the beliefs of policymakers; the general rules for constructing my scenarios; a brief overview of the thirty-two alternative strategies for each of the four states during and after the Cold War; several examples; and then the conclusions which discuss what the counterfactual scenarios reveal about the beliefs of American, British, French, and German policymakers.

**Why counterfactuals?**

Counterfactuals are unusual in social science research, yet they can clarify the role and shortcomings of causal explanations and where the number of independent variables far exceed the number of possible observations. They are specifically useful in impactful, but rare events when in historical cases the risk exists that researchers work backwards from present-day historical outcomes to uncover causal explanations that best fit their theoretical expectations. In doing so they neglect that actors at most critical junctures generally had a range of options at their disposal, and that more often than not, small differences in their choices would have had vastly different and impactful outcomes. Yet, using counterfactual histories to determine causality seems counterintuitive. They run against the historian’s mission to establish as closely as possible what happened, rather than ‘deal in speculation about what did not happen’ (Taylor 1954). They are often dismissed as a mere ‘parlour game’, a ‘red herring’ (Carr 1961, p. 127). To these critics, counterfactuals at best suggest indulgences and trivialities, and, at worst, convenient manipulations of established facts to prove pet hypotheses. They are better suited for
science fiction with their preoccupation with slight changes with dramatic consequences, such as: whether the First World War would have occurred without the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, or the Second World War have taken place without Hitler, or would the Cold War have ended peacefully if Gorbachev had not been appointed by the Politburo - and variations (Lebow 2000; Lebow 2010, pp. 126-128). However, there is a serious foundation for these questions. The fact that we cannot easily answer the questions from the examples above in the affirmative, suggests that our understanding of cause and effects for momentous events is in fact more uncertain than they appear at first glance.

This points to the especially difficult problem of establishing causality in international relations at the level of the state and its policymakers – strategy, war and peace, revolution, etc. International events are inherently complex, unique and irreproducible. The most events and outcomes are as highly impactful as they are rare - if not singular (N=1). There are abundant examples of fundamental issues the causes of which remain uncertain: the examples above, but also how and why the Russian Revolution succeeded in comparatively backward Russia; how and why an extremist ideology such as National Socialism succeeded in largely democratic and liberal Germany; how and why Communism collapsed when it did; and so on. The events are over-determined; meaning that there are far more possible independent variables than there are outcomes. They therefore challenge established social scientific methods to establish causality.

The number of international relations scholars that explicitly uses counterfactuals is therefore growing, to deal with the lacks in established methods. In fact, most analysts implicitly already use counterfactual propositions and arguments (Fearon 1991). Variation in independent variables that may not empirically exist in actuality is assumed to test causality through large-N regression analysis. Analysts with few cases and many variables are compelled to resort to counterfactual argument by a statistical principle. Simply put, this is the familiar problem of whether any independent variables are correlated with the content of the error term (Fearon 1991). Or, as King and Zeng (2007) argue, by incorporating counterfactuals, it is possible to deal with biases in the shape of the actual data. De facto, discussions about the relative importance of possible causes become arguments about the relative plausibility of different counterfactual scenarios, because when we have few cases and many independent variables, other methods need to be developed to enable sound explanations; whether the comparative method; process tracing; or qualitative methods. The use of comparative case study is the most common solution to the problem of negative degrees of freedom, but it is often overlooked how problematic it is. The analyst may add actual cases without knowing if the additional cases are appropriately identical in every important aspect except the independent variable that is tested (Fearon 1991). Counterfactuals can thus be justified in several ways.
What criteria do counterfactuals have to meet, however, to become acceptable as serious social scientific research? For some historians, only those counterfactual scenarios that contemporary actors considered and committed to paper or some other record are worth of consideration (Ferguson 1997, p. 86). Yet this excludes entire categories of plausible counterfactuals, and limits counterfactuals to records left by elites, to self-conscious decisions, and to political systems where elites feel comfortable enough to write down their ideas and share them (Lebow 2000; 2010). As a rule, authors have tended to be conservative allowing only minimal changes to actual events. For Fearon, the only counterfactuals that should be considered are those where the antecedent is likely to bring about the consequent and little else (Fearon 1991); Kiser and Levi (1996) in turn suggest that counterfactuals are best used when data is missing and incomplete (Kiser and Levi in Tetlock and Belkin 1996); Elster argues that there is only a small window where counterfactuals are possible, namely when theory is weak enough to permit counterfactual assumptions, but also strong enough to permit clear-cut conclusions (Elster 1978). That said, it might not be possible to perform the kind of 'surgical' (Mueller 1989) counterfactuals that these authors prefer. First order changes to events would lead to second order changes and counterfactuals, since events are interconnected and contiguous (Lebow 2000; 2010).

An illuminating example of the use of counterfactuals is Frank’s (2012) argument that the 2003 Iraq invasion would still have taken place if Al Gore had been President, even without neoconservatives occupying key positions in the Bush (43) government. It is a highly plausible counterfactual scenario— the contentious outcome in Florida of the 2000 elections – and about a highly significant policy decision (Frank 2012, p. 25). By showing the similarities between the members of the actual Bush (43) administration and the likely Gore alternative administration, Frank establishes that all the accepted conditions for the invasion were present in a counterfactual 2001-2004 Gore administration, as well as additional factors that would have increased the likelihood of invasion (Frank 2012, pp. 265-284). The so-far definitive basis on counterfactuals Lebow draws up a series of criteria to make counterfactuals plausible, clear, and theoretically consistent (Lebow 2000; 2010, pp. 54-57).

Testing theory

The counterfactual thought experiments I construct in this chapter differ from those above that mostly aim to distinguish the effect of contingency towards structure. It is not the presence or absence of an actor on policy outcomes that I seek to test. Rather, I aim to show that according to existing theory that emphasises the importance of structure, the constraints and incentives of the Cold War and post-Cold War environment allowed multiple plausible policy outcomes. While different, perhaps more complete, separate arguments could be made for each state’s behaviour, the counterfactuals show that no
single existing explanation can address the behaviour for all four of them. The experience driven realist explanation I offer in the chapters four and five may do so.

The theories used to construct the counterfactuals are largely those discussed in the theory chapter: the predominant challenge is of offensive and defensive structural realism; but institutionalism (relevant after the end of the Cold War); and liberalism are also addressed. These theories offer differing general predictions. In the balance of power, offensive realist variant states can only ensure their survival through expansion and power maximisation, and will therefore follow maximalist strategies to become regional hegemons. Should they fail in their own quest for hegemonic status, states will form balancing coalitions with other non-hegemonic states against potential hegemons. If this strategy too fails, states will bandwagon with potential hegemons. Failing this option, states will extract themselves from the competition and in their minimalist strategy seek autonomy, isolation, or neutrality. They do not do so in a uniform manner. Following Mearsheimer’s (2001 pp. 233-266) specification, maritime states protected by ‘the stopping power of water’ from direct threats can act as an off-shore balancer and pass the buck of balancing to continental states. In contrast, in the balance of threat, defensive realist variant the search for hegemony is generally self-defeating. The distribution of power generally favours the defensive, and this preferences maintaining the status quo. Potential hegemons will encounter counterbalancing coalitions of other great powers, rather than bandwagoners. Power maximising behaviour certainly exists, but is assigned to comparatively rare extremes at the domestic level. This implies that states will seek either maximalist collective security arrangements, or more limited balancing arrangements when faced with serious threats. Institutionalist explanations are more complementary to realism. They would generally predict that international institutions, including alliances, will sustain their momentum once established, because the costs of exit are greater than the costs of maintaining them. Liberalist explanations do not offer specific predictions for grand strategy, except that they imply that liberal democracies are likelier to be aligned and allied with one another, and coordinate their foreign policies to maintain liberal democratic, and capitalist, global order.

This offers different predictions for the Cold War era. Balance of power theory should predict that the three European states attempt to achieve (regional) hegemony, and if failing to do so form a balancing coalition against the Soviet Union. Since the US already had regional hegemony of the Western hemisphere, it should undermine the rise of a great power in Eurasia if it is able to do so at low costs. The European states should balance against both the US and the Soviet Union if their security situation permits, in order to avoid being dominated by either state. The Mearsheimer variant of offensive realism suggests that both the US and the UK should revert to off-shore balancing roles due to their more advantageous geographies. This suggests that the UK had the strongest incentive to balance against both the US and the Soviet Union. As continental states faced with the most imminent threat to both their power and their survival, France and (West) Germany had the clearest incentive to be part of strong balancing
coalitions. Balance of threat should argue against the Europeans balancing against the US, though its capabilities are great, as its intentions are more benign than that of the Soviet Union. In the defensive realist and balance of threat perspectives the involvement of the US outside of the Western Hemisphere should be conditional on the level of threat it perceived. If the threat of the Soviet Union to the US is perceived to be sufficiently low, the US could choose to stay out of Europe. Neither offensive nor defensive realism seems to offer a definite argument on why the US should involve itself in Europe, although Layne’s (2006) extra-regional hegemonic theory does provide such an explanation for US grand strategy. Liberalist theory should predict for the Western states to align and ally themselves to safeguard a liberal democratic regional order in Europe.

For the post-Cold War era, offensive realist balance of power theory should predict that the US scale down its global presence, and only undermine potential new hegemons. The European states should attempt regional European hegemony or balance against American hegemony, unless they perceive the threats of the other Europeans as sufficiently high to bandwagon against their neighbours with the US. Defensive realism and balance of threat theory should predict that the US disengages from Europe after the end of the Soviet threat, and enjoys the dividends on its position through a highly limited grand strategy. The Europeans similarly should gradually dismantle their alliance, as the threat of Russia has declined as have their mutual threats to one another. Here institutionalism can explain the enduring adherence to established multilateral frameworks. Liberalism finally should argue that the US and the Europeans states together seek to maintain and expand the global liberal order that the end of the Cold War has made possible.

**Constructing counterfactual grand strategies**

To explore how the plausibility of these explanations, I formulate four alternative strategies for each of the four states. They vary according to their level of international activism, and in their dependence on either external or internal balancing. This leads to four levels of activism that relate to the different theoretical predictions, from minimalism to maximalism (see figure 9 for a representation). The manner in which they are constructed is similar to the dimensions that Posen and Ross (1996) assign in their article to the four grand strategies that American policymakers could choose from after the Cold War. The minimalist and maximalist strategies can be distinguished according to choices on the following dimensions: the number of and contributions to alliances and agreements, as well as their the regional focus; whether the state has a deterrent, defensive, or offensive force posture, and whether their focus is territorial or regional; and the type of adversary they are expected to face. The gradations from minimalist to maximalist grand strategies and the relative force and cooperation
emphasis are crucial because they highlight the recurring series of trade-offs that decision-makers face between various risks.

Figure 9. Grand Strategies: Minimalist, Limited, and Maximalist external and internal balancing Strategies

The indeterminate nature of the environment means that under the same structural conditions policymakers can pursue diverging, but reasonable, ends. Strategy is the maximisation by policymakers between trade-offs in the pursuit of numerous irreconcilable risks, costs, and benefits. While building the alliances for external balancing, policymakers might achieve either security, influence, or autonomy, but never all three, as choices for one or more will ensure losses of another. Policymakers risk either entanglement by allies in conflicts not in their state’s interest, or abandonment when an ally refuses to come to the state’s assistance when its interests are threatened (Snyder 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Christensen 1997; Weitsman 1997; Morrow 2000). Trade-offs are also apparent when building military capabilities for internal balancing strategies: policymakers must choose between specialised and all-purpose forces (Posen 1984; Biddle 2004), between preparedness and domestic welfare, and between readiness, credibility and provocation. From actual strategic choices it therefore becomes possible to infer the relative importance policymakers attach to various goals, threats, and instruments.
The construction of the counterfactuals therefore fits with the larger argument of the book, and the chapter seeks to answer specific questions which reappear throughout the book on how strategic culture based on wartime experiences with victory and defeat settle the various trade-offs inherent to strategy formation.

The strategies can be grouped according to the following instrumental preferences: (1) a minimalist strategy that refrains from engagement with other states - isolation, neutrality, or autonomy; (2) a limited balancing strategy to achieve security (that approximates balance of threat realism); (3) a maximalist strategy that predominantly works through external balancing and diplomacy (that roughly equates to international institutionalist, liberalist, or balance of threat realism); and (4) a maximalist strategy that predominantly works through internal balancing and force (that approximates balance of power realism). The first option signals low threat level and high apprehension entanglement. The second and third options signal respectively medium and high-threat levels, with high apprehension for entanglement in the second and low apprehension in the third. The fourth option signals high ambitions, and high assessment of capabilities and high threat assessment.

To assess these idealtypes, I formulate a thought experiment with four fleshed out counterfactual scenarios with concrete choices on force postures and alliances. To ensure the plausibility of the counterfactual scenarios, several basic assumptions are applied to each era that incorporate established contemporary national characteristics. For the Cold War era it is assumed in all scenarios that both the Soviet Union and a possible resurgence in German power on the continent are perceived as strategic challenges, although the degree to which varies. For the European states any maximalist strategy towards hegemony is regional in focus, and not extra-regional. It is taken for granted that the severely damaged economies and precarious financial situation of the Europeans makes attempts at regional hegemony, through a force-driven maximalist strategy difficult. It is, however, worth examining since there is a long history of states attempting dangerous hegemony-seeking strategies. For example, I take it as a given in all their four post-Second World War scenarios that Great Britain and France will prefer to hold onto their colonial possessions, although they will weigh this interest differently in each scenario. The Suez, Algeria, and Falklands crises are shorthand for colonialist-imperialist policies. Another obvious example is the clear difference in relative capabilities between the US and Europe. Whatever the desires of (west)German policymakers in the beginning of the Cold war, they operated under severe international and domestic constraints. An American post-Second World War maximalist scenario should in no way appear similar to a German maximalist strategy, and the counterfactual scenarios reflect this. I deliberately included and amplified facets of existing strategies and policies to increase the plausibility of the counterfactuals.

For the post-Cold war, American unipolarity is taken for granted, as well as instability across regions, an unstable Russia, a slowly rising China, and the shift in the distribution
of power on the European continent after German reunification. Already existing institutions such as NATO and the EC are taken for granted in the post-Cold War period, as are the states who possess nuclear deterrents. The pursuit of (regional) hegemony is considered after the end of the Cold War, but under the assumption that these would look clearly different from those of the early 18th and early 19th century due to existing international structures. The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is shorthand for how the states deal with regional powers; the wars in former Yugoslavia or Afghanistan are shorthand for how states deal with instability; and the 2003 American invasion of Iraq is shorthand for American ambitions in expanding the liberal global order.

Underlying all the scenarios is the assumption that to a certain degree all states will be apprehensive of threats to their security and mindful of their influence in the international system. The extent to which they are, and their specific responses are, however, varied in each of the scenarios. From those weights I infer domestic preferences, biases, and beliefs in line with strategic culture shaped around historical experiences.

Taken together, in each brief counterfactual scenario I took the effort to bring them to live in plausible ways and highlight that the decisions actually taken were not more plausible or more natural than the ones that were not. To underline the extent to which these strategies were plausible, I added historical references when policymakers in reality considered one or more of the elements of each scenario.

For pragmatic reasons the complexity of interactions between the states is minimised. This means, that for each strategic alternative, the base outline of the strategies of the other three states is kept constant and they approximate their historical behaviour. As the scenario is set, the implications of these are shortly explored, and this includes possible negative feedback effects. The scenarios of two eras are not contingent to each other. For example, while NATO is not a given in the early Cold War years, I do take it as given in the Cold War aftermath.

Cold War and Post-Cold War counterfactuals: the US, Germany, the UK, and France

Thirty-two counterfactuals were constructed through this procedure, and they are summarised in tables 4-11 below. Practically speaking, there is insufficient length here to discuss all of them, and I therefore select those that I think are the most illuminating and discuss those more thoroughly. All thirty-two complete counterfactual grand strategies are discussed at greater length in the annex of this chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical approximation</th>
<th>Defensive realism</th>
<th>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</th>
<th>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</th>
<th>Offensive realism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>No entangling alliances; maritime and air power; nuclear deterrent is central; limited presence in Asia and Pacific; rely security of two oceans; trust balance of power</td>
<td>Limited ground presence in Europe and Asia; intervention capability; centrality deterrent; bilateral alliances or defence agreements (footprint in UK)</td>
<td>Large ground presence Europe and Asia; multilateral frameworks; largely shared deterrence; negotiated settlements Soviets; intervene to prove credibility to allies</td>
<td>Large ground presence Europe and Asia; intervention capabilities for other zones; keep nuclear monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Western Hemisphere; Pacific</td>
<td>Europe; Asia</td>
<td>Europe; Asia; Middle East; periphery</td>
<td>Europe; Asia; Middle East; periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Low defence spending; no risks of entanglement allies</td>
<td>Medium defence spending; ability to shape events continent</td>
<td>Contain Soviet expansionism; shape global order; expand liberal democratic order</td>
<td>Contain Soviet expansionism; control emerging regional orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Losing control of events European continent; rise Eurasia hegemon; global encirclement</td>
<td>Losing control of events European continent; interventions might come too late; Soviets may perceive incentive for speedy and decisive offensive action; Europeans could turn neutral</td>
<td>High defence spending; lower domestic spending; overextension; entanglement in risk-seeking behaviour of allies; free-riding by allies; Europeans can rebuild capabilities and compete with US</td>
<td>High defence spending; risk of free-riding Europeans; lower domestic spending; counterbalancing by allies and adversaries; Europeans might resist US preponderance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low (or very high) appreciation Soviet threat; Soviet Union is not expansionist, but still mostly rational; large confidence in deterrent; believe in inherent security</td>
<td>Medium appreciation Soviet threat; confidence in European capabilities and morale; medium confidence deterrent</td>
<td>High appreciation Soviet threat; low appreciation of European capabilities and morale</td>
<td>High appreciation Soviet threat; low appreciation of European capabilities and morale; opportunities for expansion in power vacuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium to low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Cold War United States Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Germany Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>Neutral stance; remain out of transatlantic alliance to avoid provocation Soviets; minimal territorial defence forces; embrace European economic integration, but avoid military dimension</td>
<td>Minimal territorial defence forces; embrace European economic integration; limited transatlantic alliance to avoid provocation; dependent on extended deterrence of US and other allies</td>
<td>Strongly support NATO; support European integration; accept extended deterrence of US and other allies; maintain strong forces for collective defence tasks</td>
<td>Act as European ‘third force’; take lead in construction European defence organisation; balance Soviet Union through US resources as US and Europeans pass buck, rebuild conventional forces; seek independent nuclear deterrent, together with France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Avoid recurrence of balance of power politics; avoid entanglement in provocative behaviour Western states; focus on rebuilding domestically</td>
<td>Limit provocative behaviour Western states; focus on rebuilding domestically</td>
<td>Ensure German security; reconstruct relations with Europeans; re-legitimise Germany</td>
<td>Capitalise on German military and economic potential, and the policymakers within American administration that seek exit from Europe; European neighbours that seek to retain colonial possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Dependence of security on US and European neighbours; possible collapse Europe; abandonment by allies; loss of influence</td>
<td>Possible collapse Europe; dependence on US and European neighbours</td>
<td>Difficult line between provoking Europeans and insufficiently contributing to collective defence; dependence on the US and other allies for nuclear deterrence</td>
<td>German reconstruction will provoke Europeans and Soviets; might be insufficient to deter Soviets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment Little or no influence</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement Little or no influence</td>
<td>Provoke balancing behaviour Entanglement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low appreciation of the Soviet threat; belief that German disarmament will avoid provocation; trust that US will intervene should Soviets expand; dependence on benign nature of Western states to allow Germany to rebuild</td>
<td>Medium appreciation of Soviet threat; medium to high appreciation of US willingness to remain in Europe; medium to high appreciation of capabilities and willingness of Europeans</td>
<td>High appreciation of Soviet threat; high appreciation of US benign nature; high appreciation of Europeans</td>
<td>Medium appreciation of Soviet threat; depends on acceptance of Europeans, Soviets and US to allow German reconstruction; depends on desire of US to pass of costs for European security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Low to medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Cold War Germany Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Kingdom Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>No permanent alliances; autonomous deterrent; large navy and air force; pass costs Soviet containment to US; maintain empire</td>
<td>Limited defence agreements with key allies continent (FR); autonomous deterrent; 'special relationship' with US to pass costs</td>
<td>Collective deterrent; multilateralism and collective security; support NATO; support European integration; strongly tie itself to US</td>
<td>Capitalise on uneven European balance of power; autonomous deterrent; strong continental presence; complementarity American grand strategy; support European integration on all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Middle East; 'East of Suez'; South Atlantic</td>
<td>Middle East; 'East of Suez'; South Atlantic; Europe</td>
<td>Europe; Asia and Middle East (wherever US sees interests)</td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Low to medium defence spending; maintain colonial possessions; no entanglements; avoid becoming involved in third continental war</td>
<td>Medium defence spending; maintain colonial possession; less entanglements</td>
<td>Ensure security and stability in Europe; contain Soviet Union; contain Germany; maintain US presence in Europe</td>
<td>Expand British influence into European power vacuum; take leadership role as part of American absence; draw of US resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Possible loss of control continent; Soviet Union in striking distance; US will abandon Europe due to high risks and freeriding</td>
<td>Possible loss of control continent; later British action might be more costly; US resents being British freeriding, might insufficiently commit or retreat from Europe</td>
<td>High defence spending; entanglement in Europe; entanglement in American policies; loss colonial possessions; dependence US and subsequent weakness if US should abandon it</td>
<td>High defence spending; counterbalancing; insufficient resources; loss of colonial possessions; possible Soviet expansion; possible German resurgence; possible US exit from Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Loss autonomy</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low (or very high) appreciation Soviet threat; Soviet Union is not expansionist, but still mostly rational; large confidence in deterrent; confidence in US to act should situation on the continent escalate; relative confidence in European capabilities</td>
<td>Medium appreciation Soviet threat; medium confidence in continental European capabilities and morale (specifically French); confidence in US to act should situation on the continent escalate</td>
<td>High appreciation Soviet threat; high appreciation US intentions; low appreciation European capabilities and morale</td>
<td>High appreciation Soviet threat; relatively high appreciation British capabilities; relatively negative appreciation European capabilities; complementarity to possible American buck-passing strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Large to Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Cold War Britain Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>France Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>Autonomous nuclear deterrent; ground forces in France; ground and maritime forces to maintain colonial areas; pass costs for security when possible to US and Britain</td>
<td>Selective alliances with Western allies and NATO; autonomous nuclear deterrent; ground forces in France; ground and maritime forces to maintain colonial areas; special bilateral relationship West Germany</td>
<td>Strongest supporter multilateral frameworks; deep integration into transatlantic alliance and European institutions; ground forces in Europe for collective defence; keep US committed to Europe; accept collective deterrent or extended deterrence of US</td>
<td>Build European ‘third force’; take the lead in Western European integration; subordinates West Germany in this framework; US offers support to pass of costs of Soviet and German containment; need for comprehensive combination of forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Middle East/Maghreb; Africa</td>
<td>Middle East/Maghreb; Africa; Europe</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent; Asia and Middle East (wherever US sees interests)</td>
<td>Escalation on European continent; Middle East/Maghreb; Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Avoid dependence on US; avoid entanglement in Anglo-American adventurism and provocation of the Soviet Union; possible maintenance of colonial possessions</td>
<td>Avoid dependence on US; avoid entanglement in Anglo-American adventurism and provocation of the Soviet Union</td>
<td>Containment of the Soviet Union and Germany; sharing costs for security through US presence</td>
<td>Benefit from collapse of primary continental rival (Germany) and expand influence in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>High defence spending, developing deterrent is costly; possible departure US from Europe; possible resurgence Germany; possible Soviet expansionism</td>
<td>High defence spending, developing deterrent is costly; possible departure US due to French free-riding; possible loss West Germany to Soviet expansionism; possible resurgence and nuclear armed Germany as US passes of costs</td>
<td>Medium to high defence spending; loss of colonial possessions; high dependence on US willingness to incur costs and risk for European security; risk of entanglement in American adventurism</td>
<td>High defence spending; overstretch; maintaining influence in Europe and colonial possessions impossible; possibly insufficient to deter Soviet expansionism; possible resentment of other European states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low to medium appreciation of Soviet threat; high appreciation of US willingness to remain in Europe; low appreciation of German threat; high appreciation credibility deterrent</td>
<td>Medium appreciation of Soviet threat; high appreciation of US willingness to remain in Europe; low appreciation of German threat; high appreciation credibility deterrent</td>
<td>High appreciation of Soviet threat; high trust in US willingness to become entangled in Europe; lower estimation of French capabilities</td>
<td>Medium appreciation of Soviet threat; willingness of US to pass of costs; American trust in France; strong Franco- US relationship; trust of British in France; West German willingness to accept subordinate position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Minimal to medium (too strongly stated)</td>
<td>Minimal; France did remain part of NATO alliance</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Cold War France Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States Post-Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>No permanent commitments in Europe of Asia; accept multipolarity; return to Western Hemisphere; cut defence spending take peace dividend;; focus on air and maritime forces maintain few bilateral alliances</td>
<td>Limited commitments in Europe and Asia; diminish defence spending; keep expeditionary capability; prevent rise peer competitor (China); let European integration proceed but maintain ‘special relationship’ with UK</td>
<td>Maintain, strengthen and expand alliance commitments in Europe and Asia; expand upon multilateral frameworks; stabilise and expand global liberal order</td>
<td>Maintain high defence spending; Full Spectrum Dominance; invest in dominance in all military domains; ensure centrality of US in regional and global alliances; increasing flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Western Hemisphere; Pacific</td>
<td>Middle East; Pacific</td>
<td>Asia; Europe; Middle East; Africa</td>
<td>Asia; Europe; Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Low defence spending; no risks of entanglement allies; regional balances of power prevent rise of challengers; maintain preeminence of strength US economy</td>
<td>Lower spending; low risks entanglement; maintain degree of influence; maintain preeminence of strength US economy</td>
<td>US can shape global order according to its own preferences</td>
<td>US can control global order according to its own preferences; prevent rise individual challengers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Rise of regional competitors across the globe; specifically China as a regional hegemon in Asia, but also Europe</td>
<td>Rise of regional competitors across the globe; specifically China as a regional hegemon in Asia</td>
<td>High defence spending; overextension; freeriding behaviour by allies; provoke balancing behaviour</td>
<td>High defence spending; overextension; strongly provoke balancing behaviour by multiple regional challengers across multiple regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy Security</td>
<td>Autonomy Influence</td>
<td>Influence Security</td>
<td>Influence Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment Influence</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td>Entanglement Provoke balancing behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low appreciation risk of competitors; low appreciation risk of instability; acceptance of multipolarity, including Europe; willingness to accept loss of influence</td>
<td>Moderate appreciation of risk of competitors; relative acceptance of multipolarity; low appreciation risk of instability; fairly positive appreciation of allies to sustain regional orders</td>
<td>High appreciation of global instability; low appreciation of abilities of allies to sustain global order; low appreciation of likelihood of balancing behaviour</td>
<td>High appreciation of regional threats to US interests; low appreciation of allies to support US interests, also low appreciation of likelihood balancing behaviour; low appreciation of multipolarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large to medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Post-Cold War United States Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Germany Post-Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>Extraction from NATO, no support for expansion; widening and deepening of European integration, but only in economic domains, and expansion eastwards; minimal territorial defence force, financial support for Western interventions; strong bilateral ties with US</td>
<td>Selective alliances; maintain NATO in more limited form; expand and deepen European integration; accept France predominance in Europe; accept continued containment, but attempt to limit it; limited expeditionary capability; maintain bilateral relationship with US; increase influence in Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Solidify and expand existing multilateral frameworks; accept containment through institutionalised relations; expand NATO membership eastwards, and expand mandate; expand membership, widen and deepen European integration; design armed forces for expeditionary missions, specifically peace enforcement and keeping</td>
<td>Expand influence in regional order; expand European integration, including the political-military domain; no expansion NATO; strengthen bilateral relationships with US, UK, and France; design armed forces for expeditionary missions, specifically for interventional missions; assist US in maintaining order in and outside of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Limited to financial support</td>
<td>Europe; Middle East</td>
<td>Europe; Middle East; Africa</td>
<td>Europe; Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Focus on domestic priorities, specifically after reunification; limited costs and liabilities, no entanglements; allows capitalization on innate economic potential</td>
<td>Expand German influence; limited costs; means to shape US policy towards Europe; means to shape policies of European neighbours; allows capitalization on innate economic potential</td>
<td>Ensure stability regional order and security; maintain framework within which Germany and its economy prosper</td>
<td>Capitalise on innate German economic and demographic potential; can actively shape regional order, partly shape global order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Emboldening Russia in former sphere of influence; loss of influence</td>
<td>Undermine trust allies; German resurgence remains provocative to European neighbours</td>
<td>High defence spending; overextension; unsustainable military commitments, following American missions</td>
<td>High defence spending; overextension, following American missions; provoke countervailing alliances in European neighbours and Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low threat perception of instability after the Cold War; low threat perception of risk resurgent Russia; acquiescence by Europeans, US, Russian and Central-and Eastern Europeans for less constraints; view of Europeans and US intentions as largely benign</td>
<td>Medium threat perception of instability after the Cold War; low threat perception of risk resurgent Russia; European, intentions are relatively benign; US intentions are relatively benign, but unipolarity is troubling</td>
<td>Large threat perception of instability after the Cold War; medium threat perception of risk resurgent Russia; acceptance of US unipolarity, view nature US as largely benign; view of regional order as largely unstable and in need of outside pacifier; view of European neighbours as essentially benign</td>
<td>Medium threat perception of instability after the Cold War; medium threat perception of risk resurgent Russia; US acquiescence in Germany maintaining order in its place; belief that European neighbours will not be provoked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Large to medium</td>
<td>Large to medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Minimal to medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Post-Cold War Germany Counterfactual Strategies
### United Kingdom Post-Cold War

#### Minimalist strategy
- Defensive realism

#### Limited balancing strategy
- Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)

#### Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)
- International liberalism; institutionalism; Defensive realism (balance of threat)

#### Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)
- Offensive realism

### Theoretical approximation

#### Key elements strategy
- Autonomous posture; exit from NATO; decrease army size, retain air and maritime capabilities; resist deepening and widening of European integration; no need for US as external balancer or pacifier
- Pared down NATO, no expansion eastwards or broadened mandate; maintain ‘special relationship’ with US; retain limited expeditionary capabilities
- Maintain and expand NATO, and broaden its mandate; expand and deepen European integration; transform armed forces towards expeditionary tasks, specifically peace-enforcing and keeping

#### Possible crises
- Middle East
- Middle East; Europe; Africa
- Europe; Africa; Middle East
- Europe; Africa; Middle East

#### Strengths
- Low defence spending, prioritise domestic needs; avoidance of entanglements not in national interest
- Low to medium defence spending; prioritise domestic needs; ability to shape European and Middle Eastern security
- Ability to shape regional and global order towards liberal values; maintain regional security
- Opportunity to reshape European order in own interest;

#### Weaknesses
- No control over developments European continent; possible reemergence dominant power on European continent (specifically Germany); little influence over Middle East; no influence over US policy
- Minimal control over developments European continent; possible reemergence dominant power European continent; little influence over US policy
- High defence spending; risk entanglement in missions to secure global liberal order; overstretch; dependence on US; diminished sovereignty; risk alienating US and building regional hegemon in Europe
- High defence spending; overstretch; risk provoking regional balancing behaviour; risk entanglements in US interests

#### Benefits
- Autonomy
- Security
- Influence (medium)
- Influence

#### Costs and risks
- Autonomy
- Security
- Abandonment
- Entanglement

#### Key conditions
- Positive appreciation of regional and global security; view of Europeans as benign; view of US power as relatively benign
- Relatively positive appreciation of regional and global security; little likelihood of regional challenger; view of US power as relatively benign and necessary; view of Europeans as relatively benign
- Relatively high appreciation of regional and global instability and its impact; low appreciation of abilities of allies to sustain global order; high trust in benign nature US and Europeans
- High appreciation of regional and global instability; low appreciation of European intentions; medium to high trust in benign nature of US

#### Differences actual grand strategy
- Large
- Medium
- Minimal
- Medium

#### Plausibility
- Medium to high
- Medium to high
- Minimal to medium
- Medium

### Table 10. Post-Cold War Britain Counterfactual Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>France Post-Cold War</th>
<th>Minimalist strategy</th>
<th>Limited balancing strategy</th>
<th>Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)</th>
<th>Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approximation</td>
<td>Defensive realism</td>
<td>Defensive realism; offensive realism (Mearsheimer variant)</td>
<td>International liberalism; Institutionalist; Defensive realism (balance of threat)</td>
<td>Offensive realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements strategy</td>
<td>No permanent multilateral alliances; limited, continental forces, and for protection of maritime lines of communication; limited interventions in zones of influence; no need to maintain NATO, certainly not to expand it; limited economic integration in Europe to embed Germany</td>
<td>Limited use of alliances; promote multipolar order; no expansion of NATO or broadening of its mandate; no expansion of European integration, but deepening to contain and embed reunified Germany</td>
<td>Solidify existing multilateral frameworks, and expand upon them; reintegrate into NATO, expand it and broaden its mandate; expand and deepen European integration; develop expeditionary capabilities, specifically peacekeeping and peacekeeping; invest land forces; reinvigorate relationship with US;</td>
<td>Reshape regional order; deepen European integration, give it strong military dimension, limited expansion, preference Mediterranean members; distribution of labour with US; maintain pared down NATO develop expeditionary capabilities, specifically for interventions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible crises</td>
<td>Middle East; Africa</td>
<td>Middle East; Africa; Europe</td>
<td>Middle East; Africa; Europe</td>
<td>Europe; Middle East; Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Reinvest domestic priorities; no risk of entanglement in US adventurism</td>
<td>Relative control over Germany; limited influence over European and global affairs; more multipolar order means more opportunities</td>
<td>Stabilizing and strengthening regional and global orders; increasing influence with US; reinvigorating military capabilities</td>
<td>Increased influence in Europe, and consequently, globally; shift regional order in line with national interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Unable to evolve military doctrine and technology; loss of control over reunified Germany; no means to shape relationship of American hyperpower with Europe</td>
<td>Too little constraints on German innate potential; risk falling behind in terms of military doctrine and technology; risk losing influence over allies</td>
<td>Risk of freeriding by other European states, principally Germany; risk of entanglement in American ambitions; high expenditures; overstretch</td>
<td>Risk resentment other states, soft balancing; high defence spending; overstretch; risk facing strengthened Germany, unconstrained by US and UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs and risks</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
<td>Entanglement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key conditions</td>
<td>Low perception of risk instability after Cold War; benign view of German intentions; relatively benign view of US intentions</td>
<td>Medium perception of risk instability after Cold War; relatively benign view of German intentions; apprehensive view of US intentions</td>
<td>High perception of risk instability after Cold War; perception that European order is inherently unstable without outside pacifier; perception of benign nature US acceptance of unipolarity of US</td>
<td>Medium perception of risk instability; high perception of opportunity; German and American acquiescence of France positioning itself as regional security provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences actual grand strategy</td>
<td>Medium to large</td>
<td>Minimal to medium</td>
<td>Medium to large*</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Large in the period from the end of the Cold War until the aftermath of the Iraq intervention, medium from the reintegration of France into the NATO military structures in 2008 onwards.

Table 11. Post-Cold War France Counterfactual Strategies
United States: Cold War counterfactuals

**Limited balancing strategy**

In the limited strategic option the US takes a consistent interest in European and Asian affairs but avoids full entanglement through permanent force presence or alliances. Instead the US uses its vast resources\(^1\) to prevent the rise of a new hegemonic power on the Eurasian continent, seeking a more multipolar world.\(^2\) The US is at the height of its power, the Soviet Union presents no immediate danger.\(^3\) While significantly weakened, the Soviet Union presents such a potentially dominant power further in the future.\(^4\) It has vast resources to spend and compete economically and militarily with the US, and is likely to attain a nuclear deterrent. In the near future the Soviet Union will, however,

---

\(^1\) A preliminary draft of the Bohlen-Robinson study was completed by 10 December 1945 made clear that the 'international balance of capabilities' was heavily distributed in the favour of the US. This had come about 'chiefly but not solely' as a result of the atomic bomb, which had given the United States such 'decisive military superiority' over the Soviet Union that 'any war between the USA and the USSR would be far more costly to Russia than to the United States.' This period in which American offensive military capabilities would remain 'manifestly and decisively superior' was variously estimated in the report as 'a few years' or 'several years (perhaps five or even ten,)' ('The Capabilities and Intentions of the Soviet Union as Affected by American Policy' D/S File FW 711.61/12-1045(SF), p. 1., 5., 1-2) Cited in Messer (1977).

\(^2\) Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett in 1948 emphasized that he saw 'no evidence that Soviet intentions run toward launching a sudden military attack on the western nations at this time. It would not be in character with the tradition or mentality of the Soviet leaders to resort to such a measure unless they felt themselves either politically extremely weak, or militarily extremely strong.' (Lovett to John L. Sullivan, December 20, 1948, NHC, double zero files, 1948, box 2.) Cited in Leffler (1984).

\(^3\) Bohlen and Robinson assumed one or two decades of conventional military superiority. In their view, the Soviets posed no immediate military threat outside their areas of occupation. (‘The Capabilities and Intentions of the Soviet Union as Affected by American Policy’ D/S File FW 711.61/12-1045(SF), p. 6-8) Cited in Messer (1977).

\(^4\) American civilian and military policymakers feared the loss of Eurasia. Yet they did not expect the Soviet Union to attempt its military conquest. In the early Cold War years, there was nearly universal agreement that the Soviets, while eager to expand their influence, desired to avoid a military engagement, from the Joint Intelligence Staff, the director of central intelligence, the director of army intelligence, the principal war planner of the army, and President Eisenhower himself. (39JIS, ‘Russian Military Capabilities,’ October 25, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/10; Lincoln to M. B. Gardner and F. F. Everest, April 10, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 Russia (8-22-43); o. S. P., Memorandum for Hull, May 3, 1946, ibid., ser. ABC 381 (9-145); S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, August 24, 1946, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; Chamberlin, ‘Reevaluation of Soviet Intentions,’ March 27, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Russia (top secret); CIA, ‘Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States,’ September 26, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 203; and JIC, ‘Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities, 1947-50,’ October 27, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 381 USSR (3-2-46), JIC 391/1.) Cited in Leffler (1984).
lack these resources and be unable to compete with the US.\(^5\) The US has the option to leave it to the damaged European states to balance against the Soviet Union, albeit that the UK and France are likely in a too weakened state to do so. The Europeans should be able to do this, with some assistance.\(^6\) An off-shore balancing strategy, in which the United States would come to the aid of the Western European states in case of hostile moves by the Soviet Union, but where it avoids underwriting remaining European imperial ambitions or adventurism, is the most feasible.\(^7\) The US therefore needs to rebuild European military power without as little direct involvement of its own forces.\(^8\)

The US withdraws most of its armed forces from Western-Europe after the Second World War, but leaves a significant footprint in Britain and in Japan in support of its expeditionary forces. The American force posture focuses on long-distance naval and air capabilities, and its ground forces are reduced in numbers although a strong interventional force\(^9\), including large reserves, is maintained to tip the balance\(^10\) in case of unwelcome developments in Europe, Asia or the Middle East.\(^11\) The US supports the

\(^5\) Bohlen and Robinson pointed out that, during the years of the Pax Americana before the Russians got the bomb, the United States could take advantage of having ‘considerable latitude’ in determining its Soviet policy. (‘The Capabilities and Intentions of the Soviet Union as Affected by American Policy’ D/S File FW 711.61/12-1045(SF), p. 2) Cited in Messer (1977).

\(^6\) As the supreme allied commander of NATO, Eisenhower saw no inherent reason why a united Western Europe with ‘about 350 million people, tremendous industrial capacity, and a highly skilled and educated population’ should ‘be afraid of 190 million backward people.’ (‘Notes of a Meeting at the White House,’ 31 January 1951,’ FRUS, 1951, vol. 3, 450-56.) Cited in Leffler (1984).

\(^7\) As Roosevelt informed Churchill: ‘In as much as the United States is approximately 3,500 miles removed from Europe, it is not its natural task to bear the post-war burden of reconstituting France, Italy and the Balkans. This is properly the task of Great Britain which is far more vitally interested than is the United States. The United States will be only too glad to retire all its military forces from Europe as soon as this is feasible.’ (‘The Acting Secretary of State (Stettinius) to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant),’ 26 February 1944, FRUS 1944, vol. 1, 184.) Cited in Scheetz (1999). ‘Do please don’t ask me to keep any American forces in France. I just cannot do it! I would have to bring them all back home. As I suggested before, I denounce and protest the paternity of Belgium, France, and Italy.’ (‘President Roosevelt to the British Prime Minister,’ 29 February 1944, FRUS 1944, 1, 189.)

\(^8\) Dulles argued that if EDC were not ratified, the US should withdraw to the European perimeter and defend the continent through airpower and naval blockades, and attrition warfare. (Statement by Dulles to the North Atlantic Council, 14 December 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, vol. 5, 461-68) Cited in Scheetz (1999).

\(^9\) Kennan foresaw development of elite, highly mobile, compact unites, capable of responding quicly and effectively to limited aggression, but in no way designed to counter Soviet capabilities (Kennan) was convinced would not be used (Gaddis 2005, p. 96).

\(^10\) ‘We would do the ‘big stuff’ (large-scale retaliatory attack). Our allies were expected to handle local hostilities,’ Dulles NSC Meeting, August 27, 1953, FRUS, 1952-1954, II: 447). US strategy was to compensate for manpower deficiencies by making credible the prospect of escalation to nuclear war if the soviet Union attacked (Gaddis 2005, pp. 166-167). General Eisenhower was a disciple of Eisenhower: the only way to avoid an all-out nuclear war was to make that only military option available to the United States (Gaddis 2005, p. 173).

\(^11\) Eisenhower was convinced that ‘in the long run, it is not possible—and certainly not desirable—that Europe should be an occupied territory defended by legions brought in from abroad,
European Defence Community in order to streamline and unify European defence efforts and coordination, although it cannot force the integration of West Germany upon the hesitant French. This leaves West Germany as a semi-neutral, more nationalist, but truncated power in Western Europe that is unable to upset the balance of power in Europe. The US pushes for a Multilateral Force (MLF) of seabased nuclear weapons to credibly deter superior Soviet capabilities. It assists the UK in developing an independent nuclear deterrent, and after French protests, it shares nuclear technology somewhat in the fashion that Rome's territories vainly sought security many hundred years ago.’ (‘Eisenhower to Edward Hazlett Jr.,’ 21 June 1951, in The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, ed. Louis Galambos, vol. 12, NATO and the Campaign of 1952, 369.). Eisenhower: ‘The stationing of US division in Europe had been at the outset an emergency measure not intended to last indefinitely.’ (NSC meeting, October 7, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, 2:527). At the beginning of Eisenhower’s tour as SACEUR that ‘if in ten years, all American troops stationed in Europe for national defense purposes have not been returned to the United States, then this whole project will have failed.’ (Eisenhower to Bermingham, February 28, 1951, Eisenhower papers, 12: 77) 12 The heart of Eisenhower’s diplomatic policy was the EDC, a treaty for a supranational army that integrated the militaries of France and Germany. The EDC was to be commanded by the NATO SACEUR initially, but ultimately designed to act independently (Green, 2010). 13 Secretary of State Dulles: ‘The American people were not avid for power or leadership. They wanted to see the age-old leadership of the Western World flower again under France.’ (Eisenhower-Laird meeting, December 5, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, V: page 1771. Eisenhower saw the EEC as a supranational body aimed at building the sinews of a ‘third great power bloc, after which development the United States would be permitted to sit back and relax somewhat.’ (NSC meeting, November 21, 1955 in FRUS 1955-1957, XIX: page 150) ‘With the common market Europe would be a third world force along with the US and the Soviet Union. If Europe does not have a common market, it will remain weak.’ (Dulles-Adenauer, June 12, 1956, FRUS 1955-1957, XXVI: 107-121 (quote 116) ‘[Protection of Europe is seen] as representing some kind of charge on the US which the American public is not prepared to carry indefinitely. A united Europe, by contrast, could be as powerful as the United States or the Soviet Union.’ Dulles-Erhard, June 7, 1955; in FRUS, 1955-57, IV: 291-292 (quotes both pages) In 1948 American policymakers were already talking about Western Europe as an independent center of power, a ‘third force’ strong enough ‘to say ‘no’ both to the Soviet Union and to the United States.’ (Hickerson –Inverchapel meeting, January 21, 1948, FRUS 1948, 3:11.) Cited in Green (2012). 14 Germany could not be permitted, in Acheson’s words in July 1950, to ‘act as the balance of power in Europe’ (Acheson-Truman meeting, July 31, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:167-168). European integration was seen as ‘the soundest basis on which this generation could reinsure the next against another dangerous German aberration’ (Acheson to Schuman, November 29, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:497). 15 Eisenhower and other high American officials in the 1950s strongly supported the basic idea of nuclear sharing. Keeping these weapons away from allies was ‘insane’ (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 197).To SACEUR: ‘we are willing to give, for all intents and purposes, control of the weapons. We retain titular possession only.’ (Eisenhower-Norstad meeting, June 9, 1959, FRUS, 1958-1960, VII: 461-464, quote 462)Eisenhower’s long-term solution was an independent European deterrent: the Multilateral Force (MLF). Intermediate range nuclear missiles would be given to NATO and deployed on NATO naval forces, either surface ships or submarines, manned by international crews. SACEUR would command the force, but in a major change, SACEUR would now be a European general.
with France.\textsuperscript{16} In light of the American objectives to create a multipolar world\textsuperscript{17}, it seeks to ensure that the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union balance each other on the Eurasian continent as a whole.\textsuperscript{18} As it becomes clear the People’s Republic of China is developing nuclear weapons, the US enters into bilateral talks with it on nuclear sharing to drive a greater wedge between the two major communist states.

Without a global containment strategy, American policymakers do not plan for, but are perturbed by the wave of nationalist anti-imperialist revolutions in Asia and Africa. The US reacts strongly against perceived Soviet supported Communist actions in strategically vital zones, and aims to keep the Middle East open and free from Soviet as well as European imperialist influences. It successfully intervenes in Cuba against the Socialist regime, and inserts advisors in Vietnam to undermine perceived Chinese influences. The absence of a credible South-Vietnamese regime causes the US to withdraw support after several years rather than risk fighting a long and costly counterinsurgency for unclear aims. The opposition claims this undermines American credibility, but the public remains mostly indifferent. The real issue of contention is how to solve the Korean conflict, where there is a real risk of Chinese influence in East Asia becoming too large and the absence of strong commitment by the US in the early stages has created a persistent low-level conflict. The US focuses most of its attention on the Korean issue and accepts the French and British intervention in the Suez Crisis that succeeds in removing Nasser. The Soviet Union closes off West Berlin after which Britain and France accept the gradual loss of influence over West Germany and enter into closer collaboration. The Western Europeans are not strong enough to challenge Soviet influence in Central and Eastern Europe, but their conventional capabilities, their deterrent, and the probability that the US could intervene again in Europe or globally against Soviet interests raise the costs for any direct Soviet action against them. The assertive behaviour of the Soviet Union undermines the appeal of Communism, and it therefore focuses on slowly and methodologically building and consolidating its military and economic capabilities. An uneasy but stable stand-off is achieved in Europe and in Asia, with several states competing regionally for control.

\textsuperscript{16} ‘For God’s sake, let us not be stingy with an ally...instead of being generous, we treat many of our allies like step-children.’ (NSC meeting, November 21, 1955, in FRUS, 1955-57, XIX: 150-153, quote 151)

\textsuperscript{17} ‘When there was an American commander,’ Eisenhower told a startled de Gaulle, ‘other countries looked too much to the United States to help them and did not accept their own responsibilities.’ (Eisenhower – De Gaulle meeting, December 19, 1959, DDF 1959, 761)

\textsuperscript{18} ‘It could give rise to increased factionalism in national Communist parties, weaken the thrust of world Communism, and facilitate the emergence of more independent and nationalistic Communist states, especially in Eastern Europe.’ (Basic national policy 1962)

Johnson was contemplating working with one Communist power to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by another. ‘Different dangers require different policies and different actions’, Johnson commented on the day before the first Chinese nuclear test. (Johnson remarks at Al Smith memorial dinner, New York, October 14, 1964, JPP: 1963-1964, p. 1329.) Cited in Gaddis (2005, p. 210).
There are several risks present in the limited strategy scenario: the US will not be able to prevent aggressive behaviour by the Soviet Union – the European nuclear and conventional deterrents should do this - and it can only decide whether to respond to a conventional incursion once it is already underway – which raises the incentive for the Soviets to pursue fast and offensive action. The US can hope that its nuclear deterrent raises the costs and uncertainty on the part of the Soviet Union, especially since it is apart from the European deterrents, but once nuclear missiles become intercontinental this becomes less likely. Under pressure from Soviet preponderance, Europeans states could switch to neutrality, allowing the Soviet sphere of influence to de facto encompass the entire European mainland. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on a medium threat perception of the Soviets, a belief in the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, and a qualifiedly positive assessment of European capabilities, intentions, and morale.

**Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)**

In the maximalist internal balancing strategy the US seeks to capitalise on the power vacuum left in Western Europe after the destruction of the Second World War and the fundamentally altered balance of power on the Eurasian continent and guarantee its place as the sole remaining superpower. In an essentially insecure world, the US assertively seeks to curtail pernicious Soviet ideological influence over European societies and push back its considerable, if damaged, conventional capabilities, through extensive and costly force commitments and a flexible series of alliances and agreements.\(^{19}\) The US provides for the security needs of its European and Asian allies, but in return demands loyalty and acceptance of a strict hierarchy in transatlantic relations\(^{20}\), with the US as the ‘leader’.\(^{21}\)

---

\(^{19}\) A report prepared by the staff of the Moscow embassy and revised in mid-1946 by Ambassador (and former General) Walter Bedell Smith emphasized that ‘Soviet power is by nature so jealous that it has already operated to segregate from world economy almost all of the areas in which it has been established.’ While Forrestal and the navy sought to contain Soviet influence in the Near East and to retain American access to Middle East oil, Patterson and the War Department focused on preventing famine in occupied areas, forestalling communist revolution, circumscribing Soviet influence, resuscitating trade, and preserving traditional American markets especially in Western Europe. (Moscow embassy staff, ‘Russia’s International Position at the Close of the War with Germany,’ enclosed in Smith to Eisenhower, July 12, 1946, DDEL, Dwight David Eisenhower Papers, file 1652, box 101. Also see, for example, Stimson to Roosevelt, September 15, 1944, ML, JFP, box 100; Stimson to Truman, May 16, 1945, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 157; McCloy, Memorandum for Connelly, April 26, 1945, ibid., box 178; MID, ‘Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation,’ June 25, 1946; numerous memoranda, June 1945, USMA, GLP, War Dept. files; numerous documents, 1946 and 1947, RG 107, H(C1P, 091 Germany (Classified); and Rearmament Subcommittee, Report to the Special Ad Hoc Committee, July 10, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC) Cited in Leffler (1984).

\(^{20}\) Paul Nitze made the point that American interests were fundamental and European concerns were secondary. The ‘primary goal’, he said, was the ‘preservation of the United States and the continuation of a ‘salutary’ world environment’. ‘Even if war were to destroy the world as we know
The US does not withdraw its troops from the European continent after the end of the Second World War, and instead expands its forces to put pressure on the Soviet Union. It similarly expands its presence in Asia and the Pacific. Its force posture depends on superior and large land-based capabilities in Western Europe, and East Asia, and strong naval and air force capabilities to control global lines of communication and access to strategic resource areas such as the Middle East. The US ties the Western Europeans to itself through a transatlantic alliance, with the understanding that European defence efforts should be focused on contributions to collective security for Europe. A separate European power outside of American political control is resisted, and the bilateral relationship with Britain is exploited to slow down and divert European integration. Europeans are pressured to release their colonial possessions, if they it today, still the US must win that war decisively, ‘the preservation of the US’ was ‘the overriding goal, not the fate of our allies’. (Notes of Council on Foreign relations Study Group on Nuclear weapons and US Foreign Policy, November 8 1954, meeting p.13, Hanson Baldwin Papers, box125, folder 23, Yale University Library) Cited in Trachtenberg (1999).

21 ‘We are bound to pay the price of leadership—we may as well have some of its advantages.’ (Bundy outline for Kennedy’s talk to NSC, January 17, 1962, DDRS 1991/3578). Cited in Green (2012).

22 Kennedy argued for counter-insurgency capabilities, because ‘The record of the Romans made clear that their success was dependent on their will and ability to fight successfully at the edges of their empire. It was not so clear that we were yet in a position to do the same.’ (NSC meeting, January 18, 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII: 238-242, quote on 240.) Cited in Green (2012).

23 Kennedy had deep fears that French or German nuclear weapons would provide them with political independence and a credible defence(Green 2012).

24 Kennedy was even more blunt, arguing to the French that ‘we did not fear a third force would be neutralist. We were concerned, instead, about whether there would be a wholly separate, independent force unrelated to American responsibility and interest.’ (Kennedy-Malraux meeting, May 11th, 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: 695-701, quote 697.) Cited in Green (2012). De Gaulle’s themes of European economic, military, and political independence ‘have considerable political potential in hands of de Gaulle and perhaps other European leaders who are convinced that nineteenth century nationalism is the motor force of international affairs. Effective manipulation of these nationalistic forces could result in serious erosion of American position.’ (Bohlen-State, February 3rd, 1963, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: page 172.) Cited in Green (2012). A united Europe ‘would present us with a more formidable challenge than the present divided Europe.’ (Last quote in paragraph from Thomas Hughes, cited in Costigliola 1992, p. 111.) Kennedy was even more blunt, arguing to the French that ‘we did not fear a third force would be neutralist. We were concerned, instead, about whether there would be a wholly separate, independent force unrelated to American responsibility and interest.’ (Kennedy-Malraux meeting, May 11th, 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: 695-701, quote 697) Cited in Green (2012).

25 The US wanted Britain in the EEC, would help steer it in the right direction. A Europe that included Britain would be less parochial, more open, more ‘Atlantic’, and friendlier towards the United States than one that revolved around the French German axis. De Gaulle’s move in 1963 was therefore a clear countermove (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 370). Dean Acheson bluntly said America must get England in the EEC to ‘act as our lieutenant (the fashionable word is partner).’ Cited in Green (2012). Though softer language about Britain increasing European ‘stability’ was more often used, the basic idea was clear: Britain would act as a kind of Trojan horse for American interests and would help steer European unity towards American ends. Cited in Green (2012). Kennedy also took this line: ‘As to the Common Market, the President said that if Great Britain
expect an American force contributions. The US guards its nuclear monopoly, and discourages nationally independent deterrents in the UK and France. Western Germany is integrated into the European Community and reconstitutes its forces with the understanding that they may only operate through NATO. CENTO and SEATO are expanded and underwritten by American commitments to ensure the encirclement of the Communist bloc from Europe to Asia. Pressure is levied upon both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, although the Soviet Union is perceived as the greater revisionist threat to the balance of power in Eurasia.

The global strategy the US creates a broad series of challenges to the credibility of the commitments to its allies. Each overthrow by a nationalist and anti-imperialist Communist movement is seen as favouring the balance of power in the favour of the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, and therefore demands an American response. The Korean war remains hotly contested over a decade as successive American administrations are unwilling to accept the division of the peninsula and attempt to recapture the North, in spite of strong Chinese military involvement. Soviet moves towards West-Berlin are met by threats of escalation. The US involves itself in the aftermath of the decolonisation of the former possessions of the European imperial powers, and takes over defence commitments there. The French and British intervention in Suez is blocked and both states are reprimanded as their decolonisation processes are accelerated, but the US asserts itself throughout the Middle East in the wave of pan-Arabic movements. The US intervenes in Cuba several times, leading to a stand-off over


26 The ‘Acheson report’ on NATO nuclear policy stated that ‘use of nuclear weapons by the forces of other powers in Europe should be subject to US veto and control.’ (Policy Directive, April 20, 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: 288-290 quote 289) Cited in Green (2012). Kennedy administration actively discouraged European nuclear capabilities. Small nuclear forces, McNamara insisted, would be neither numerous nor accurate enough to constitute an effective deterrent: they would, however, make their home countries targets for Soviet attack (Gaddis 2005, p. 220).

27 Paul H. Nitze and ad hoc committee that drafted NSC68 now argued that ‘changes in the balance of power could occur not only as the result of economic maneuvers or military action, but from intimidation, humiliation, or even loss of credibility’ (Gaddis 2005, p. 90).

28 ‘It is regrettable that there are such problems with and in Europe because today’s struggle does not lie there, but rather in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The whole debate about an atomic force in Europe is really useless, because Berlin is secure and Europe as a whole is well protected.’ (Kennedy-Spaak meeting, May 28, 1963, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: 582-587, quote 587)

29 Rusk: ‘if you don’t pay attention to the periphery, ‘Rusk warned, ‘the periphery changes. And the first thing you know the periphery is the center... What happens in one place cannot help but affect what happens in another.’ (Rusk press conference, May 4, 1961, DSB, XLIV (may 22, 1961), 763). Kennedy and his advisers thought that it was necessary to expand the means to deter undesirable shifts in the balance of power: ‘We intend to have a wider choice than humiliation or all-out nuclear war.’ (Kennedy radio-television address, July 25, 1961, KPP: 1961, p. 535.) Cited Gaddis (2005, p. 201).
Soviet nuclear weapons placed there.\(^3\) The American presence in Vietnam drifts into a longer conflict, which is terminated only after the US has escalated the war with a massive commitment of American, British and French forces in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. This freezes the US into a permanent stand-off with China on its borders. Uneasiness on the part of the Europeans with the expanding breadth of requests for troop contributions from the US lead to bilateral agreements between the UK and France on defence cooperation, that later include West Germany and the smaller West-European countries. The Soviet Union is unable to expand its influence but instead consolidates its position as a counter-balance, both in ideological and in military terms, to American dominance. The Soviet Union accelerates its arms spending to counterbalance the US, increasing the pressure on its economy beyond what it can maintain in the long-term. Under these circumstance the Soviet Union and China maintain a solid if uneasy alliance against American pressures on Central Europe and South-East Asia. The US profits from a global order shaped in its own image, albeit founded on an increasingly precarious resource base.

There are several risks present in this maximalist American grand strategy: American predominance provokes the Soviet Union to increase its conventional and nuclear capabilities, and bolsters its ideological appeal.\(^3\) American assertiveness increases resentment in Western-Europe, not only among the traditionally anti-imperialist political left, but also the cultural nationalist right, and unites the various European

---

\(^3\) The Kennedy and Johnson administrations came to fear most not so much communism, which was too fragmented, or the Soviet Union, which was too committed to détente, or even China, which was too impotent, but rather the threat of embarrassment, or humiliation, of appearing too weak (Gaddis 2005, p. 211). In the Cuba crisis: a successful deployment, publically revealed, ‘would have politically changed the balance of power. It would have appeared to, and appearances contribute to reality.’ (Kennedy radio-television interview, December 17, 1962, KPP: 1962, p. 898.) Cited in Gaddis (2005, p. 212).

\(^3\) In July 1947, intelligence analysts in the War Department maintained that the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan would be viewed by the Soviet Union as a threat to Soviet control in Eastern Europe as well as a death-knell to communist attempts to capture power peacefully in Western Europe. ‘The whole Berlin crisis,’ army planners informed Eisenhower, ‘has arisen as a result of... actions on the part of the Western Powers.’ (MID, 'Estimate of the Possibility of War,' July 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); Op-32 to General Board, April 28, 1948, NHC, General Board 425 (serial 315); and ‘National Military Establishment Views on Germany’ [appended to memorandum for Maddocks], June 30, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For the repercussions of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, see Chamberlin to Chief of Staff, July 9, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Greece; and Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, November 7, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; and, for a similar view in the State Department, see FRUS, 1947, 1: 770-75. For prospective Soviet reactions to American assistance to Turkey, also see General Board, 'National Security and the Navy,' enclosure D,June 25, 1948; and Conolly to CNO, December 4, 1947, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 1, A4/FF7. For assessments of Soviet reactions to Western initiatives in Germany, also see Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, March 16, 1948, and June 9, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; CIA, 'Possible Program of Future Soviet Moves in Germany,' April 28, 1948, ibid., box 255; and Inglis, Memorandum of Information, April 3, 1948, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 1. box 3.) Cited in Leffler (1984).

184
nationalist perspectives of the continent. The extensive commitments that the US has undertaken necessitate cuts in domestic welfare expenditures and a powerful narrative on American interests and threats to those interests that accelerates the need for credibility and the tendency towards overextension. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on a high threat perception of the Soviet Union and China (building on defensive realism) or opportunity for expanding hegemonic influence (building on offensive realism), and a pessimistic perspective on European morale and military and economic capabilities.

Germany: Cold War counterfactuals

Limited balancing strategy

In the minimalist grand strategy West Germany involves itself in a selective manner in Western European security, building a limited military force, and supporting a more independent Europe to play the US and the Soviet Union off against each other diplomatically. In the wake of the Second World War, in the face of its utter wartime destruction and alliance of all major powers against it, West Germany is unable in the short term to generate the economic, military, or political resources to reassert itself in Europe. As the foremost future battleground of an overt superpower conflict, West Germany carefully positions itself between the superpowers. The main policy focus is to rebuild the tattered economy, and reposition itself as an independent state in the future.32 While West Germany leans to the transatlantic alliance, it works to convince the Soviet Union it will not escalate or join aggressive American action. In the long term West Germany seeks to end the occupation of German territory by both parties with a view to eventual reuniﬁcation.

The German armed forces are rebuild for the purposes of territorial defence, with limited capabilities for any use beyond that. West Germany seeks to deescalate the Cold War, and therefore holds off on joining the transatlantic alliance, worried that this exacerbates the bloc formation and the control of both superpowers over their respective allies. Instead, West Germany advocates a European Defence Community, envisioning a moderate third force to complicate the calculations of both the US and the Soviet Union. While West German policymakers would prefer national nuclear weapons,33 they know

32 Germany attempted to position itself more autonomously within Europe during the 1950s (Krell 1991).
33 In 1957, when the French proposed joint production of nuclear weapons, Adenauer was delighted to go along: ‘Wir müssen sie produzieren.’ (Schwarz, Adenauer, 2:332, 394-401). Cited in Trachtenberg 1999, p. 233).
they will not be able to gain access to such weapons. Instead, they support the nuclear status of France specifically, but also the UK, with the hope that multipolarity strengthens the precarious German hand in terms of capabilities and geography. European integration is another instrument to both rebuild and normalise its relations with Germany’s neighbours. American involvement in Europe is supported but its dominance over a truncated NATO is perceived as provocative to the Soviet Union.

The emergence of a European third force pole appeals to the American policymakers who prefer a selective, balancing role towards the European continent. To the alarm of France, the UK, and the other Western European states, the US starts building down its forces on the continent, only to be abruptly reversed during the Kennedy administration that seeks to maintain control over Europe. The pro-Atlanticist West German policymakers are disquieted by Soviet action in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), worried that they have misinterpreted Soviet plans for the European continent as a whole. The conflicting signals sent by the US increase the uncertainty for West German policymakers and the long-term sustainability of both German survival and multipolarity within Europe is questionable.

There are several risks present in this minimalist West German grand strategy: the withdrawal of American forces from the continent, leaving an alliance not sufficiently cohesive or militarily capable to defend against potential Soviet aggression, and the lack of West German abilities to adequately influence either superpower, or its European allies. Consequently, this strategy is conditional upon near equal (mis)trust of the Soviet

34 The French argument for national nuclear forces might trigger German demands, and nationalism (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 236). De Gaulle’s nationalism, specifically the policy of nuclear independence, seemed to trigger resurgent German nationalism for them: without immergence in NATO and western structures that constrained NATO the Federal Republic might take a similar course. Adenauer claimed the desire for an independent nuclear weapon in a press conference on April 5, 1957 (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 239).
36 Leading German politicians, not least Chancellor Adenauer expressed fears that the maritime powers might abandon their allies on the continent. And Strauss told the cabinet that ‘today a nation that does not produce atomic weapons itself is déclassé.’ He oversaw the shift from large conscript forces towards a smaller, more professional military capable of deploying tactical nuclear weapons. The French considered building a nuclear weapon together with the Germans (Pitman 2000).
37 ‘If Europe were ever to be organised to leave us outside, from the point of view of these great issues of policy and defense, it would become most difficult for us to sustain our present guarantee against soviet aggression. We shall not hesitate to make this point to the Germans if they show signs of accepting any idea of a Bonn-Paris axis.’ (Kennedy to Gavin, May 18, 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, p. 704.) (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 374). ‘If they chose to align themselves with De Gaulle and if they backed the policy of an independent Europe, they could not count on the United States to defend them. If they wanted American protection, they would have to follow the American lead on political and nuclear questions.’ (NSC Executive Committee meetings nos. 38 and 39, January 25 and 31, 1963, FRUS 1961-1963, pp. 163, 489).
Union and the US, low appraisal of West Germany’s own capabilities or manoeuvre room within Europe, moderate to high appraisal of the capabilities of its European allies, and sufficient belief that the US has enough of a stake to remain involved in some manner.

United Kingdom: Cold War counterfactuals

Limited balancing strategy

In the limited grand strategy the UK takes a selective approach to the European continent and avoids entangling itself through permanent alliances or the stationing of forces there. The destruction on the European continent and the introduction of nuclear weapons offer the UK the opportunity to fully exploit its advantageous defensive position as an island. The ascendance of the Soviet Union as the dominant continental power does present a risk for the long-term future, though it represents no threat for at least the first decade after the war. The UK therefore strengthens its bilateral ties with France and the US to rebalance the distribution of power in Europe. The financial resources that are now available allow the UK to refocus its efforts towards maintaining its colonial possessions.

In line with the maritime strategy, the British armed forces are predominantly focused on naval and air capabilities to maintain open access across global lines of communication. The land forces are primarily prepared for colonial tasks, but a small core of conventional forces remain available for possible interventions on the continent. Nuclear weapons have fundamentally changed the balance of power, and British policymakers are convinced they must acquire them. The British develop an

38 ‘Of course it is difficult to tell how far Russian policy is dictated by expansionism and how far by fear of attack by the US and ourselves. Fantastic as this is, it may very well be the real grounds of Russian policy. What we consider merely defence may seem to them to be preparations for an attack.’ (Public Record Office, London, FO 800/475, fos 59-60, ME/46/22, Attlee to Bevin, Private and Personal, 1 December 1946).
39 The 1944 statement in the Foreign Office papers that ‘no Soviet threat to the country is likely to arrive until’ ten years after the war in Europe was over. JIC(44)467(o)Final, PRO, Foreign Office Papers, series 371, file 47860 (FO 371/47860). Cited in Watt, 1986. British planners no longer perceived an imminent Soviet threat in the early 1960s (Baylis and O’Neill 1995, p. 336).
40 The Middle East region is of vital importance. ‘It forms the nodal point in the system of communication by land, sea, and air that links Great Britain with India, Australia, and the Far East; it is also the empire’s main reservoir of mineral oil.’ (Public Record Office, London, CAB 129-2, fo. 20, CP(45)156, Great Britain’s position in the Middle East, Secret, 8 September 1945).
41 ‘The Prime Minster [Churchill] said that we could not expect to maintain our influence as a world power unless we possessed the most up-to-date nuclear weapons. […] He had no doubt that the best hope of preserving world peace was to make it clear to potential aggressors that they had
independent nuclear deterrent with partial assistance from the US to ensure British security from direct attacks. 42 The ‘special relationship’ becomes crucial to British security as the US is needed for financial support and as an ally should the Soviet Union seek to assert itself through force. On the continent, the French position must be strengthened and preferably West Germany as well. 43 The move for a continental security organisation that incorporates France, West Germany, and the smaller states is accepted with some trepidation, after it is underwritten with American support both financially and technologically. The UK therefore mediates between the US and the European powers, but avoids being part of permanent security frameworks and of becoming entangled in potential adventures of the US and the European states. Relations with the Soviet Union are friendly, albeit that arms and intelligence competition are a constant feature.

The wave of nationalist and anti-imperialist movements puts severe strains on the British Empire. Conventional forces that were otherwise assigned to use in Western Europe are now available for keeping order in the colonies, but they lack sufficient numbers to permanently hold all the colonies. Choices must be made. After several decades of low-level conflict, a truncated version of the pre-war Empire is consolidated into the Commonwealth, which includes several key assets that were part of the East of Suez role the UK envisioned for itself. The British and the French intervene in Suez. The outcome is only a partial success. The US might not able to exert as much pressure on the UK, but its French allies are overstretched to fill the gap that the UK left in the collective defence of Europe. France is tied up with its forces on the European continent and has become dependent on US support. The Middle Eastern adventures as a whole, including those in the Persian Gulf, are consequently less successful and British influence there declines. Maintaining British prestige in the Falklands therefore becomes more important, which necessitates a forceful response in 1981. In Europe, the Soviet Union is able to dominate in Central Europe, as well as exert its influence over West Germany, which has chosen neutrality. The US moves to strengthen France, Italy and the Low Countries, but limits its own military presence on the continent. The pressure on France after West German defection consequently increases. Thanks to their

---

42 Ernest Bevin told a Cabinet committee in 1947: ‘We’ve got to have this ... I don’t want any other Foreign Secretary of this country to be talked at or by a Secretary of State in the United States as I have just had in my discussions with Mr. Byrnes. We have got have this thing over here whatever it costs ... We’ve got to have the bloody Union Jack flying on top of it.’ (M.M. Gowing 1974 cited in Parker 1986, p. 450).
43 The British, and to a certain extent the American were reluctant to take their chances a second time with full democracy and self-determination in Germany – to see Germany resurrected as a strong and independent power, not aligned with either side and free once again to play them off against each other (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 59). The Americans not so worried about united Germany (views American Joint Chiefs of Staff, in JCS to SWNCC, May 12, 1947, FRUS 1947, 1:741)
mutual dependency, the US and France have developed a ‘special relationship’.\textsuperscript{44} With American assistance France attains its own nuclear weapon. The situation on the continent remains stable albeit the prospects for long-term Western security are uncertain. However, British direct security seems guaranteed.

There are several risks present in this minimalist British grand strategy: the UK is likely to be seen as a free-rider by the US and France, and with no strong commitment on the part of the US there are insufficient capabilities on the continent to defend against a direct Soviet attack. Should the Cold War escalate, more costly, if not hopeless, British commitments might be required at a later date. Consequently, this strategy is conditional a moderate appraisal of the Soviet threat level and on the capability of nuclear weapons to credibly deter adversaries. The ‘special relationship’ therefore must be strong enough to keep the British economy running, and the US should be willing to intervene if the situation on the continent escalates. French capabilities should be robust enough to counter or deter the threat on continent. There is a risk that France supplants the UK in its role as favoured ally of the US, and thereby becomes the more influential power in Europe. Finally, the ideological appeal of Communism cannot be strong enough to capture the governments on the continent.

\textbf{France: Cold War counterfactuals}

\textit{Limited balancing strategy}

In the limited grand strategy France does not permanently anchor itself in alliance structures but selectively supports European defence agreements, with its own territorial security based on its deterrent. After the Second World War, a damaged France is unable to assure its interests on the continent alone against the badly haemorrhaged, but dominant continental power of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{45} The possible reunification of

\textsuperscript{44} Secretary of State Dulles: ‘The American people were not avid for power or leadership. They wanted to see the age-old leadership of the Western World flower again under France.’ (Eisenhower-Laird meeting, December 5, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, V: p. 1771).

\textsuperscript{45} French leaders agreed with their counterparts in Washington and London that the Soviet Union seemed unprepared to initiate an aggressive war against the West (Harrison 1981, p. 11). (Resumé of Telegram from Foreign Minister Bidault to French Ambassador Bonnet in Washington, made by the US embassy in Paris: FRUS, 1948, vol.3, dated 29 June 1948, pp. 142-143). ‘Il existe une analogie certaine entre la position de la France et celle de l’Allemagne Fédérale concernant la défense de l’Occident. L’une et l’autre ont le souci d’écarter à tout prix de leur territoire la possibilité d’une invasion et d’éviter de servir de champ de bataille ; elles sont préoccupées de s’abstenir de toute provocation à l’égard des Soviétiques, avant que ne soit constituée une force occidentale véritablement digne de ce nom’ (Bérard to Foreign Ministry, October 17, 1950, Allemagne, vol. 70, ff. 17-17, French Foreign Ministry Archives).
Germany casts another shadow. The weakness of Western Europe requires the presence of the US, of an outside power to balance the continent. However, France refuses to institutionally link its fate to the US, because its stake in Europe per definition cannot be as great. Furthermore, the US may draw the Europeans into conflict that derives from American national interests far outside of Europe. France contributes to Western security, but positions itself outside of the alliance, freeing up resources to attempt and retain its colonial possessions.

To ensure French security and to have assets to contribute to European security, the French armed forces are mostly reconstituted towards territorial defence but the land forces have the capability to be deployed more broadly in the European theatre. The greater mobility and operating space of the French forces, together with greater air support, comes at a high financial costs. At further cost, France develops an independent nuclear weapon, against the wishes of the US which seeks to unify the European collective security system under its own leadership and control.\footnote{American policymakers believed that ‘If the French and other European powers acquire a nuclear capability,’ Kennedy said in January 1963, ‘they would be in a position to be entirely independent and we might be on the outside looking in.’(NSC meeting, January 22, 1963, FRUS 1961-1963, 8:460, 13: 486), even though public statements on the efficacy of the force were that it had no value whatsoever (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 320).} France signs an agreement with NATO to contribute forces in case of an unprovoked attack, but remains unclear about what defines provocation. Extra-regional contributions to allied causes are explicitly prohibited, fearful as France is of irresponsible risk-taking by the US for its own global interests. Through this position, underwritten by an independent deterrent, France avoids dependence on the US and it avoids becoming a bargaining chip in an American-Soviet conflict.\footnote{After Secretary Rusk castigated the French ambassador Alphand about evils of a third force, the ambassador observed that ‘the US would sometimes be accused of playing one European power against the other, sometimes of favoring a United Europe in order to be able to dominate it better.’ (Second quote from Rusk-Alphand meeting, May 28, 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, XIII: 708-713, on 713.) Cited in Green (2012).} Furthermore, France contribute a third centre of decision to complicates Soviet calculations on action towards Western Europe. The other threat on the European continent, West Germany, is less constrained by a truncated NATO in this system.\footnote{The Pleven Plan attempted to thwart independent German control of its armed forces and the revival of the German High Command by proposing to integrate West German military forces into a larger supranational army. As originally proposed, however, the Pleven Plan treated the Germans as inferiors and suggested ‘not so much a genuine European Army as a French Foreign Legion for Europe.’ Cited in Scheetz (1999).} While supportive of European integration insofar as it constrains West Germany, France resists further integration.\footnote{The French planned to split the Rhineland and the Ruhr off from the rest of Germany (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 44).} This leaves West Germany less than fully
integrated into Europe\textsuperscript{50}, and forces a more independent strategy on its part, thereby increasing the volatility of the European security system as a whole.

Faced with a wave of nationalist and anti-imperialist movements in its colonial possessions, France responds forcefully at first. After the loss of Indochina, France attempts to hold onto Algeria and fights a two-decade-long unsuccessful counterinsurgency, lacking the resources to fight both there and maintain sufficient forces for territorial defence and possible action in Europe.\textsuperscript{51} The joint intervention with Britain to maintain the Suez Canal proves unsuccessful, after the UK proves unable to resist American pressure. While France subsequently single-handily captures the Canal, it is forced to relinquish it after the occupation escalates towards persistent low-intensity violence. France fares better at maintaining other colonial possessions, but these commitments clash with requirements in the hexagon and Europe, and France relinquishes them by the late seventies or early eighties. West Germany acts with increasing autonomy in Europe, and pressures the US into greater access to NATO nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union mounts more pressure on the solidarity of the transatlantic alliance, which leads to greater calls in the US for partial disengagement from Europe. American forces in Europe become deprioritised in favour of those in East Asia, making extended deterrence becomes less credible. Consequently, American Congress discusses the nuclear arming of West Germany as a way of pass off the burden of collective security. France views a more multipolar regional European order as an acceptable trade-off to a bipolar system, preferring the inherent uncertainty over certain subsidiarity.

There are several risks present in this limited balancing strategy. France is likely to be considered a free-rider on the collective security provided by the US. French free-riding can alienate the US and lead it to decrease its conventional and nuclear commitments to Europe. The Soviet Union could exploit these fissures and increase the pressure on the Western states. If the US then withdraws its forces, it is likely that the UK withdraws its own forces to the British Isles and depends on its nuclear weapon. Other, smaller European states are then likely to defect from NATO and attempt to adopt neutrality. Should the Soviet Union be sufficiently risk-acceptant, and the US sufficiently risk-averse, France will be abandoned on continent. West Germany remains too weak to contribute much to European security, or conversely it will become more assertive and autonomous and seek to attain its own deterrent. Consequently, this strategy is conditional upon the Soviet Union being deterred by nuclear weapons, and the US being


\textsuperscript{51} French favoured colonial defence requirements over European forces when choices had to be made (Harrison 1981, 33).
willing to commit sufficient forces to European security. That commitment depends on
the US considering European interests nearly equal to its own. Yet, in reality, French
policymakers doubted the US was serious about its commitments during the first
decades of the Cold War. They certainly have no way of being certain of the American
commitment. The US must both consider the Soviet Union a serious enough threat to
commit forces even without French contributions, but not serious enough to prioritise
its own territorial security. Furthermore, for France the risk of revolutionary overspill
must remain relatively small and constrained to national uprisings.

Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)

In the maximalist external balancing strategy France follows an internationalist
approach and fully integrates its national security policies into a permanent
transatlantic alliance structure, thereby avoiding abandonment on a continent that it
shares with two major potential threats. French security was at stake, if not its very
survival as a state. The destruction of the French economy and its military during the
war and of the Western Europe as a whole, the future military dominance of the Soviet
Union, combined with the remaining possibility of a resurgent Germany, has put France
in a precarious position. As the remaining powerful and undamaged Western state, the
US plays the crucial role in unifying and leading the contesting European interests into a
single collective security system. French policymakers realise that France must become
the largest contributor to transatlantic security, to ensure the commitment of the US to
the continent. French survival consequently takes precedence over other, less vital,
national interests, and its colonial commitments are rapidly abandoned.

In line with its continental strategy, France focuses on providing large numbers of
conventional forces for the European theatre of operations, strengthening both the army
and air support to the detriment of its colonial troops and the navy. These forces are
then predominantly stationed in West Germany, strengthening the means to ensure the
dual containment of both the Soviet Union and of Germany. French planners prefer a

52 The French were essentially asking their Anglo-Saxon allies to guarantee that they would
intervene militarily if German ever tried to pull out (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 118). (Schuman to
Acheson, January 29, 1952; Bruce to Acheson, February 1, 1952; Churchill-Acheson meeting,
February 14 1952, in FRUS 1952-1954, 5:10, 12-13, 39). Key French policymakers realized that the
division of Germany and incorporation of West Germany into the West, would solve the German
problem. As long as American forces were stationed in West Germany, no western German state
was in a position to challenge the status quo, and that the Russians would be kept at bay
(Trachtenberg 1999, pp. 74-75). (Note especially a series of memoranda written in 1952 and 1953
by Jean Sauvagnargues, especially his memorandum of June 25, 1952, and April 22 and June 10,
1953, Europe 1949-1955/Allemagne/882 and 823/FFMA, and Europe 1949-
1955/Généralités/100/FFMA.). The French were more cooperative when the commitment to more
national independent deterrent, but accept a shared NATO deterrent instead. They seek and accept a similar deal as the British receive with Polaris, using their consistent large contributions as leverage. France is the de facto strongest supporter of NATO in Europe, through which it achieves security against an invasion by the Soviet Union and a resurgent and possibly revisionist reunified Germany.\textsuperscript{53} France works hard at building a strong bilateral relationship with the US, institutionalising American-French cooperation on nuclear technology and intelligence. The continued American presence in Europe is the key to French security, and French policymakers focus the policies on preventing the possible abandonment by the US.\textsuperscript{54} However, competing with the British over American ties remains fraught with difficulties, and it is certainly difficult to bypass established American cultural proclivities and prejudices that favour the English over the French. French policymakers remain left with a nagging doubt over the extent of American commitment to European security.\textsuperscript{55} The transatlantic alliance seems cohesive and solid to the Soviet Union and in its turn it slows down its build-up of conventional and nuclear weapons to simply parity, instead using its ideological appeal to influence communist movements with Western Europe. France supports European integration as the means to increase economic and military stability, and keep West Germany prosperous and secure, as well as further contained within multilateral structures.

\textsuperscript{53} It became apparent to French defence planners that an integrated strategy for the defence of western Europe had to be bound up with America's strategy. (French General Staff memorandum, November 25, 1953, Ismay Papers III/12/13a/LHCM; Ismay's notes for December 6, 1953, meeting, Ismay Papers, III/12/17/LHCMA; summary of foreign ministers' meeting, December 6, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, 5:1789-1790) A highly integrated NATO defence strategy, a strategy in which nuclear weapons played the major role and in which the defense of Europe was tightly linked to American air-atomic offensive, all this had been the goal of French military policy for quite some time. ('Avis du Comité des Chefs d'Etat Major', September 6, 1954, 1k145/3/SHAT).

\textsuperscript{54} Georges Bidault, the French foreign minister, had told Marshall in 1947 that the French unenthusiastic to the idea of a demilitarisation treaty because they were worried it might 'be considered a sort of 'substitute' for other guarantees' – namely an American troop presence in Europe, especially in Germany - that his government believed to necessary. Bidault-Marshall meeting, March 13, 1947, FRUS 1947, 2:247). The American concept of stopping the Red Army at the foot of the Pyrenees (sic) could not delight the French, who were convinced that the situation would be irreversible. 'Not even is there an emergency plan for the supply of arms. France is therefore strictly reduced to her means, since the Brussels Pact unites only the powerless. In other words, she is totally exposed.', commented Couve de Murville. (Note of 10 May 1948, MAE, série Y-54). Dulles was talking in 1953 about frightening the French by raising the spectre of a retreat to the peripheral strategy. (See State-JCS meeting, January 28, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, 5:712-713).

\textsuperscript{55} In January 1947, France had hoped to play the role of a 'bridge' between Moscow and Washington. In the spring of 1948 she did not aspire to anything other than being a 'junction' between a northern and southern front (Letter Chauvel to Bonnet, 21 April 1948, MAE, series Y, Bonnet Papers.) Cited in (Melandri, Vaïsse 2001, pp. 186 464, 465).
The wave of nationalist and anti-imperialist movements in the European colonial possessions troubles French traditionalists with visions of maintaining the colonial possessions. In spite of heavy protests from the public and elements of the military, Algeria and Indochina are abandoned during the 1950s and early 1960s along with the other colonial possessions to focus resources to the direct threat to French security in Europe. France declines to participate in a doomed British intervention in the Suez Canal, in order not to alienate the US, and because Suez is no longer necessary to fight the conflict in Algeria more effectively. Stability and security in Western Europe are prioritised as much as possible. However, the Vietnam War has increased the demands on the US, American planners divert forces towards South-East Asia that are not required in Europe, because it is stable. After French and British protests that this weakens extended deterrence and endangers the balance of power in Europe, the US offers to exchange French and British contributions in Vietnam for the American presence in Europe. Consequently, France remains involved for decades in a costly and an increasingly unsuccessful counterinsurgency and nation-building campaign in South-East Asia. NATO Europe is maintained, but at great financial costs to France. It also increases political instability as the political left attacks French involvement outside of Europe.

There are several risks present in this maximalist external balancing strategy: France has committed itself fully to NATO to ensure American commitment. France has thereby largely guaranteed its security. Yet, because of its dependence on American involvement France is vulnerable to sudden changes in American priorities and entanglement in American national objectives. Should the Soviet Union prove sufficiently aggressive, the US might reconsider its nuclear guarantee, reprioritise its own security in its own hemisphere and renegotiate the distribution of power within Europe. This could leave France without few means to assure its own defence. Furthermore, France will have to sacrifice most or all of its own national interests, including its colonial possessions. Consequently, this strategy is conditional upon French policymakers trusting the US to attach enough importance to European affairs to risk its interests and its own immediate security, and that the American perception of the Soviet threat is sufficiently high to take but not so high as to be intimidated. The strength of bilateral ties with the US can abet the continuity and coherence of allied strategy, but not chance the basic geographical and military distribution of power.

**Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)**

In the maximalist internal balancing strategy France seeks to capitalise on the altered continental balance of power and assert regional hegemony. Its traditional continental challenger, Germany, was destroyed in the Second World War, and while the Soviet Union looks to be the dominant military power for the foreseeable future, it has been
severely damaged. However, France itself has been even more critically damaged and is facing domestic dissension led by the Communists. Its external and internal security interlinked, the French government takes upon itself regional leadership of a European security community that integrates West Germany. France acts as the guarantor of European security needs, and it is underwritten in this role by the US. France becomes the central bulwark of the American counter-communist and balancing strategy on the European continent. France equates the conflicts in the European colonial possessions with European security and leads European counterinsurgency campaigns to suppress them.

To maintain a dual European and extra-European strategy, France needs a modernised conventional army and a colonial army, backed by air support and a navy to maintain maritime lines of communication. The French economy can hardly support such an ambitious force posture, and ironically France therefore relies on imaginative and flexible diplomacy with the US and the European allies. The base negotiation position of the French government is that its successful suppression of domestic communist movements and its position on the European continent make France exquisitely suited to balance the Soviet Union and its Western European followers. The US sees France, with its long tradition of fighting on the continent, as an adequate proxy to balance the Soviet Union, freeing up its own resources for the Pacific and East Asia, and contributes technological assistance towards developing a French nuclear weapon that is part of a multilateral force. Great Britain reluctantly follows the French lead in Europe and contributes troops to the European Defence Community, in exchange for mutual assistance in securing the Near and Middle East. France can thereby achieve its own East of Suez policy. West Germany is looking for rehabilitation into Europe and France is willing to give it as part of the French-led European Community and the Defence Community, and eases the restraints on West Germany, in spite of the protests of Great Britain. With its interests on the continent consolidated, France becomes the primary counterweight to the Soviet Union, leads the European Third Force, and is playing an important part in the conflicts outside Europe.

The wave of nationalist and anti-imperialist movements taxes French capabilities outside of Europe. In the end Algeria, Indochina, and the other French colonial possessions are weaknesses, and the temptation to divert forces from asserting itself on the continent, weakens the French case for European leadership. Its collaboration with the UK to stop the nationalisation of the Suez Crisis is successful but further expands the use of French forces abroad. The assertive French attitude in European affairs increasingly troubles Great Britain, increasingly so as the Empire is disintegrating.

---

56 Secretary of State Dulles: ‘The American people were not avid for power or leadership. They wanted to see the age-old leadership of the Western World flower again under France.’ (Eisenhower–Laird meeting, December 5, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954, V: page 1771).

57 French favoured colonial defence requirements over European forces when choices had to be made, even to the strong detriment of European defence (Harrison 1981, p. 33).
and its commitments are winding down. After the reconstruction of its economy, West Germany becomes less willing to accept the humiliation of subordination to French leadership. German policymakers seek to change the conditions of their agreement on European integration. Similarly, the US has doubts about both the ability of France to credibly balance the Soviet Union, and with France taking upon itself a range of strictly national objectives unconnected to European security, American policymakers further call that French ability into question. Soviet conventional and nuclear capabilities have drastically expanded in the meantime, and its behaviour becomes more and more assertive. Soviet assertiveness necessitates an increased presence of American forces in Europe. France resists US political interference in Europe, but is undermined by British and West German actions to build a broader transatlantic alliance, leaving it more isolated. In the face of Soviet expansionism, France accepts American leadership of the alliance as a whole, but claims a primes inter position on the European continent.

There are several risks present in this maximalist French grand strategy: the US could easily withdraw its support, both if France seems unsuccessful and if it seems too successful in its role as continental balancer, or if it is deemed as unreliable or ideologically weak in the face of communism. British acceptance of the French role is similar changeable, and depends on how successful the UK is in accomplishing its national objectives. Its credibility as a deterrent power in Western Europe is uncertain enough to be challenged often by the Soviet Union, making France prone to overstretch and internal instability. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on an excellent relationship with the Americans and clear understanding by American policymakers that France plays a crucial strategic role. The US willingness to financially and technologically support the French bid to become the dominant Western European power, depends on how credible France appears as a continental balance to Soviet power and if it can establish that the Soviet Union is a serious threat to Western Europe. Other European states should also feel more threatened by the Soviet Union than by new French dominance, but this condition remains uncertain in the long-term.

**United States: Post-Cold War counterfactuals**

**Minimalist strategy**

In the minimalist grand strategy the US ends its alliance commitments and removes its forces from Europe and Asia, returning to its traditional strategy of non-intervention in Eurasia and isolationism. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed the need to balance an Eurasian hegemon, and in a unipolar world, where American military and economic power are unassailable, the need for permanent alliances or multilateral institutions has dissipated. The European states are stable and prosperous enough to
sustain and protect themselves. European political unification unlikely due to divisions among the Europeans and a desire of the major states to maintain sovereignty. The situation in Asia is similarly benign for American interests, although policymakers are wary about rising Chinese influence. They therefore maintain capabilities in the Pacific and Asia. However, the reduction in the number of armed forces and the defence budget reinvigorates the dynamic American economy and positions it to profit from the era of globalisation to the utmost.

The American force posture is predominantly focused on maritime and air capabilities, and the land forces are mostly disbanded, except for a smaller size expeditionary capability to deploy in possible crises. Its advantageous geographic position and nuclear deterrent ensure the security of the US, and they allow the US to reap a peace dividend. The US can easily sustain a solid technological advantage over peer competitors without spending on the level of the Cold War. Maintaining NATO is no longer a priority, as the immediate threat that led to its founding has disappeared. Expansion eastwards is not necessary. European economic integration presents no threat to US interests, and is unlikely to lead to a cohesive political-military unit. The rise of China presents a risk to American Pacific interests in the coming decades, but China is unlikely to surpass American capabilities. Moreover, China is constrained by multiple potential regional balancers, such as India, Japan, and Russia, who are likely to be supported by smaller states such as Australia and South Korea. Russian capabilities in turn are severely constrained and should a hostile leadership emerge, it would be preoccupied with rebuilding the economy and maintaining political stability. The US government estimates that it can look forward to three decades of unchallenged superiority and prosperity, absent of any major threats. It does not have to actively maintain its Cold War leadership. The American economy is robust and does not depend on the state of the global economy, yet it is also technologically and financially well positioned to take advantage of the era of globalization.

The first crisis in this new era, however, challenges the isolationist perspective. In 1990 Iraq invades Kuwait and thereby gains de facto control over a vast amount of the global supply of oil. Without active American leadership the United Nations cannot generate enough forces to intervene in the short-term. The conflict drags on through sanctions and it is only the threat of eventual American involvement that causes Iraq to relent, withdraw its forces, but claim a moral victory. The Iranian fear that Iraq is developing nuclear weapons prompts Iran to do the same. The US refrains from acting, but maintains its naval presence to intervene should their competition escalate. The parallel breakdown of Yugoslavia is considered a tragedy, but one for which the Europeans carry the responsibility and the means to solve. The conflict provides the impetus for greater joint European capabilities but these are too slow in preventing the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia, Kosovo, and other contested areas. The fissures and resentments in the Middle East continue, with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remaining unresolved. Transnational Sunni terrorist groups, their members brought together and hardened through fighting
the Soviets in Afghanistan, strike across the Middle East, against regimes that are perceived as apostate. American intervention becomes more likely as time passes. In response to the instability on its border, the European Union does begin effectively pooling its resources, now that the UK has given up its traditional reticence to politically commit to the continent after the withdrawal of American forces has made the ‘special relationship’ a redundant asset. On the other side of the continent, China is projecting maritime power into the South China Sea, seeking to assert its position over its traditional sphere of influence.

There are several risks present in this minimalist American strategy: potential major competitors may assert their power in the absence of American balancing behaviour. The US is not drawn into the instability of the post-Cold War era, but it also remains unable to influence it. In the case of the Middle East, this implies little US control over who has access to the largest reserves of natural resources. American power potential and resources remain large enough, however, to act decisively should a clear threat emerge. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on the belief that no peer competitors are likely to have the resources to seriously damage American interests, or, in the case of the Europeans, that they have the intention to do so. Similarly, instability is considered as unwelcome, but not as an imminent threat to American interests, or one that requires the full use of American military resources, which remain available should the need arise.

**Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)**

In the maximalist internal balancing strategy the US upholds its permanent alliance commitments and the presence of the majority of its forces in Europe and Asia when the Cold War ends. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed direct threats to American security and interests, but has also offered an opportunity to create a global order conducive to American interests. American policymakers believe they must permanently extend the unique occurrence of unipolarity in which American military and economic power are unassailable into the future. Potential challengers in Eurasia must be dissuaded from competing with the US.\(^{58}\) The financial costs of this expansive approach to global order are high but so are the benefits to the US.

In order to prevent the rise of any possible challengers and expand US control over the core and periphery, the US must maintain and further develop the most technologically advanced forces to achieve full spectrum dominance in combat: this means the US invests heavily in land, air, maritime, and cyber warfare. To ensure the compliance of its allies, the US must keep them militarily dependent, which it does through maintaining

the presence of its armed forces and the institutions in which they are held. European military contributions to the American-lead order are highly welcome, but these are to be made through NATO and not to be doubled through a rival organisation. The US undermines European unification in non-economic domains: the integration of European markets and their opening to American trade and investment are welcome, political-military integration is not. EU institutions were widened rather than deepened due to US pressure. The established Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ gives American policymakers leverage to undermine European institutions from within. The dual expansion eastwards of NATO and E.U. institutions served also to further constrain the Russian sphere of influence and dovetailed with undermining independent European role. In Asia, the US must similarly remain the central security actor to contain China, which it does through expanding the number of alliances and agreements across East and Central Asia. However, the US dominates NATO, and the other agreements are often bilateral, signalling a more flexible approach to international cooperation that avoids constraining the US.

The crises of the post-Cold War world challenge American power, albeit generally in an indirect and unforeseen manner. The Gulf War is fought by a US-led coalition, under the nominal approval of the UN, and is pursued until the Iraqi regime is overthrown. This leads to an occupation that last several years and establishes a more friendly Sunni-Kurd government to check growing Iranian influence in the Gulf. The US postpones involvement in former Yugoslavia, considering it an European affair that does not directly impact American interests, but is then drawn in as it is perceived to challenge the credibility of American leadership. Instability is a constant feature of the new order, and various regional flashpoints pose dilemmas to American policymakers on whether to intervene. Credibility depends on maintaining global stability and security, specially concerning open and stable access to resources, and this creates a momentum for interventions to increase in frequency. American leadership is widely accepted by other states, but it is also highly resented. The attacks of 9/11 are followed by the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and strengthen the hand of those policymakers who would see the entire Middle Eastern region reordered. Following invasion plans already laid out in the 1990s, and bypassing the UN, the US invades Iran to prevent the regime acquiring weapons of mass destruction, leading to a decade long occupation. European resentment at continual requests to provide armed forces, the destabilization of the Middle East, and the perceived unilateralist turn cause frequent tensions within the transatlantic alliance. The European states turn to bilateral agreements to streamline European defence and they prepare alternatives to NATO. Alarmed by the expansion of the American presence and the increasing web of agreements and alliance around it, Russia and China accelerate their arms spending and increase their collaboration. The costs of continual interventions and occupations creates an unsustainable drain on the resources of the American government, crashing the economy and leading to increasingly polarised domestic politics. A global order conducive for American interests has been established, but reactions against dominant US power are growing.
There are several risks present in this maximalist American grand strategy: an continually expansive American role is immensely costly and is unlikely to be sustained indefinitely. American preponderance generates sharp resentment that takes leads to counterbalancing behaviour by other potential superpowers, to asymmetric warfare by weaker or non-state actors, and leads to the alienation of most of the traditional American allies. The expansionist view of American interests leads to a divisive domestic political scene. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on an understanding of the global order as inherently dangerous and unstable without the US to maintain security. Or, conversely it is driven by the perceived opportunity to reorder the system in line with American priorities and interests. It also suggests that its European and Asian allies are seen as neither capable or willing enough to maintain these interests on their own, nor as capable or willing to balance the US as it asserts itself.

**Germany: Post-Cold War counterfactuals**

*Minimalist strategy*

In the minimalist grand strategy Germany ends its alliance commitments in Europe, and redirects its efforts towards the pursuit of its national economic objectives. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed the need to be part of a counterbalancing alliance against a continental hegemon, even though the need to contain a reunified Germany remains for the Western allies. To avoid provoking its neighbours, it limits the number and capabilities of its forces. Germany absents itself from participation in political-military organisations such as NATO, but supports the economic and monetary integration of Europe. In exchange for the absence of military contributions, it contributes financially to its former allies. In the stable and secure era that follows the Cold War, Germany is well positioned to profit from its advantages in the era of financial and trade globalisation.

The German force posture is a stripped down version of that of the Cold War era, with a predominant role for land forces and air support for territorial defence. With declining investments, the armed forces decline relative to the rapidly modernising forces of the US, UK, and France, and can therefore play only a limited contribution to collective defence. This represents a de facto withdrawal from NATO for Germany, but its military decline leaves little doubt that it is not in the position to threaten any of its neighbours in any foreseeable future. To further negate distrust towards its objectives, a reunified Germany accepts further economic and monetary European integration. In essence it underwrites the political-military strategies of the UK and France through its support for the European economy. In exchange Germany supports the eastwards expansion of the European Union, with allows it to capitalise on its economic and cultural influence over
Central and Eastern Europe. While it has rejected the transatlantic alliance as unsuited for the post-Cold War era, Germany maintains solid bilateral relations with the US. Germany similarly improves its relationship with Russia. On the basis of its economic weight, Germany leads an unsuccessful campaign for accession to the UN Security Council.

The instability that follows the end of the Cold War seems to have little consequences for a Germany that is largely preoccupied with economically consolidating its reunified society and economy. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait disturbs its access to energy resources but Germany offers financial support for a US led intervention to re-establish Kuwaiti sovereignty. The war in former Yugoslavia is tragic but beyond a minimal UN peacekeeping contribution and support to non-governmental organisations, Germany does not perceive it has a role to play. It attracts growing numbers of refugees from the Balkan conflict, but otherwise the direct impact on German interests are minimal. Though Central and Eastern European politics remain turbulent. The attacks of 9/11 lead to the reinvigoration of the transatlantic alliance as NATO supports the US intervention in Afghanistan. Germany contributes minimally logistically, and offers to send development aid. The absence of Germany on the global stage is incommensurate with its growing economic prowess, leading to its disgruntled allies accusing Germany of freeriding. German policymakers answer that this is the price for their containment of its political-military potential. The German government vehemently opposes the US invasion of Iraq and considers it an unnecessary destabilisation of the Middle Eastern region. It finds common cause here with France, but the German government does not entertain French overtures that follow to consolidate an European political-military alternative to the transatlantic alliance. The current NATO rump organisation remains dominated by the Anglo-American allies, and European small state supporters, with a minimal role for Germany, and fewer new members from Central and Eastern Europe, giving it a de facto maritime bias towards action in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The lack of presence or interest of the Western states in its former sphere of influence, emboldens Russia to re-establish its role in the area, and it supports separatist movements in Eastern Europe. This increases the uncertainty in the states that have edged towards Germany, and with which it has considerable economic ties. While the US guarantees that any rapid change in the regional distribution of power will not take place, Germany is unable to influence the situation itself. The German government also has little ability to redirect American policymakers, wary of its perceived freeriding, towards the area. The German lack of contribution to the Libyan intervention reinforces the allied perception that it is a freerider. The end of its second decade as a reunified state finds Germany prosperous, but diplomatically isolated, and limited in its ability to shape the regional order.

There are several risks present in this minimalist German grand strategy: Germany is left unable to halt the spread of instability or influence the behaviour of the Western states, which accuse it of free-riding on the public goods of security and stability that
they provide. Similarly, in the long term, a possible revanchist Russia may upset the European balance of power. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on a low threat perception of post-Cold War instability, including the possible threat posed by regional powers, and Germany cannot perceive Russia as possible revanchist threat. Germany is dependent on, but unable to influence, the US and its other allies, and so must be convinced of their benign nature, and willingness to act according to its interests. Conversely, a Germany apprehensive of entanglement in unnecessary and overly aggressive actions by its allies is ensured freedom of action.

**Maximalist internal balancing strategy (hegemony)**

In the maximalist grand strategy with a focus on force Germany uses the institutions already established together with its military potential to expand its role and influence within Europe and outside of it. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed the need to be part of a permanent alliance against a continental hegemon. Consequently German policymakers attempt to slip the containment of the innate political-military, economic and demographic potential of a reunified Germany that the European and transatlantic institutions present. Germany therefore supports further European integration, including on the political-military level, to lessen the need for American military capabilities. European capabilities will also supress the suppressant extra-territorial hegemonic influence the US wields over the continent. Through the restraining effects of the European institutions, Germany is both able to reassure France and make it accept reunification. They also allow Germany to rebuild the requisite military capabilities needed to underline Germany's great power status. Provocative though these policies might be in the long-term, and costly vis-à-vis domestic priorities, Germany is able to assert its influence on the continent as it has not been able to for a century.

The German force posture reflects the dual need to act as the central security provider within Europe, while simultaneously putting sceptical neighbours at ease. Consequently, German armed forces are prepared for extra-territorial missions, primarily reflecting the tasks of the European and transatlantic institutions within which they operate. The land-based units are predominantly prepared for peacekeeping, stabilisation, reconstruction and nation-building tasks, but also to contribute significantly to interstate interventions, the latter requiring advanced air support and naval logistical capabilities to increase deployability. The costs of recalibrating German armed forces away from territorial defence towards out-of-area operations are initially high, especially since they need to overcome a half-century lag of experience that the French and British forces have built up in their colonial wars and anti-communist interventions. Yet, within a decade Germany is able to deploy a significant amount of high-quality units, equally fit for conflict management as high-intensity actions. Germany consequently becomes the
leading partner of the US for maintaining order within Europe and its periphery, although its forces always remain deployed under allied command. Germany resists the expansion of the NATO in mandate and scope, including adding new members in Central and Eastern Europe, as it considers this its traditional hinterland. It instead builds strong bilateral relationships with the US, UK and France. With the latter Germany supports the further economic and monetary integration of Europe, using its economic capacity to underwrite the economic development of the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe. Through its bilateral cooperative efforts across Europe, including these new member states and the smaller Western European states, Germany together with France lays the framework for a European security identity. The UK reinvigorates the transatlantic relationship, convincing several of the smaller states neighbouring Germany that have become wary of its growing potential to refocus on strengthening NATO. Regardless of the high financial and political costs, within the second decade Germany has achieved its desired position as the central player in European affairs and a potential global force to be reckoned with.

The wave of instability that follows the end of the Cold War represents a series of challenges to German policy of activism. The Gulf War, as the first occasion of interstate warfare that Germany has participated in for over forty years, even if it comes too soon after reunification, also offers an opportunity to assert Germany’s new intentions as regional player. Its armed forces are in the middle of their doctrinal transformation and are only able to play a minimal role in the actual conflict. Yet, their competence is noted, and Germany reinvigorates American activism in reforming the global order. The events in former Yugoslavia require an European response, and Germany provides the resources to a joint NATO Europe action supported by American infrastructure and hardware. The parallel costs of reunifying Germany and integrating the Länders formerly belonging to the DDR, supporting the expansion of the EU eastwards and high defence expenditures for its international commitments severely dampen German economic growth during the first decade following reunification. The turn of millennium seems to offer some respite from these pressures, as the internal adjustments are nearing completion. The attacks of 9/11, however, necessitate an allied response, and lead to renewed American ambitious action to transform the Middle East and attack the root causes of global instability. Germany joins the US action in Afghanistan to demonstrate its reliability as a partner. The expansion of American strategy towards regime change in Iraq is watched with increasing alarm, but strong support for the US in the increasingly hostile and anti-American international environment is considered an opportunity to position Germany as the most important partner to the US in Europe, the strength of the bilateral ties even rivalling the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’. The German moves cause a policy shift in France, which has become wary of German intentions and hesitant to facilitate further German ascendance. Consequently, France reaffirms its ties with the UK, and cooperates with it in the maritime-centred strategic framework of the pared down NATO. More importantly, increased German assertiveness and influence in Central and Eastern Europe, have alerted Russia and lead it to counterbalancing and
intimidation of the non-NATO member EU states close to its border. Germany uses the Libyan intervention to signal its political support of British and French objectives, although another military adventure comes at great financial and domestic political costs. The economic basis that previously supported German internationalist policies can no longer do so, or at least to the same extent, certainly not when confronted with the economic and financial crises and the demand on German financial support by the weaker E.U. member states. Germany has become the de facto central power in Europe but the burden seems greater than it can bear in the long-term.

There are several risks present in this maximalist German strategy: the extensive in and out of area military commitments are unsustainable for the German government in the long-term, even though Germany is increasingly able to shape the rules of the game in the European order according to its own national interests. While Germany is resentful of US hegemony and the restraints it places on German power, it needs US acceptance, or at least tolerance, of its new status, The need for US support inevitably makes German policy subsidiary to American strategic goals. The ambitious agenda of the US is likely to entangle Germany into commitments that are beyond what it can maintain over the long-term. Moreover, new-found German assertiveness will provoke anxious responses among its European neighbours, and is likely to lead to Russian counterbalancing. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on a medium threat perception of post-Cold War instability, including the possible threat posed by regional powers, and a medium perception of Russia as possible revanchist threat. Germany needs to be willing to expend sufficient resources to attain credible military capabilities and be willing to use them, even though this will trigger responses among allies, neutrals and potential adversaries. Other European powers must be willing to accept the peaceful fulfilment of Germany’s innate potential. Consequently, German policymakers must fundamentally believe that the European order is flexible and that the search for regional hegemony will not provoke overt soft or even hard balancing among its European neighbours.

United Kingdom: Post-Cold War counterfactuals

Maximalist external balancing strategy (collective security)

In the maximalist external balancing strategy the UK continues its commitments to the European institutions, including its military participation, in order to safeguard and expand the established global liberal order. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has mostly removed the need to be part of a permanent alliance against a continental hegemon, but multiple regional powers remain and instability is spreading outside of Europe. Within Europe potential sources of conflict remain in the distribution of power.
on the continent. The fletch work of Cold War political, military, and economic institutions led by the US must be expanded. Consequently, the UK must further integrate into the dual institutions of the European community and NATO, and accept the economic and military consequences. The costs to sovereignty and British government finances are acceptable in light of the alternative of instability.

The British force posture is therefore expanded to include more diverse tasks and to increase the expeditionary reach of the British armed forces. This requires increased investment in maritime and air capabilities. The army must be redesigned from continental defence towards high intensity interventions as well as lower intensity reconstruction, peacekeeping, and nation-building. The British armed forces should remain embedded in NATO, both to maintain the institution and to ensure continued American commitment to the future of Europe. The organisation can further be used to establish and maintain security, democracy and stability in the regions bordering Europe. The UK becomes a more enthusiastic supporter of European integration and supports both the deepening and the widening of the EU institutions. British support for the EU achieves two goals: to embed and constrain a reunified Germany, and to ensure that the UK remains a crucial bridge between Europe and the US. The dual expansion of NATO and the EU also embeds democratic institutions in formerly authoritarian states. The UK considers more inclusive policies towards Russia, to prevent provocation. In general, British policymakers believe the number and scope of international institutions must be further expanded to further ensure global stability. They attach increased importance to the UN, specifically in terms of crisis management. Through its contributions, the UK achieves the desired global order, but it is one that requires constant management and carries high costs.

The instability of the post-Cold War world demands constant alertness and action, as the UK intervenes predominantly where it perceives the global order to be threatened and it is able to act. The first crisis fits the model: the Gulf War is quickly won through a strong American-led, UN-sanctioned coalition that drives Iraqi forces back from Kuwait. Taking the successful outcome as an auspicious sign, British policymakers seize the momentum. They push for prominent roles for NATO and the EU in the wars in former Yugoslavia, the archetypical conflicts of the new era. The intervention and peacekeeping missions are problematic. The UK contributes disproportionately compared to the other major European powers, which are wary of the long effort needed, and compared to the US, which prefers providing air power over boots on the ground. The UK seeks action in Rwanda, but lacks the capabilities to intervene in the time horizon. Instead, a series of more limited actions follow over the next years. The attacks of 9/11 are considered an attack on the very basis of global peace and stability, and the emergent global democratic order. The UK government therefore wholeheartedly participates in the intervention and the proceeding years of nation-building. It considers joining the US intervention in Iraq, which is seen as one of the sources of Middle Eastern instability, but hesitates to proceed without U.N. legitimization. This leads to the US intervening
alone, and the UK joining for the post-invasion nation-building effort. The financial pressures of the dual intensive long-duration missions raise the government debt, and necessitate budget cuts. The UK supports the French-led intervention in Libya, but with most its forces involved in or recovering from two nearly decade long missions, it is unable to do more than contribute to some of the logistics. The waves of instability shift to new locations, demanding decisions on new interventions. The UK has the global order it sought, but the costs are high and the influence it has gained is uncertain.

There are several risks present in this maximalist British grand strategy: the extensive in- and out of area military commitments are unsustainable for the UK government, made worse by the risk of free-riding behaviour by other Western states as UK provides the public good of stability. The more ambitious agenda of the US is likely to further entangle the UK in missions beyond its means. Expanding the depth and width of European integration may create a political-military unit on the continent and alienate the US. The dual expansion of NATO and the EU may provoke Russia. Instability is permanent and dynamic. The influence of the UK might not be substantially improved, at least not in proportion to the investment. Consequently, this strategy is conditional on the view that global instability has increased after the end of the Cold War and that it directly impacts British interests. Furthermore, British policymakers must believe they have the means to effectively constrain instability. Conditional for the British course towards institution-building requires a high level of trust in both the Europeans and the US, but also the belief that intra-European rivalries will re-emerge without American-led institutions to constrain them.

**France: Post-Cold War counterfactuals**

*Limited balancing strategy*

In the limited grand strategy France seeks to shape the European and global order through a restrained use of alliances and scepticism towards permanent commitments, and the selective use of force abroad. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed the primary continental threat to French security and consequently the need to be part of a counterbalancing alliance. A reunified Germany may possibly dominate Western Europe economically and politically, and therefore existing institutions need to be maintained and partly expanded to contain its ascendance over the continent. To avoid the permanent extension of American hegemony, a more multipolar global order is to be encouraged. France has the capabilities to defend itself and deter potential continental adversaries, and its financial resources can now be invested towards playing a more active role in shaping the extra-European order, including the traditional French sphere of influence.
France develops a force posture predominantly towards extra-regional interventions where vital or strategic interests are threatened. This implies increased funding towards advanced land-based capabilities, with air support and naval logistics. While France seeks to influence regional balances of power, it maintains only minimal peacekeeping or nation-building capabilities. The French nuclear weapon allows it to maintain strategic autonomy and middle power status, as well as a minimal forces for territorial defence. Proliferation is considered a devaluation of French nuclear weapons. France does not support expansion of NATO eastwards, nor the broadening of the mandate, and consequently it does not reintegrate itself into the political-military planning. The disappearance of the Soviet threat has ended its usefulness, and now NATO merely risks provoking Russia. Moreover, it allows the US to maintain its dominance over Europe, and to drag European members into adventures that serve its own interests. French membership of NATO is extended, however, because it offers a route to prevent an expanded role for the organisation. France is similarly sceptical of European integration, as it constrains French national interests, but supports the EU because it allows France to exert control over newly reunified Germany. It does not support expansion of membership of the European project eastwards. German reunification was unavoidable, but for French policymakers a reunified Germany suggests the risk of renewed struggles over political influence on the continent. The UN Security Council seat offers France increased leverage. France therefore supports limited UN missions, though it resists calls for a more ambitious agenda for the UN.

The instability of the post-Cold War era is perceived by French policymakers as a low-level threat, but considering French interests in Africa and Middle East, one well worth watching. France considers regional powers gaining nuclear weapons as the greater threat. As its access to natural resources is threatened by the expansive actions of the Iraqi government in its invasion of Kuwait, France joins in the allied action of the Gulf War. French policymakers are satisfied when Iraqi forces are driven back to their own territory, wary as they are of destabilising the region and assisting Iranian ascendance in the region. France avoids taking part in the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, and is only prompted to contribute when it seems the US and UK will act without it. French forces are predominantly reserved for actions in Francophone Africa, such as assistance to the Rwandese government. The attacks of 9/11 are seen through the prism of Islamic extremism that France has experience with domestically and in its traditional spheres of influence. France considers taking part in Afghanistan, but instead offers logistical support. It firmly resists the invasion of Iraq. French policymakers believe it will destabilise the regional balance of power and entrench American hegemony in all the major geopolitical regions. The institutionalised nature of the Franco-German relationship allows France to organise a European counter-alliance to the Anglo-American push for intervention in and transformation of the Middle East. However, due to its realpolitik posture, France does not have the legitimacy to play a leadership role in Europe needed to pursue a longer-term solution policy to deal US predominance. France instead nestles itself in a series of tighter bilateral cooperative agreements, becoming a
de facto central player on the European continent as long as American attention is
distracted by events in the Middle East and East Asia. Germany begins to assert itself on
the continent, compensating with its huge economic weight for the absence of political-
military capability. The US involves itself further into the Middle East. The possible
threat of Iran should it develop a nuclear deterrent to the regional balance of power and,
perhaps, French security, necessitates increased French-American cooperation. The
Arab Spring movements surprise French policymakers and they cooperate with the
Americans and the British in Libya, in order to safeguard some French influence in the
emerging regional order. Growing Russian assertiveness in its former sphere of
influence increases the demand for a stronger collective security organisation in Europe
to compensate for the decline of NATO. A more multipolar regional and global order
offers France advantages but French policies have increased the strategic complexity,
and the demand for flexible diplomacy and action grows beyond the capacities of French
policymakers.

There are several risks present in this limited French grand strategy: the spread of post-
Cold War instability might be difficult to contain and the ambitions of regional powers,
including those of a possible resurgent Russia, might be greater than expected. Moreover, France risks losing influence with and leverage on Western allies when these
push for the further expansion of NATO (the US and UK), and European integration
(Germany) without France playing an active role in shaping these organisations. The
latter could offer Germany much greater influence on the European continent than
France, necessitating more assertive French policies in terms of force projection outside
of Europe to compensate for its lesser economic weight. Consequently, this strategy is
conditional on a medium threat perception that a possible Russian resurgence on the
continent is unlikely, a medium assessment of the aggressive intentions of regional
powers, and of the extent that the post-Cold War instability takes hold. It also depends
on a relatively benign assessment of German intentions within Europe and wariness of
American hegemony in Europe and the Middle East, benign to French interests though
it might be.
Inferences from counterfactuals

The counterfactual scenarios substantiate that policymakers could have plausibly chosen other grand strategies than the ones they in actuality chose (tables 4-11 briefly summarise the thirty-two counterfactuals). These alternatives each had distinct advantages for the state in question as well as risks. Their choices showed how policymakers weighed the relative advantages and risks of threats, allies, and the force posture. The section below infers from these choices what beliefs policymakers must have – approximately – held.

United States

The counterfactual scenarios for the US – as tables 4 and 8 briefly summarise – suggest that a more limited, or even minimalist, US strategy was plausible in the post Second World War era, and offered significant benefits. Protected on both sides by oceans and at the height of its economic and military power, the US itself was not directly threatened. It could therefore have passed off the costs of preventing the rise of a possible Soviet continental hegemon onto a reconstructed Europe where the advent of nuclear weapons had increased the deterrent capabilities of the European powers. If the Communist threat was perceived as predominantly state-based, rational, not inherently aggressive, and non-ideologically subversive in nature, these measures would likely have been sufficient to contain the Soviet Union and prevent it from dominating the European continent. It is therefore remarkable that American policymakers did not attempt to pass off costs for European security and the containment of the Soviet Union on to the Europeans, though some of them, including President Eisenhower, did consider such a policy.

The US could have handed Europeans nuclear weapons and a promise to intervene should the Soviets show actual intentions to invade Western Europe. The US could have acted as the ‘arsenal of democracy’ that President Roosevelt envisioned before the Second World War, supporting European reconstruction and rearmament without actually committing its own forces or extending security guarantees. In fact, such a policy might not only have been sufficient to deter the Soviet Union without provoking it, but actually improved the overall security situation. Without American military capabilities added to its own, Western Europe would be too weak to independently threaten the Soviet Union. In contrast, the presence of American forces in Western Europe endangered US security, as the US would be involved in any escalation. Escalation of the Cold War – whether through Soviet intentions, riskseeking behaviour by European allies, or in contrast European indecisiveness, or simply error by any including American policymakers – would have forced American involvement. This in
turn would have perhaps led to the destruction of American cities, and certainly have led to massive casualty rates of American forces in the European theatre.

The key element in the actual choice for what was and is essentially a maximalist grand strategy – with elements of both primacy and collective security – is that there was no faith in the ability to deter the Soviet Union because Soviets designs were inherently expansionist, and that Europeans could not be trusted if they were not under American control. The decisions of American policymakers suggest that they perceived the Soviet threat as both high and existential by nature, and that American policymakers had insufficient faith in European capabilities and morale to counter it. The crux is that it was not the conventional capabilities of the Soviet Union that were perceived to offer the greatest threat to US interests, but the perceived ideological appeal of communism, specifically in Europe but also throughout the rest of the world. The European states would disintegrate and succumb to communist movements, if they had not already renationalised their foreign policies and reignited their established rivalries. If the Soviet Union was indeed inherently aggressive by nature, containment would be highly uncertain and unstable.

These beliefs explain the choice for a maximalist American grand strategy and demonstrates American interests and security were not only linked, but even equated, to those of the Europeans. It shows an American willingness to accept significant risks to its forces and its own territorial security for the protection of Europe. It demonstrates that successive generations of American policymakers accepted the risk of entrapment/entanglement, with potential risk-seeking and free-riding behaviour on the part of the Europeans, over the possible loss of control of Europe and Asia. This demonstrated a willingness on the part of American policymakers to accept continuous demands on American efforts in all parts of the world in order to guarantee the credibility of its strategy, and the acceptance of the domestic costs of potential overstretch. Finally, its maximalist strategy shows that American policymakers were either unaware or unwilling to accept the potential that American preponderance could provoke counterbalancing coalitions, suggesting that they assumed that other powers would generally accept that American power was benign in its nature.

The continuation of the maximalist American Cold War strategy into the post-Cold War era further demonstrates how deeply engrained these beliefs are: a highly selective US strategy could have accomplished American security interests at much lower costs. The disappearance of the Soviet threat removed the major potential Eurasian hegemon. There was no longer a strict requirement for the US to maintain its Cold War alliance commitments, nor the permanent presence of American forces abroad, nor high defence spending to maintain technological superiority. Certainly, the development of European security alternatives potentially created the possibility of a more multipolar world. Yet, such a world would still dominated by the US, but allow it to pass on the costs for security and stability. It does not explain why the US continued to involve itself in
conflicts and threats to stability in peripheral conflicts across the globe. American policymakers instead actively worked against their allies becoming more independent from the US, and feared the renationalization of European and Asian states and the reignition of old rivalries. The high costs of such a maximalist strategy, both in terms of spending and overstretch, are not easily explained by structural incentives. To explain these choices requires that American policymakers share core beliefs on American interests and threats to those interests, the efficacy of alliances and force postures, and broadly agree which trade-offs are preferable or at least acceptable over others.

Germany

The counterfactual scenarios for Germany – as tables 5 and 9 briefly summarise - suggest that both a more limited (West)German strategy and a more maximalist hegemonic strategy were possible in the post Second World War era. Even accepting that Germany was severely constrained by its Western allies, German policymakers could have played out its pivotal strategic role on the European continent more assertively. If the Soviet Union was not perceived as inherently expansionist and aggressive, nor American power as inherently benign, and sufficient faith remained in the innate potential of German power, such an assertive course of action could have safeguarded German security as well as given it greater policy leeway. German policymakers had not changed their perceptions of the threat of the Soviet Union after the Second World War. There was instead a consistent apprehensiveness about the use of military force and the autonomy of the German military. Despite the clear threat from the Soviet Union, German policymakers had to publically defend NATO and the deterrent in the late 1970s and 1980s, simply because fear of the escalation of the Cold War had become so prominent.

West Germany was highly constrained during the Cold War, yet it remarkable is that German policymakers accepted the bounds of the Cold War structures and made very little attempts to loosen them – not in 1955, not in 1990. In fact, they welcomed NATO and the various iterations of European integration. Both allowed West Germany to be more secure than it had been since its founding as a nation-state. These two structures peacefully removed the threat to its West – France – and offered a new security that the Franco-German peace treaty reinforced. They also gave West Germany security – though one that was not as complete – on its Eastern border. In the circumstances of the early Cold War, that was probably the best West Germany could achieve in terms of security. It was probably not the optimum/best German policymakers could have achieved in terms of influence or of autonomy.

The counterfactuals suggest that, even in the highly constrained circumstances of the early Cold War, German policymakers had more options at their disposal to gain
leverage on its allies. A comparison with France – the continental state whose security was equally precarious should the Cold War escalate with conventional or limited nuclear means - highlights that it was possible to achieve influence and autonomy. Yet, German policymakers made only limited claims towards nuclear weapons – as Adenauer had done. The single most autonomous policy of German policymakers was Ostpolitik, when they attempted to deescalate the Cold War by assertive diplomacy towards Germany’s eastern neighbours.

The choice for a maximalist German grand strategy focused on multilateral cooperation – with elements of neutralist minimalism – demonstrates which trade-offs in terms of risks and benefits German policymakers were willing to accept. Rather than pursuing a measure of autonomy for Germany, they accepted the entanglement of Germany. Rather than establishing the possibility of German force being used as one of the many instruments available to a state, Germany accepted strict restrictions on its force posture and employment. Rather than pursuing an independent, or even a shared, nuclear deterrent, German policymakers agreed to accept restraints on its possession. Together these choices suggest that they were willing to sacrifice a great deal of autonomy and consequently accept a great of vulnerability and dependence on the US, rather than risk German isolation or abandonment on the continent. It also suggests that German policymakers trusted the US and believed its power to be relatively benign, certainly compared to that of the Soviet Union. Together, these developments suggest that Germany was no longer willing to seek a position commensurate with its innate potential.

The partial continuation of this limited and autonomous strategy with maximalist elements into the post-Cold War era demonstrates how deeply engrained these beliefs are among German policymakers, even when the restraints of the Cold War were removed. A reunified Germany could either position itself more independently or, conversely, more vigorously support the collective security system upon which its foreign policy is dependent. During the entire post-the Cold War period it appears that German policymakers have not actively – and certainly not consistently - sought to strengthen the German position, preferring to fund the bill for others do to so. In fact, according to its allies, it has shirked the options to do so. That is remarkable since the circumstances within which German policymakers can operate have drastically changed. Germany is far less constrained and bound since its unification and the removal of the Cold War structures. German policymakers broadly accept American leadership, and the constraints of its European neighbours, and suggesting that they view their allies as non-threatening.

What is exceptional about the choices of German policymakers in the two decades since the end of the Cold War, they have not attempted to leverage Germany’s position against France, the UK or the US, as, in contrast, the policymakers of each of those three states have done towards the other states. France has tried to leverage its ties with Germany
for greater influence in Europe vis-à-vis Britain and the US. Britain has attempted to use the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ to achieve greater influence both in Europe and with the US. The US has used Britain to undermine any significant degree of European integration in the political-military domain. Germany has avoided this type of jockeying for regional and global influence and power. German policymakers do not even seem to have been tempted by the power shifts in the period of austerity that followed the financial crisis in Europe. To explain these choices requires that German policymakers share a vision of German interests and threats to those interests, and broadly agree which trade-offs are preferable or at least acceptable over others.

**United Kingdom**

The counterfactual scenarios for the UK— as tables 6 and 10 briefly summarise - suggest that, even within the constraining circumstances of the post-Second World War era, the UK could have plausibly chosen a more limited, even minimalist, grand strategy that best utilised the advantages it had in that environment. Protected by the Channel and the credible deterrence made possible by the introduction of nuclear weapons, Britain was in a position to continue its traditional role of off-shore balancer towards the European continent, shifting the balance of power to its favour. If the Communist threat was perceived as predominantly state-based, rational, not inherently aggressive, and non-ideologically subversive in nature, these measures would likely have been sufficient to contain the Soviet Union and prevent it from dominating the European continent. Britain did not attempt to pass off costs to US, though the American presence in Europe was an option to do this. Instead, British dependence on the US cost the UK its empire.

In the decade that followed the Second World War, British policymakers shifted from a maritime to a continental strategy in contrast to established British policy traditions and powerful institutional interests within the armed forces. British post-war grand strategy in fact was exactly the opposite of a buck-passing strategy. During this period – with the partial exception of the Suez Crisis, but the manner in which that ended proves the thesis - British policymakers never dared to risk alienating the US and leading it to possibly abandon its European commitments. For Britain the costs of an American abandonment of Europe were perceived to be high. This should be considered surprising, as Britain was in a better position than any of the continental states to guarantee its territorial security from invasion by the Soviet Union, simply based on its geography, certainly if the UK possessed a nuclear deterrent.

The eventual choice for a maximalist strategy predominantly that centred on embedding the US into Europe through NATO suggests that British policymakers perceived the threat of the Soviet Union as imminent. The ideological appeal of Communism to the war-torn states on the European continent, and the expansive nature of the Soviet Union
necessitated a permanent British commitment to the continent, a radical departure from its established strategic behaviour. Without a British commitment, the US might devolve the responsibility for European security onto the continental European states. The European allies had insufficient morale to maintain their own security, were defeatist, if not outright sympathetic to Soviet aims. This combination risked leaving Britain isolated in Europe, facing a threat on the continent, this time not only armed with air power, but nuclear weapons that could decimate suddenly-vulnerable British populations.

These beliefs explain the choice for a maximalist strategy and demonstrates which trade-offs in risks and benefits British policymakers were willing to accept. Britain sacrificed a significant measure of sovereignty and manoeuvre space to guarantee the continued presence of the US in Europe, although it unsuccessfully attempted to use its position to become the primes inter pares among the European allies. It accepted the permanent stationing of British forces on the continent which ensured that Britain would not be able to extract itself from a possible future European conflict nor that it would be able to maintain its colonial empire in the long term, although it attempted to do the latter. It forewent the development of a completely independent nuclear deterrent, which showed both a willingness to accept American leadership and a lack of faith in the possible deterrence of the Soviet Union by these weapons. Britain actively resisted the organisation of Europe as an independent counterweight to Soviet power, fearing abandonment by the US. Whereas British leaders had heretofore done their best to avoid entrapment/entanglement on the continent, they now accepted it in Europe and in their relationship with the US. Taking these European commitments together with their global commitments, meant that British policymakers were willing to accept overstretch and the loss of national policy autonomy towards its empire. The acceptance of the risks inherent in these trade-offs demonstrates that British policymakers felt highly insecure in relation to threats from the continent, that they perceived Britain as unable to maintain its own security and the Europeans as even more incapable of doing so, and that they perceived the US as crucial to maintaining security towards the Soviet Union and order within Europe. Finally, it suggests that British policymakers trusted the US to guarantee security and viewed American power as inherently benign.

Maintaining this integration in the post-Cold War era demonstrates how deeply engrained these beliefs are: without the Soviet threat the UK could disengage from NATO and return to a more limited or minimalist grand strategy and refocus on national priorities. Instead Britain actively worked to keep the US embedded in Europe, to prevent the rise of an independent European security identity, and thereby to continue its bridging role between the US and Europe. In order to achieve this, British policymakers were willing to accept a permanently subordinate position of Britain towards the US and the entanglement of British interests in American strategy. This included sending British forces on US led interventions against perceived aggressive and expansionist threats to a stable global liberal order. This interventionism has outpaced British financial resources. In contrast to its willingness to entangle itself in American
strategy, Britain refuses, however, to accept the full integration of Britain in Europe, viewing British interests as separate from the continent. This means that British strategy does not fully fit a collective security / liberal model, just as it no longer fits an off-shore balancing or regional hegemony model. To explain these discontinuities, requires that British policymakers fundamentally share core beliefs on the British interest within Europe and the world, and the threats to these interests, and broadly agree which risks of which trade-offs they are willing to settle for.

**France**

The counterfactual scenarios for France – as tables 7 and 11 briefly summarise - suggest that a more cooperative maximalist French strategy was plausible in the post-Second World War era, and would have prevented significant risks. Vulnerable to invasion from the East, badly damaged and divided during the war, France was in a precarious position in the Cold War, facing two continental threats: the Soviet Union but also a possible resurgent revanchist Germany. France was best served by the complete immersion in the transatlantic frameworks, ensuring through the permanent presence of the US in Europe the double containment of Germany and the Soviet Union. If the Communist threat was perceived as serious and potentially ideologically subversive, and the US was perceived as reliable and essentially benign, the full integration of France in the transatlantic structure would have been sufficient to provide security against both the Soviet Union and Germany, and enable France to focus on its domestic reconstruction.

France’s buck-passing strategy risked alienating the US, and this could have led to the US partially or wholly abandoning Europe. This was problematic for France for two reasons. A diminished American commitment would increase the risk to France of Soviet attempts to expand its sphere of influence, but it also increased the chances of resurgent German power. The German problem was there both after the Second World War and after the Cold War. French decisions in the first decades of the Cold War are therefore problematic and contradictory, in light of their precarious security situation.

Indeed, in the early years of the Cold War French policymakers frantically sought an American presence. Part of the motivation for the rejection of the EDC was the fear that France would be abandoned on the European continent with both the Soviet Union and Germany. This changed during the 1950s. While it is true that the early 1960s the French situation had improved and the risk of alienating the US had declined, it is not clear why French policymakers would actually take this risk. France alienated the US and Britain, undermined transatlantic unity by leaving the integrated political-military command of NATO, and spent prodigious amounts of resources acquiring an independent nuclear weapon. Why should they seek a more autonomous course and invest heavily in a nuclear weapon? Why should French policymakers shift their
attention nearly exclusively to Europe, and very quickly abandon French colonial possessions? These choices show a contradictory – at first glance – clearly high appreciation of the Soviet threat in Europe together with policies that undermined the strength of the alliance that ensured French security.

The eventual choice for a limited and autonomous grand strategy – with elements of regional hegemony-seeking and collective security – suggests that the Soviet threat was perceived as both high and existential, but also that French policymakers had insufficient faith in the US (and Britain) to guarantee its security. French policymakers feared that in the case of a possible escalation of the Cold War, the US would abandon it in favour of its own security. They did therefore not perceive the extended deterrence that the US offered as credible, nor were they convinced that France would not be entangled in American adventurism.

The partial continuation of this limited and autonomous strategy with maximalist elements into the post-Cold War era demonstrates how deeply engrained these beliefs are among French policymakers. As France was now free to follow its autonomous course, it instead attempted to use European integration to accelerate the arrival of a more multipolar global order in which Europe, and thereby France, could extract itself from American domination. After the Cold War a reunified Germany should be considered – in terms of balance of power – threatening. Indeed, Mitterrand and other
top French policymakers feared it for exactly those reasons. The European Union constrained and embedded Germany.

French policymakers then sought to use the EU to balance the US, now the most powerful state in the international system. France demonstrated a continued lack of trust in American intentions, when it attempted to temper American activism in the periphery. Furthermore, to curb American influence, France has undermined a British role within Europe, though it collaborated with the UK bilaterally, because it is the only other major European state that is serious about defence. The reintegration into NATO proved a slower process until France’s European options were first exhausted and it became clear that a pre-occupied US was less interested in Europe. However, despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat, France has not deprioritised its deterrent, continuing to equate it with a security guarantee and autonomy. To explain these choices requires that French policymakers share a vision of French interests and threats to those interests, and broadly agree which trade-offs are preferable or at least acceptable over others.

**Conclusion**

The counterfactual thought experiments illuminate the options available to the policymakers of the four states, despite the structural constraints of the Cold War and post-Cold War period. This chapter shows that the two cases with the more complex historical experiences, also faced more complex choices during the Cold War. Whereas the US was an undisputed superpower, which could act without hardly any restraints, and Germany had been destroyed and could not act outside of restraints, France and the UK had multiple strategic options but more limited resources to pursue them.

Again, comparing France with Britain offers a remarkable contrast. If French policymakers were right about the credibility and possibilities of national deterrence, then the British policymakers were clearly wrong, and if the British policymakers were correct about the inability of a national British deterrent to effectively deter Soviet attacks, then the French were absolutely wrong. If the French policymakers were wrong, they overspent on defence, weakened their security on the continent to attacks and pressure from the Soviet Union, and misunderstood the importance of these weapons for increasing French influence. If British policymakers were wrong, they were willing to weaken their security because they trusted the US to effectively deter the Soviet Union through the extended deterrence of its nuclear weapons. They were willing to lose the influence of a truly autonomous nuclear weapon, while French policymakers viewed autonomy as intrinsic to the possession of such a weapon.
This is not an argument that either British or French policymakers transparently made misguided or dangerous choices. Or rather, they both did, but they could not have done otherwise: all choices in the Cold War were dangerous. In what was a highly uncertain strategic environment, given a series of options with intrinsic costs and benefits, they chose a reasonable course that best fit their established beliefs on the reliability of allies, and on the nature of the threat and their ability to deal with it. These beliefs directly fit their experiences during the Second World War: British policymakers sought to avoid isolation on the continent and lost their belief in strategic air power; French policymakers sought to avoid dependence on its allies and believed they could not risk not applying the latest advancement in military technology.

For the US, what the counterfactuals underline, is the risks American policymakers were willing to take to ensure the balance of power in Europe would be maintained in the West’s advantage. Those risks were far from abstract: in the nuclear era they implied a direct threat to national survival, while the US had enough economic, technological, and geographic advantages to choose alternative policies. American policymakers were adamant in their belief to avoid a repetition of the experience of the Second World War, when a European threat almost achieved continental dominance over hesitant and weak European states. This proved to them that the US could not rely on far-off balances of power, a belief American policymakers carried through to the post-war environment.

In contrast, what emerges from the counterfactuals on Germany is how little effort German policymakers made to escape the structures of the alliances and the international institutions in which Germany was embedded. This is specifically remarkable in the post-Cold War era, but in both eras (West)German policymakers had more options to leverage their power within Europe than they seemed to want to pursue.

This chapter depended on highly abstracted interpretations of US and European calculations of interests to make its point. Lost through this process, might be the sense of how policymakers actually articulated their strategic beliefs and referenced history. The following two chapters show how the beliefs of policymakers were mostly consistent through the post-war period. Chapter seven does this through an analysis of policy documents, while chapter eight expands upon this content analysis with other documents, speeches, and interviews. Together these two chapters evoke the concrete use of the past, and its consistency throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.
Chapter Seven

Content Analysis of Policy Documents (1960 to 2010)
This chapter and the next one approach the legacies of victory and defeat by looking at
the rhetorical binding tissue that American, British, French, and German policymakers
use to legitimate their policy choices. Both these chapters show the consistency in the
expressed ideas of policymakers, and thereby build on the arguments of the previous
chapters.

It is a continuation of the arguments of chapters three, four, five, and six. In different
ways, those chapters focused on how experiences in the Second World War shaped the
grand strategic behaviour of the states that participated in it. Chapter three took the
broad view of all the war’s participants, defined their experiences in a structured
manner, and showed that victorious states had a greater propensity to use force, while
defeated states were more likely to depend on diplomacy. Chapters four and five focused
on the US, UK, France, and Germany in particular, and dissected how their experiences
with the Second World War shaped the strategic beliefs of civilian and military
policymakers, and the domestic relations between state, society, and the armed forces.
Chapter six argued, through counterfactuals, that the experiences of the US, UK, France,
and Germany in the Second World War explained why their policymakers took certain
strategic decisions despite other, equally or sometimes more plausible, alternatives that
were available to them.

What these chapters did not do, however, was look specifically at how policymakers
justified their choices. In these final two empirical chapters, the focus therefore moves
from behaviour to an in-depth examination of the ideational motivation and
legitimation of policymakers in different kinds of texts.

This chapter examines a disciplined selection of policy documents to analyse how
policymakers motivate and defend the elements of grand strategy. Because of the formal
role in decision-making that policy documents play, they can create a bridge from ideas
to action that can be assessed empirically in a structured manner. The stated strategies
therefore occupy a specific place between strategic beliefs and strategic behaviour. The
elements analysed are: the international environment; alliances; force posture; the
domestic environment; and the policy goals and ambitions of policymakers.

Chapter eight that follows this chapter looks at how policymakers referred to history
when they motivate and defend the choices between policy alternatives. It draws from
the same set of policy documents, but supplements them with other texts of
policymakers – speeches, books, and interviews. Chapter eight shows that experiences in
the Second World War played a recurring role in tying together the various strategic
beliefs. It also shows that subsequent experiences with conflict – such as Suez, Vietnam,
Algeria, the Falklands, the Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq – reinforced
or undermined the lessons of the Second World War, but also that they were only able to
do so in a limited manner.
Policy documents

Ideally, the content analysis would cover a single consistent source over six to seven decades for each country and each government over the entire era – a source that covers national policy goals, assesses the international and domestic environment, and gives instrumental preferences. Unfortunately, such a source does not exist. To approximate the ideal characteristics, this study uses the highest level statements on national security or defence policy statements for each state: the defence white papers and national security strategies. These documents attempt to encapsulate in a single statement: the state’s goals; developments in the international environment; threat prioritisation; tasks for the armed forces; the alliances and international organisations within which the state will operate, as well as highlight resource constraints and other domestic issues. These texts generally will cover each of these dimensions in separate sections or chapters. Often they also reflect on current policies, technological changes, specific regional policies, trade issues, the role of democracy and of development aid. They should not be taken as the equivalent of actual grand strategy, but can serve as the ideational ‘glue’ of how the different parts of national grand strategy relate to one another.

Table 12 provides an overview of the documents used.

The selected documents for each of the four states have the same functional equivalence as the highest statement of policy, allowing comparisons between states and over time. The documents play similar legal and planning roles, and governments have an incentive to present an internally coherent statement that reflects actual strategic calculations.

The policy papers fulfil similar institutional roles. They are generally public defences of policy by the executive/government towards the legislative/parliament, and some are even explicitly linked to the budget requests for those policies. For example, since the Goldwater-Nicholls Act in 1986 each American administration is required to publish an annual National Security Strategy which explains and justifies its policy to Congress (although most administrations have published on a much less regular basis). These strategies were intended to increase the coherence of the planning, programming, and budgeting system of the Department of Defense; to strengthen strategic planning and its consistency with national security strategy, policies, and objectives; to strengthen the compatibility with the available resources; and ensure sufficient attention within the strategic planning for alliances with other nations (Goldwater Nichols, Sec. 104). The Department of Defense was already publishing annual Defense Programs that offered the Senate Armed Services Committee five year plans and the budget for the coming year (these later transitioned to annual reports to both President and Congress). To take another example, in the French system the military programming laws (Loi...
Programmation Militaire) are crucial to the legal framing of the budgets, where, as a manifestation of mobilization and political verification, parliament approves the long-term direction proposed for national defence (David 1989, pp. 18-19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Title of document</th>
<th>Year Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(declassified)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Documents</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. words</td>
<td>30815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Defence Review</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Documents</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. words</td>
<td>18248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Documents</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. words</td>
<td>12958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defence Policy Guidelines</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Documents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. words</td>
<td>43014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Overview American, British, French and German documents (1960-2010)

The documents also address various domestic audiences and serve to legitimise policies to them. While formal evidence can be misleading and the existence of an explicitly stated strategy is no guarantee that a state and its agents will follow it or behave cohesively (Gray 2009, p. 28), there is an inherent incentive for policymakers to strive for internal coherence. Certain details of strategy and intelligence will by definition remain secret. Yet, the effectiveness of strategies will diminish when ends and means are poorly integrated and poorly understood by the agents of the government, the legislative (in a democracy), and perhaps even the public. Even though we should be naturally
cautious about taking the texts at face value, this makes them a reasonable approximation of the actual grand strategy.

The documents used also reflect established use in other studies within the literature. Studies of American strategy and defence draw from National Security Strategies; analysts of British strategy and defence use the long-running white papers and defence statements, the more irregular strategic defence reviews and the recent national security strategies; research of French strategy and defence are based on the white papers and military programming laws; and investigations of German strategy and defence use the white papers. However, in spite of fulfilling similar functions within each state, differences of length and scope exist between the documents of the different states as well as over time. For example, the French military programming laws (though not the white papers) are much briefer than the German white papers, even though they fulfil similar functions and cover the same dimensions. The length and scope of these texts has also increased over time. Even though stating strategy explicitly may well be a ‘very modern and rather dubious habit’ (Luttwak 2009, p. 409), there is a definite trend in particularly the past two decades for countries to increasingly publish broad and public statements on their security and defence policy, and a corresponding convergence in style and scope.¹

Some limitations inherent to these documents remain. Due to the security-military focus of the texts, a bias against other instruments and goals of grand strategy exists. Still, the non-substitutable, and therefore more crucial, dimensions of grand strategy are military force and alliances. These, and the linkages between them, are covered in greater detail here than elsewhere making these texts effective analytical tools.

The specific documents of the sample were chosen on the basis of several criteria. The first, mentioned above, was established use in other studies. Second, documents widely considered as watersheds in policy were incorporated, such as the 1972 French White Paper, the 1998 British Strategic Defence Review and the 2002 US National Security Strategy. Third, necessity sometimes limited the possible choices. For example, (West)Germany produced no white papers before 1969 and since then less regularly than most of the other states, yet the high page count and comprehensive nature compensate for the lower publication frequency. Where gaps in the coverage of periods or administrations existed, other equivalent source documents were sought to ensure as much coverage of administrations and strategic eras as possible.

Categories of analysis

The documents were analysed according to the following six categories: (1) expressed policy goals; (2) international environment (threats); (3) domestic environment; (4) the military instrument (tasks of the armed forces); (5) the diplomatic instrument (alliances and international frameworks); and (6) other instruments. Together, these six categories give insight into how policymakers develop strategic beliefs on the balance of threat and power, alliances, and force posture, and motivate choices into grand strategy.

Content analysis method

There is a variety of methods of content analysis available depending on the unit of measurement, whether the analysis is more quantitative or qualitative, issues of replicability, if and how software is used, and so on. The approach here is based on paragraphs as the units of measurement, by counting in each text the paragraphs that contained a statement concerning one of the dimensions (and subcategories). At a textual level, paragraphs are syntactical units that are used by authors as separations within the text and intended as building blocks in the overall argument (Marthes and Kohring 2008). Counts are not exclusive, meaning that paragraphs that contain several categories are counted until the possible categories are exhausted. Concepts that did not fit in the coding scheme received their own categories and were counted separately, to store as much context as possible.

With content analysis there are general issues concerning the trade-off between valid interpretation and replicability. Researchers who use the interpretivist approach run the risk of finding frames they are consciously or unconsciously looking for. In contrast, a deductive approach that starts from the theoretical level has some crucial prerequisites, namely that the frames are established beforehand and that they suit the topic currently under investigation (Marthes and Kohring 2008).

Computer-assisted approaches reflect these trade-offs, having significant advantages in terms of replicability, yet disadvantages in terms of conceptual validity. These limits matter when it comes to explaining foreign policy. For example, the Verbs in Context program shows general trends in the qualifications in word usage by state elites. It has been applied to the operational code of Kennedy in public and private during the Cuban missile crisis (Marfleet 2000) and the offensive versus defensive nature of Chinese policymakers’ beliefs on strategy (Feng 2009). Similarly, the Alceste program, is revealing in terms of keywords used by politicians (and other policymakers), as shown in Schonhardt-Bailey’s (2005) analysis of Bush (II) and Kerry national security speeches. However, computer-assisted programs are still not fully able to understand language in all its richness, while a human coder recognizes nuances and ambiguities. Another
drawback is that some words or combinations can be quite rare in spite of being central to the meaning of the text (Marthes and Kohring 2008). For example, the use of analogies to defend policy choices or explicit statements on pre-emptive use of force (such as those in the 2002 National Security Strategy) are relatively rare, yet highly important for analysis. Software will certainly miss a great many of the referential units, such as synonyms and continuance over multiple paragraphs, that cannot be reduced to single words. This is especially likely to be a problem in documents from different countries from different periods.

To achieve comparability between documents, both within and between states, the scores were normalised. It is not possible to compare percentages of the total text of each element because the documents vary in specificity and length (from less than 10 to more than 300 pages). The scores of each category were instead standardised through an anchored score, where the most used concept within a certain category is used as the anchor for the other concepts within the category. This distribution is then scaled from 0-10 with 10 being the most prominent, and 0 meaning least prominent or absent. Example: if proliferation has a score of ten and terrorism a score of five, this means it occurs roughly twice as often; if terrorism had the score 1 proliferation occurs ten times as often. The advantage of normalizing the scores in this manner is that it makes transparent the relative prominence of a category regardless of the length or scope of the document it is taken from.

The data on domestic context and other strategic instruments is not presented through scores, but instead by relating the number of paragraphs per document to ranges of low (0 <3%), medium (3<6%), and high (>6%), as seen in tables 13 to 18 (other strategic instruments) and tables 17-20 (domestic context).

The chapter has been structured to work from the international environment down to the domestic context. The results of the content analysis are presented in the following order: (1) the perceptions of the international environment, specifically the prioritisation of threats; (2) the preferred alliances and frameworks of international cooperation; (3) the preferred tasks for the armed forces (4) the other instruments of states and how they relate to diplomacy and force; (5) the expressed policy goals and ambitions; and (6) references to domestic politics relations.
International environment: threats

The coding scheme for the category international environment consists of: (1) state threats; (2) the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; (3) terrorism; and (4) various non-state threats. After comparing the scores for each dimension, the chapter discusses the nationally specific ways of framing the nature of the threats. Analytically, the intensity level of the threats is important, because it suggests corresponding tasks for the armed forces and alliances. The tendency to type adversaries as inherently aggressive and expansionist in nature also suggests a certain worldview. Finally, it points to an underlying difference between perceiving a world in which specific threats matter, or one in which the general distribution of power does.

Specificity of the threat

The results show that the policymakers of the US, UK, France, and Britain perceived the broad trends of threat similarly, as could be expected of states that are highly similar. Figures 10 to 13 show that states are the dominant threats during the Cold War, and that after the end of the Cold War, the perceived risks and threats become more diverse. As can be expected, terrorism, instability, and proliferation increase in importance, as well as various other non-state new trends, risks, and threats.

2 These non-state risks and threats are broad and include: extremism, crime and drugs, disease, migration, demography, environment, underdevelopment, economic stress, energy scarcity, and cyber and communication attacks.
Figure 10. Threats. US policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 11. Threats. UK policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 12. Threats. FR policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 13. Threats. DE policy documents (1960-2010)
A clear difference is that state threats (including rogue and failed states) remain important in American, British and French texts after the end of the Cold War, but that in the German documents the emphasis is placed on political, social, economic, and ecological issues. It is one of several empirical findings in the document analysis that underlines that policymakers in the US, UK, and France may perceive their global role as respectively a superpower, and two great/middle powers, whereas German policymakers no longer harbour such ambitions.

There is also a marked difference in how specific the texts are about the states that are considered threats. Figures 14 to 16 show that the American documents are highly explicit about adversaries, the British documents are much less explicit and the French rarely are, while the German papers (figure not included) are only so during the Cold War.

Figure 14. State threats. US policy documents (1960-2010)
The American documents consistently name a series of the peripheral states as threats. A decade before President Bush (43) in his 2002 State of the Union address included all three in the ‘Axis of Evil’, the Clinton administration documents focus on Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. Moreover, during the Cold War, the states that oppose American policies are presented not as acting against the US for their own reasons, but are instead as Soviet clients (US 1982, pp. 9-13). After the Cold War, these peripheral states are linked to proliferation, terrorism, crime and drugs. This shows a tendency on the part of American policymakers to view the separate threats as interlinked threats to the global

---

3 In the 1980s these include: Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Vietnam, and Syria; during the 1990s these are: Iraq, North Korea, and Iran (with Libya as a clear fourth priority).
4 The security strategies published by the Clinton administration focus in their planning for major theatre conflicts on Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. These states are capable of fielding sizable military forces that can cause serious imbalances in military power within regions important to the US’ (US 1995, p. 9), and to fight ‘weapons proliferation, terrorism and the nexus between them’, they argue, in the case of Iraq, to ‘bring about a change in regime’ (US 1999, p. iv).
order as a whole that require a comprehensive US response. After 9/11, the Bush (43) administration explicitly combines ‘rogue states and their terrorist clients’, and argues both must be stopped ‘before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the US and our allies and friends’ (US 2002, p. 14). This nexus of states, terrorism, and proliferation is not unique to the Bush (43) administration. It was present in the papers of the previous administrations and in the Obama administration’s 2010 strategy - ‘there is no greater threat to the American people than weapons of mass destruction, particularly the danger posed by the pursuit of nuclear weapons by violent extremists and their proliferation to additional states’ (US 2010, p. 4).

Figure 16. State threats. FR policy documents (1960-2010)

The British papers also focus on the peripheral states. In many ways, the 1998 British strategic defence review is similar to the American papers of the nineties. It presents a comprehensive view of the changes in the international system after the end of the Cold War, in which instability, rogue states, proliferation and terrorism are interlinked (UK
1998, par 9). Iraq is used as the example of the dangerous crossroads between rogue states and proliferation of WMDs (UK 1998, par 8). The British papers tend to frame failed and failing states as ‘havens and sources of support’ for threats, rather than as active threats (UK 2003, p. 5).

The French papers are remarkably less specific about which state threats they are planning for – even though state threats are the most important threat in all the documents during and after the Cold War (see figure 12). The French papers refer to powers that seek to influence regional politics, a threat seen as particularly prominent in Middle East and Asia (FR 1990) – thereby implicitly referencing the same state threats as the US and the UK (Iraq, Iran, and North Korea). The references are more direct in the 2008 text, after the Sarkozy-led return of France to the integrated military structures of NATO (FR 2008).

**Nature of the threat**

Despite the view that threats facing the US are interconnected, the American documents do not offer a monolithic view of the Communist threat. The 1962 basic national security policy states that the Communist Bloc is not ‘monolithic in character’, while still presenting it as ‘tyranny’ (US 1962, p. 6). In the 1968 document, ‘the division within the camp of our adversaries’ is acknowledged (US 1968, p. 7), while the 1972 paper underlines the Sino-Soviet rivalry (US 1973, p. 40). The 1978 paper points to the structural weaknesses of the Soviet Union a decade before the collapse of the Soviet Union (US 1978, p. 2), and the 1982 strategy points a range of economic and external problems for the Soviet Union (US 1982, p. 2). On the other hand, the Soviet Union is presented as inherently aggressive, and negotiations with the Soviet Union only make sense if taken from position of strength (US 1973, p. 31), as long as it is engaged in a

---

5 ‘We have seen new and horrifying forms of terrorism and how serious environmental degradation can cause not only immediate suffering but also dangerous instabilities. ... This requires an integrated external policy through which we can pursue our interests using all the instruments at our disposal, including diplomatic, developmental and military’ (UK 1998, par 9).
6 ‘Rivalry between the USSR and the PRC has to some extent limited the influence each has been able to gain from these efforts. Their inability to project military power and the forces of nationalism have also been important constraints’ (US 1973, p. 40).
7 ‘... the Soviet Union ... suffers from major internal handicaps – economic, political, and social – and these handicaps will probably increase with the decline already occurring in birth rates and about to occur in domestic energy supplies and rates of economic growth’ (US 1978, p.2.).
8 ‘The Soviets face severe economic problems. Economic growth throughout the 1980s will probably be two percent or less per year. ... As Soviet citizens perceive a decline in the quality of life, productivity growth will also decline unless dramatic economic reforms are introduced – an unlikely prospect. ... The Soviets have several external problems. ... Moreover, internal unrest and insurgency have come to plague a number of Soviet clients; these countries continue to consume scarce resources’ (US 1982, p. 2).
policy of unparalleled global expansionism’ (US 1982 p. 2). Even as the Reagan administration was negotiating with the USSR, its 1988 security strategy emphasises that the Soviet Union has not abandoned its ‘expansionist aspirations’ (US 1988, p. xii foreword). The ideological nature of the language increased over time, rather than decreased. The British papers rarely discuss the nature of the Soviet threat. The exceptions are those published by the Thatcher government as they present the Soviet Union as inherently aggressive, expansionist, and tyrannical to its own population (UK 1982 pp. 1, 25; UK 1987, pp. 4-6).9

In contrast, German policymakers had a greater need to convince domestic audiences that the USSR was a threat. The German papers reiterate repeatedly that the Soviet Union is the only state to perpetrate aggression in Europe since the end of 1945, giving examples of Soviet aggressive behaviour since 1945 - the Soviet occupational zone in 1953; the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956; the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968; the pressure on Poland in 1980; and the invasion in Afghanistan in 1979 (DE 1983, p. 218). The need to present Soviet aggression is clearest in the 1983 white paper (DE 1983, p. 6), published in the aftermath of the NATO Doubletrack controversy. It is also revealing that German policymakers feel compelled to compare the moral nature of NATO to the Warsaw Pact (DE 1976, p. 6).10

The French documents rarely discuss the nature of threats, instead focusing on the balance of power between the two Cold War superpowers (FR 1971 in David 1989, p. 187). The 1972 white paper refers to France as a middle power caught between the superpowers, and the other Cold War French documents underline that France rejects Bloc politics, while attempting to balance the line between alliance solidarity and autonomy (FR 1983 in David 1989, pp. 197-199). The preoccupation with great power relations and apprehension for bloc mentality is also present after the Cold War. It is emphasised that the US is now the only superpower (FR 1994, p. 8), and the expansion of the European Union is considered beneficial but also potentially provocative to Russia, because it might threaten the resurgence of antagonistic blocs between East and West (FR 1994, p. 31).

9 For example: ‘The Soviet Union has again displayed its readiness to make use of military power both directly and indirectly in pursuit of political objectives. Soviet forces in Afghanistan are brutally suppressing popular resistance with complete disregard for international opinion and law´ (UK 1982, p. 1).
After the Cold War ends, instability is interpreted in similar ways. The 1991 US strategy argues that the enemy it faces is ‘less an expansionist communism than it is instability itself’, and the US will ‘increasingly find our military strength a source of reassurance and a foundation for security, regionally and globally’ (US 1991, p. 25). The British papers argue the same. The 1998 review of the new Labour government underlines the necessity to act because ‘instability inside Europe as in Bosnia, and now Kosovo, threatens [British] security’ and Britain ‘cannot stand aside when it leads to massive human suffering’ (UK 1998, par 7). The French 1994 white paper delivers a comprehensive threat assessment that includes proliferation, regional instability and new non-state threats such as crime, and attacks on information systems (FR 1994, p. 14). The German outlook on the international system changes even more drastically. State threats are considered largely irrelevant. Instead, the fear of instability, specifically in Central- and Eastern Europe, is perceived as causing other states ‘to think increasingly in the old categories of purely military-oriented security’ that may ‘ultimately escalate into violence’ (DE 1994, par 235).

After 9/11, the British documents emphasise the link between failed states on the one hand and terrorism on the other, where the former create ‘ungoverned territory which provide potential havens and sources of support for terrorist groups and criminal networks involved in drugs production or the plundering of natural resources’ (UK 2003, p. 5). This has led to a new situation as the ‘Cold War threat has been replaced by a diverse but interconnected set of threats and risks, which affect the UK directly and also have the potential to undermine wider international stability’ (UK 2008, p. 3). Particularly, rogue state threats armed with nuclear weapons - such as North Korea and Iran - are seen as particularly dangerous, because of ‘their attitude to international institutions and treaties, and because of the impact of their activities on stability in regions crucial to global security’ (UK 2008, p. 12). In the German texts, international terrorism ‘threaten the achievements of modern civilization such as freedom and human rights, openness, tolerance and diversity’ (DE 2003, p. 6). Similar to the British and French papers, the 2006 German paper considers ‘poverty, underdevelopment, poor education, shortage of resources, natural disasters, environmental destruction, diseases,'
inequality and human rights violations’, including the ‘threat to cultural identity’ that
globalisation is often perceived to be, as factors that provide a ‘breeding ground for
religious extremism’ (DE 2006, p. 17).

After 9/11 the French papers stress that ‘terrorism crossed an historical threshold and
underwent a change of scale’ (FR 2008, p. 27). Unlike the American documents, the
French documents treat the dangers of terrorist groups and the dangers of the regional
powers that have or seek WMDs as two parallel and possibly concurrent threats. French papers already in 1994 foresee terrorism as the principal ‘non-military threat to
French security’ (FR 1994, p. 17), and specifically identify Islamic extremism as a threat -
l’extrémisme islamiste représente sans doute la menace la plus inquiétante’, that has
taken the place of Communism as a unifying ideology for societies in social and
economic crisis (FR 1994, p. 18). Yet, the French and American papers differ when they
discuss root causes, insofar as that the French papers acknowledge a broader set of
drivers of extremism - globalisation the most important -, while the US texts emphasise
the ideological nature of the threat (see the annex of this chapter). The French
documents instead emphasise state threats, especially combined with WMD
capabilities. Unlike the American or British texts, they neither specify which states
these are, nor do they assign them the same role as upsetting the global system as a
whole. There is also a much clearer and substantiated hierarchy of threats in the
French texts. The 2008 paper explicitly organises its force planning and the expected
tasks for the armed forces along the lines of the ‘arc of crisis’ that stretches from the

---

14 ‘The most serious currently identified scenario is the combination of a major terrorist attack on
European soil, using non-conventional nuclear, chemical or biological-type means, together with a
war situation in one of the strategically important zones for Europe. With that in mind, our
strategy should allow for the possibility of an outbreak of major conflicts in the Middle East and
Asia.’ (FR 2008, p. 38)

15 ‘The threat of ballistic and cruise missiles to the continent of Europe has grown sharply and
France and several other European countries will come within range of new ballistic capabilities
between now and 2025.’ (FR 2008, p. 48) ‘But our security is under threat from other sources.
Considerable nuclear arsenals remain in being, and others continue to expand, notably in Asia. The
proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons is gathering pace, together with that of
ballistic and cruise missiles’ (FR 2008, p. 64).

16 Instead, state threats are simply characterised as regional powers, without attribution of motives.
These are deemed self-explanatory (a clue to the realpolitik assumptions of the French
policymakers).

17 For example, from the 2008 paper: ‘Terrorist attacks (simultaneous and/or major): probability
high; medium to severe scale; real CRBN risk; cyber-attacks: probability high; small to large scale;
ballistic threat: originating from major powers, or from newly capable powers, given foreseeable
missile ranges to 2025; in this second case, probability low to medium; potentially severe scale;
pandemic: probability medium; medium to severe scale; natural disasters (notably floods in
metropolitan France) or industrial disasters: probability medium or high; medium to severe scale;
organised crime (growth in drug trafficking, counterfeited goods, arms, money laundering
activities); probability high; French Overseas Départements and territories: Caribbean area
(earthquakes and hurricanes): probability high; threats to French Guyana and the Pacific region;
probability low’ (FR 2008, p. 54).
Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, in which it identifies the terrorist threats and regional powers - in this case directly stated as Iran – that impact European, and thus French vital and strategic interests. In contrast to the documents of the other states, for France the threat of the regional powers is seen in terms of upsetting the balance of power, or French and European security.

**Instruments: alliances and force posture**

Alliances and force posture are the two means with which states pursue survival and other interests. In this chapter, the analysis covers them, but as part of a broader use of diplomatic and military instruments. Diplomacy is defined as frameworks of international cooperation, and the military instrument is defined as projected tasks of the armed forces. Though the range of instruments that are part of statecraft are broad, only a few are covered in the policy documents here – trade policy, development aid, democratization.

---

18 The text emphasises that the region consists of several historically, political, socially, economically unique countries, with each part having its own logic, from the Sahel, from Mauritania to Somalia, these differ from Mediterranean littoral, the Near East, the Arabian-Persian Gulf, and from Afghanistan and Pakistan (FR 2008, p. 43).
Diplomatic instrument: alliances and frameworks of international cooperation

The coding scheme of diplomacy is divided into the following categories: (1) United Nations (UN); (2) European Union (EU); (3) North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); (4) bilateral agreements; (5) flexible / coalitions of the willing; and (6) unspecified calls for international cooperation.

The US, UK, France, and Germany are highly similar: they are members of the same alliance (NATO); they belong to the same international organisations (European Union in case of the Europeans); they support the UN – and the documents reflect this similarity. Yet, there are clear and enduring differences in their relative preferences.

Figure 17. International cooperation. US policy documents (1960–2010)
Figure 18. International cooperation. UK policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 19. International cooperation. FR policy documents (1960-2010)
During the Cold War, the American and European papers are largely similar, as figures 17 to 20 show. However, in the post-Cold War period they increasingly differ in terms of the specificity with which they discuss international cooperation. While the importance of international cooperation is continually emphasised, it becomes an increasingly noticeable pattern in the American texts to *not* specify organisations or formalised structures, or instead suggest a preference for bilateral (or ad hoc) agreements. This correlates with an increasing stress – see final section - on the need for American leadership. In contrast, the documents from the European states continue to focus on concrete organisations: NATO, the United Nations, and a European defence option (the latter obviously not applicable to the US).
**NATO**

During and after the Cold War, in the American, British, and German documents, NATO is the central framework, as figure 21 shows. As expected, the French documents plan for autonomy rather than alliance. Unexpected is that NATO continues to decrease in importance, up to and including the 2008 white paper published as French forces were reintegrating into the political-military command. Yet, in the American documents, NATO declines in importance after the end of the Cold War to a greater extent than in the British or German papers. American papers still present NATO as the core alliance to pursue American interests. The 1995 strategy even states that NATO ‘has always been far more than a transitory response to a temporary threat’, in fact, ‘it has been a guarantor of European democracy and a force for European stability’ (US 1995, p. 26).

The British defence documents, as figure 21 shows, present NATO as the cornerstone of British security in Europe. The British documents are even self-aware that NATO is a departure from a buck-passing strategy – the 1962 white paper argues that ‘the safety of our own country lies in the success of the common defence of the North Atlantic area’, and that ‘the Government does not believe that the defence of Europe could be left to long-range nuclear weapons alone’ (UK 1962, Survival p. 137). Similar to the American papers, the British consider NATO more than strictly a collective defence organisation, but as ‘a force for peace in Europe with an important role to play in spreading democracy, human rights and the rule of law’ (UK 1992, p. 10).

The tension between French solidarity with and commitment to the Atlantic Alliance on the one hand and its search for autonomy on the other hand is expressed in the 1972 white paper that stresses that ‘French interests cannot be made subordinate to those of a

---

19 ‘A strong NATO is indispensable to protecting western interests.’ (US 1982, p. 23); ‘A system of vigorous alliances is essential to deterrence; and the most important of these is NATO.’ (US 1988, p. 52); ‘The NATO alliance will remain the anchor of American engagement in Europe and the linchpin of transatlantic security.’ (US 1995, p. 26) and (US 1999, p. 29); ‘There is little of lasting consequence that the US can accomplish in the world without the sustained cooperation of its allies and friends in Canada and Europe. Europe is also the seat of two of the strongest and most able international institutions in the world: [NATO], which has, since its inception, been the fulcrum of transatlantic and inter-European security, and the European Union (EU), our partner in opening world trade.’ (US 2002, p. 25); ‘[NATO] remains a vital pillar of US foreign policy.’ (US 2006, p. 38); ‘[NATO] is the pre-eminent security alliance in the world today’ (US 2010, p. 41).

20 ‘Against the continuing Communist military threat, the cornerstone of the defence of the free world in a complex of collective security alliances.’ (UK 1960, p. 5); ‘[NATO] is the foundation of this country’s defence and security policy.’ (UK 1987, p. 15); ‘NATO will continue to be based on the principle that the security of European and North American allies is indivisible.’ (UK 1992, p. 10); ‘NATO will continue as the cornerstone of our defence planning.’ (UK 1998, par 18); ‘The UK recognises the pre-eminence of NATO as the alliance upon which Europe and North America depends for collective defence and global crisis management’ (UK 2003, p. 6).
superpower’, for doing so will ‘weaken French resolve to protect itself’ (FR 1972, p. 3).\(^{21}\)

The French position is the ‘refusal of the blocs, non-alignment with the great powers’, and French policy represents an attempt to defuse the Cold War crisis (FR 1972, p. 3). The balancing act between alliance solidarity and autonomy does not change after the exit of the Gaullists from power. France will engage on the ‘side of its partners in the alliance, if these are the victims of aggression, yet reserves the choice of the moment and the manner of its engagement’, as the 1983 paper, published during the Mitterrand presidency, spells out (FR 1983 in David 1989, pp. 200-201). NATO continues to decline in importance, despite France’s return to NATO’s integrated political-military command and statements of support to NATO.\(^{22}\) The 2008 paper still cautions on NATO provoking threats as the geographical expansion of the Alliance (meaning towards Russia) increases the risk of ‘strategic miscalculation involving the Alliance’ (FR 2008, p. 98). French policymakers continue to pay attention to the balance of power, even upon their full return to NATO.

In contrast, German policymakers, practically embrace all the multilateral options on the table to ensure stability (DE 1994, par. 107) - NATO, European unification, and the United Nations. NATO is crucial for maintaining the peace, both during and after the Cold War.\(^{23}\) The German white papers present NATO as a ‘community of values’ of ‘democracy, law, human rights, self-determination and social justice’ that allowed ‘German democracy to re-establish itself and to prosper’ (DE 1983, p. 120). The 1994 paper envisions NATO as contributing to the maintenance of stability in Central- and Eastern Europe (DE 1994, foreword). NATO remains the central organisation for German policymakers, even a decade after unification.\(^{24}\)

\(^{21}\) ‘Mais la valeur de notre participation à l’Alliance Atlantique, comme la valeur de notre coopération à la sécurité européenne imposent une volonté de n’accepter aucune intégration dont le résultat serait de subordonner nos intérêts à ceux de la très grande puissance qui dirigerait l’intégration et en fin de compte d’affaiblir notre résolution de défense elle-même.’ (FR 1972, p. 3)

\(^{22}\) ‘NATO is the organisation for collective defence that unites North America and Europe. This mission is specific to the organisation. It is in the interest of France and its partners that it be preserved and adapted. It is as relevant as ever ... (FR 2008, p. 96).


\(^{24}\) ‘The transatlantic partnership remains the bedrock of our security. Now and in future, there can be no security in and for Europe without the US of America’ (DE 2003, p. 9); ‘NATO is, and remains, the foundation for the collective defence of its member states. No other organisation is able to take on this task in the foreseeable future.’ (DE 2006, p. 40)
European defence identity

The European defence identity never receives the same prominence that NATO does for the UK and Germany, as expected and as figure 22 shows. After the Cold War, in contrast to the other states, French documents state that ‘Europe has become our main political and geographical focus’ (FR 2003, p. 4). The 1994 paper is straightforward on the motive for doing so as – in light of France’s ‘relative weight’ in the international order – French power can be ‘amplified’ by ‘better alliances’ and membership of international organisations (FR 1994, p. 23). Similarly, ‘maintaining France’s rank’ will depend on ‘her aptitude in influencing the European project’ (FR 1994, p. 26). In contrast to the British and German documents, the French papers explicitly argue that the European defence project should have a mandate beyond simply that of the civil arm of NATO (FR 2003, p. 1). The 2008 paper reiterates that it would be ‘unrealistic’ to reserve ‘high intensity operations for NATO’ while leaving ‘so-called low intensity conflicts, stabilisation and reconstruction to the European Union’ (FR 2008, p. 95).
Though it becomes more important, the European defence identity is not considered an alternative for NATO for British and German policymakers. The British papers emphasise that in no way the European security identity should threaten or damage the Atlantic Alliance through competition or duplication.\textsuperscript{25} The German texts also frame the EU security identity in relation to the Atlantic Alliance, and emphasise the complementary civilian capabilities that the European Union can provide.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure22.png}
\caption{European option. UK FR DE policy documents (1960-2010)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{25} ‘This [WEU] arrangement lays the foundation for a European defence identity compatible with NATO, avoiding the risks and costs implicit in creating rival defence structures, while encouraging closer European co-operation developed in a way that complements the Atlantic Alliance.’ (UK 1992, p. 14); ‘The UK is a strong supporter of developing EU military capability to complement NATO, rather than competing with it.’ (UK 2003, p. 6).
Informalisation and formalisation of international cooperation

There is a tension between formalisation and informalisation of international cooperation in the documents of all four states, where the former is more legitimate, but the latter is considered more effective. In all four states, the UN becomes more important after the end of the Cold War (see the annex of this chapter). Simultaneously, there is a turn, however, towards more flexible and less formalised frameworks of international cooperation. This is shown by the increasing prominence of unspecified forms of international cooperation (see figure 23) and bilateral agreements (see figure 24).

The security strategies published by the Bush (43) administrations stress flexible, more ´effective´, and less constraining ´coalitions of the willing´ that ´can augment these permanent institutions´, the latter should be ´taken seriously´ and are ´not to be undertaken symbolically to rally support for an ideal without furthering its attainment´ (US 2002, p. iii). Within these statements of support to multilateralism – and its inevitable constraints – are references to the ´new, productive international relationships´ that are forged and ´existing ones´ that are redefined in ways that meet the ´challenges of the twenty-first century´ (US 2002, p. 7). The 2006 security strategy refers to new and more flexible forms of ´results-oriented partnerships´ that are more ´oriented towards action and results rather than legislation or rule-making´ and can respond ´more quickly and creatively´ (US 2006, p. 46). After the damage perceived to be done to the Transatlantic relationship over the controversy over Iraq, the 2010 strategy published by the Obama administration stresses the importance of ´mutual respect´ in international cooperation (US 2010, p. 41), yet it also discusses the inadequacies of an international architecture at risk of becoming ´outdated´, and suggests seizing ´new opportunities´ (US 2010, p. 40). This continues the trend of the previous post-Cold War administrations.
The French 2003 paper respond to this explicit disengagement of multilateralism in the American document and reiterates France’s goal of autonomy ‘and to diversify its capacity to act within coalitions - European, allied or ad hoc’ vis-à-vis the changing context (FR 2003, p. 1). The 2008 British paper states that ‘sometimes the best approach will be more flexible alliances, coalitions or bilateral relationships tailored to particular issues’ (UK 2008, p. 8).

The special relationship between the US and the UK is visible in both the American and British documents. The 2006 US strategy emphasises the common values the US shares with Europe, but specifically found within the ‘special relationship’ with the UK (US 2006, p. 38). Unsurprisingly, however, the ‘special relationship’ is stressed the most in the British documents. They are the most explicit about the importance of the special relationship with the US, which is the UK’s ‘most important bilateral relationship’ (UK 2008, p. 8) and its ‘pre-eminent security and defence relationship’ (UK 2010, p. 60).

---

26 Published at the height of the transatlantic controversy, in January of 2003, after the publication of the 2002 US security strategy in September, but before the invasion of Iraq in March.
The German papers stress the importance of the transatlantic relationship to an even greater degree than the British texts. The American commitment to the security of NATO Europe and the sacrifices of the US are praised, yet the uneven distribution of power between both sides of the Atlantic is also addressed (DE 1969, p. 16), as well as the precariousness of the (literal) geographic Atlantic divide (DE 1983, p. 68). There is little doubt how important the role of the US is to German policymakers. The 2006 paper, published after the Iraq controversy, even states that the ‘central goal of German foreign and security policy’ continues to be ‘to shape the transatlantic partnership in the Alliance with the future in mind, and to cultivate the close and trusting relationship with the USA’, because both ‘now and in the future, the fundamental issues of European security can be only addressed together with the USA’ (DE 2006, p. 21). The only other state for which the German policy papers emphasise the importance of the bilateral relationship is France, stressing the ‘historical and political importance’ of the French-German relationship to Europe (DE 1994, par. 447).
Military instrument: tasks for the armed forces

In the coding scheme, the military instrument is divided into the following categories (ranging from more intense to less intense): (1) intervention/combat; (2) forward global presence; (3) collective defence; (4) national / territorial defence; (5) nuclear deterrence; (6) conventional deterrence; (7) crisis management; (8) conflict prevention; (9) stabilization and nation-building; (10) peacekeeping; (11) evacuation and humanitarian roles; (12) defence diplomacy/joint training and (13) security assistance.27

The analysis focuses on the tasks the armed forces are expected to perform, in line with the approach states themselves increasingly take, as they make the planning assumptions for their force posture more explicit. The tasks signal the type of adversaries they are expected to face: conventional forces with tasks with a high level of intensity suggest a strategic focus on medium to great power states, while a (near) exclusive focus on peacekeeping precludes these contingencies. Likewise, the further the desired expeditionary or based reach of the armed forces, the larger the geographic scope for using military force as a political instrument will be, and the greater the ability to exchange force for diplomatic pressure. The conditions on the use of force in turn more directly suggest the place and limits of force in a state’s strategy.

Tasks for and geographic scope of the armed forces

A comparison between the American and European expected tasks for the armed forces shows several common trends, but also distinctly national features (see figures 25, 26, and 27). During the Cold War the armed forces of the US, Britain and Germany were predominantly tasked with collective defence and nuclear deterrence. After the end of the Cold War, using the armed forces for intervention abroad becomes more prominent in the American, but also British and French documents (see the annex of this chapter). This makes sense considering the absence of major adversaries after the collapse of the Soviet threat, and the perceived need to keep order in the periphery. In line with the increasing diversity of risks and threats, the policy documents include a broader array of purposes than the more traditional political use against states – such as crisis management; conflict prevention; peacekeeping (see the annex of this chapter). In contrast, the importance of nuclear deterrence decreases in importance in the post-Cold War documents, as could be expected from a state-directed tool.

27 Concepts also included in this analysis that strictly speaking are not roles and tasks for the armed forces: intelligence/knowledge/anticipation; integrated or comprehensive, which refers to the integration of the military instrument with other means; and projection/expeditionary capabilities refer to the capacity of the armed forces to operate at great distances from territory.
Figure 25. Nuclear deterrence. US UK FR DE policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 26. Collective defence. US UK FR DE policy documents (1960-2010)
The geographic scope of interventions becomes broader after the end of the Cold War, specifically for the US, UK, and France, as figures 28 to 31 show. The scope in the US documents is truly global, encompassing Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. However, in relative terms, the largest change takes place in the British documents during the 1990s, where its interventionary focus shifts towards the Middle East first and foremost, and Europe secondary, and in the first decade of the century towards possible missions in Asia, Europe, and Africa. The French documents are less specific, but include a broad range of regions to operate in. These priorities reflect France’s European focus, and its Francophone zones of interests that include France’s previous colonies and mandates in Africa and the Middle East. In German texts, there is practically no focus on out-of-region missions.

The US has maintained an extraordinarily all-encompassing global posture since the end of the Second World War. The presence of American troops is presented as not only

---

For the sake of clarity, the regions were simplified to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and the category of unspecified other, where it is clear that is out of region. These must be seen in the context of each state. Obviously, for the European states Europe is in-region, and the Middle East and Africa border it. For the United States all these regions, except the Americas, are out of region.
crucial for the actual defence of its European and Asian allies, but even more so for US credibility, by symbolically demonstrating commitment (US 1968, p. 31; US 1973, p. 89). After the Cold War ends, the demonstration of commitment remains the ostensible motive for a forward presence, as the US ‘presence can deter aggression, preserve regional balances, deflect arms races and prevent the power vacuums that invite conflict’. Indeed, the 1991 strategy claims, ‘certain regions – like Europe and East Asia – represent such compelling interests to the US that they will demand the permanent deployment of some US forces for as long as they are needed’ (US 1991, p. 27). On this point, there is no difference between the Bush (41) and Clinton strategy. The 1995 security strategy, for example, argues that US forward presence promotes ‘an international security environment of trust, cooperation, peace and stability, which is fundamental to the vitality of developing democracies and free market economies for America’s own economic well-being and security’ (US 1995, pp. 9-10), or as in the 1999 security strategy - ‘maintaining our overseas presence promotes regional stability, giving substance to our security commitments, helping to prevent the development of power vacuums and instability, and contributing to deterrence by demonstrating our determination to defend US, allied, and friendly interests in critical regions’ (US 1999, p. 11). The Bush (43) 2002 and 2006 security strategies equally argue that the ‘unparalleled strength of the US armed forces, and their forward presence, have maintained the peace in some of the world’s most strategically vital regions’ (US 2002, p. 29). The 2002 security strategy argues American military strength helps ‘dissuade potential competitors from challenging American power’ (US 2002, p. 29).

The tension between British global commitments and their financial resources is a constant theme throughout the Cold War documents. The withdrawal of British forces from their remaining global commitments and the redirection towards NATO Europe, is the preeminent focus of the 1960, 1962, 1968 and 1975 defence white papers. British policymakers perceived their burden as disproportionate to those of the major European allies. The paper argues that ‘within NATO Britain was the only European member to contribute to all the major areas of the Alliance´ (UK 1975, par. 3), and British commitments extend far beyond Europe, with a ‘necessary’ global military presence that imposes ‘upon Britain an extra burden which none of her European Allies and trading competitors was bearing’ (UK 1975, par. 4).

29 ‘… our contribution to the NATO shield forces means a deployment of forces overseas and, therefore, a heavy burden on our balance of payments.’ (UK 1962, Survival p. 137); ‘The present government has inherited defence forces which are seriously over-stretched and in some respects dangerously under-equipped. … There has been no real attempt to match political commitments to military resources, still less […] to the economic circumstances of the nation.’ (UK 1965, Survival p. 90); ‘… reductions in capability, whether in terms of manpower or equipment, must be accompanied by reductions in the tasks imposed by the commitments which we require the Services to undertake.’ (UK 1968, par 5)
It is therefore remarkable that the scope of British activity again becomes broader, both in terms of geographic range and of tasks. The 1998 Strategic Defence Review - the major statement on security and defence policy of the first Labour government in nearly twenty years – expands the assumptions towards two concurrent medium scale operation in Europe and in the Middle East (analogous to Bosnia and Iraq), for in the post-Cold War world ‘we must be prepared to go to the crisis, rather than have the crisis come to us’ (UK 1998, par 6 introduction).\(^3\) The 2003 British paper, in response to the events of September 11\(^{th}\), explicitly argues for increased need for power projection capabilities, and a global role for the UK’s armed forces (UK 2003, p. 7).

It is not coincidental that the British papers reflect American themes. The 2003 paper stresses that British armed forces must be interoperable with those of the US, because the most demanding expeditionary operations, including those against state adversaries, can only be plausibly conducted if American forces are engaged. Of equal importance is that interoperability with the US is essential if the UK wishes to ‘secure an effective place in the political and military decision-making processes’, in order to ‘influence political and military decision making throughout the crisis, including during the post-conflict period’, (UK 2003, p. 8). This explicitly makes the British armed forces a political instrument to maintain the special relationship with the US. Resource constraints again dominate the discussion of the direction of British strategy - after years of British engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq took its toll on the British armed forces(UK 2010, p. 9). However, the 2010 Defence Planning Assumptions still incorporate global power projection and commitments in multiple theatres of standing commitments, intervention operations, and stabilisation operations (UK 2010, p. 19). The consistent over-extension of British armed forces suggests a fundamental disconnect between the resources and the strategic ambitions of the UK. This disconnect does not seem to be as present in the US and France, at least not in publically available documents, and it is therefore puzzling.

France is the only other European power with extra-regional ambitions. In the French case, as figures 25 to 27 show, intervention/combat tasks as well as nuclear deterrence remained central in the policy documents rather than low to medium intensity tasks. The geographic scope projected in the 2008 paper follows the arc of crisis that stretches from the Atlantic, through the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, to the Indian Ocean. The standing commitments, as well as the power projection and interventionary capabilities, seem to be prioritised according to the same explicitly hierarchical and geographical lines common to the French documents.

\(^3\) One is a relatively short warfighting deployment, the other an enduring non-warfighting operation - a full scale operation (UK 1998, par 10 supporting essay).
The reach and intensity of the tasks for the German armed forces are by far the most limited of the four states, in line with the constitutional constraints laid out in Basic Law 8a that restricts German forces to defence. They focus exclusively on collective defence in Europe during the Cold War (see the annex of this chapter), and predominantly concentrate on the low to medium intensity range in Europe afterwards, as figure 27 shows. It is explicitly stated that the Bundeswehr is an alliance army and will not operate outside of NATO, the European Union or the UN. However, the definition of collective defence shifts to include a wider range of tasks that ‘includes the prevention of conflicts and crises, the common management of crises, and post-crisis rehabilitation’, consequently, ‘defence can no longer be narrowed down to geographical boundaries’ (DE 2003, p. 3). The 2006 paper argues that the Bundeswehr has been transformed into an expeditionary force (DE 2006, p. 6). It stresses that defence remain the Bundeswehr’s ‘core function’ (DE 2006, p. 56), and that it is under strict control of German Parliament. Germany’s Basic Law ‘affords a wide margin of freedom that makes it possible to also respond to changes in the security environment’, however, and consequently Germany ‘participates in international conflict prevention and crisis management missions, including the fight against international terrorism’ (DE 2006, p. 56). The reformulation of the constitutional restrictions is the solution to demands on Germany to contribute to NATO and maintain its relationship with the US.
Figure 29. Regional focus: intervention. UK policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 30. Regional focus: intervention. FR policy documents (1960-2010)
Figure 31. Regional focus: intervention. DE policy documents (1960-2010)
Deterrence and adversaries

The nuclear deterrent was the foundation of Western Cold War military and grand strategy, and the documents (and figure 25) reflect this. In the post-Cold War strategic era, it is mainly the French papers in which it remains a central element of strategy. Partly, this reflects the Gaullist legacy, but, arguably more importantly, it illustrates the French beliefs on the usefulness of these weapons in the contemporary era. These differences hinge on the belief whether the new state and non-state threats can be deterred, which in turn would depend on assumptions of rationality on the part of rogue states and extremist movements.

The American post-Cold War strategies all express doubt on the ability of nuclear weapons to deter rogue states and terrorist groups. Unlike the Soviet Union, these actors cannot be considered rational (US 1991, p. 26). Deterrence only gets a single mention in the 1995 security strategy, although both the 1995 and 1999 strategies assume that nuclear weapons still ‘serve as a guarantee of our security commitments to allies and a disincentive to those who would contemplate developing or otherwise acquiring their own nuclear weapons’ (US 1999, p. 12). In contrast, the 2002 strategy explicitly states that these are incomparable to the Soviet threat during the Cold War, because then ‘especially following the Cuban missile crisis, we faced a generally status quo, risk-averse adversary’, where ‘deterrence was an effective defense’ (US 2002, p. 25). The 2010 security strategy, published by the Obama administration, makes the same argument, namely that the world has radically changed from the Cold War, and that the current threats that consists of ‘violent extremists’ may not be deterred by American nuclear weapons (US 2010, P. 25). In sum, American documents consistently articulate a sense of insecurity and invulnerability.

The British deterrent is assigned a more minimal role during the Cold War. This is reflected both in terms of its low prominence in the papers (see figure 25), as well as in the discussion itself. The UK’s conception of the ‘minimum deterrent’ necessary (UK 1992, p. 132) is vastly different from the central role the deterrent plays in French strategy and documents (as figure 25 also shows). In fact, in the 1998 paper, the UK’s deterrent receives only a single passing reference until the fourth chapter. The policy of the Blair governments was explicitly only to maintain the ‘minimum deterrent remains a necessary element of our security’, and ‘to see a safer world in which there is no place for nuclear weapons’ UK 1998, par 60). The deterrent becomes more prominent in the documents of the second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century, and is connected to major threats again.31 The 2010 defence review emphasises the necessity of

---

31 ‘On defence, in 2006 we decided to maintain our independent nuclear deterrent because, while we are strongly committed to multilateral nuclear disarmament and to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, we cannot rule out a threat to the UK involving nuclear weapons re-emerging over the next 50 years.’ (UK 2008, p. 44)
the deterrent as an ‘ultimate insurance policy in this age of uncertainty’ (UK 2010, p. 5), although the minimalist approach to nuclear weapons is reiterated (UK 2010, p.37).

As the only non-nuclear state here, the support for deterrence in the papers of (West)Germany is nuanced and the 1969 white paper, for example, takes pains to assure its audience that the use of nuclear weapons is carefully considered and not an ‘automatism’ (DE 1969, p. 17), or run by a computer (DE 1983, p. 219). The 1983 paper reiterates that NATO nuclear deterrence is needed to match the overwhelming conventional and nuclear Soviet preponderance in Europe (DE 1983, pp. 52-58). After the Cold War, deterrence and proliferation receive much less attention in the German documents. Unlike the American papers, the German documents consider non-proliferation institutions the most effective instrument to ‘prevent and contain’ the threat (DE 2003, p. 6), and, crucially, they consider ‘credible deterrence, backed up by defence, policing and intelligence measures to prevent proliferation, plus effective control of exports’ sufficient to deal with the threat of proliferation, especially when backed by ‘arms control, disarmament, and contractual agreements on the non-proliferation of WMD’ (DE 2006, p. 14).

For France, as expected, the role of the deterrent remains markedly different. It is reiterated in each successive French document since 1960 that the national deterrent is the only guarantee of French security and strategic autonomy. The perceived limits of American deterrence are explicitly outlined in the 1972 French white paper, which states that though European security presents a strategic interest to the US, it cannot be considered a vital interest to the US. The paper therefore argues that the US nuclear deterrent per definition cannot be credibly extended to guarantee European security, to believe otherwise is an ‘illusion’ (FR 1972, p. 5). It concludes that deterrence can therefore only be considered as exclusively national, and observes, using a somewhat characteristic French phrasing, that not being able to rely on American deterrence should be considered ‘sans rancœur’- without bitterness.

The first French post-Cold War paper stresses that ‘the concept of deterrence remains unchanged’ (FR 1994, p. 57), and that the deterrent remains the clear choice to ensure French autonomy and security in a changing threat environment (FR 1994, foreword).}

---

32 ‘C’est d’ailleurs bien ce qui inspire le jeu que mènent ensemble les États-Unis et l’Union Soviétique au-dessus des puissances moyennes. S’ils reconnaissent objectivement que le jeu de la dissuasion ne peut valoir entre eux que dans le cas où leurs sanctuaires nationaux se trouvent directement menacés, il faut bien en conclure - et c’est l’évidence - que la défense de l’Europe occidentale ne saurait bénéficier automatiquement de la dissuasion américaine. Depuis fort longtemps, les Américains l’ont senti et ont adopté à l’usage de l’Europe leur stratégie de réponse graduée (flexible response) qui est un palliatif et pour certains une illusion.’ (FR 1972, p. 5).

33 ‘Il ne faudrait d’ailleurs pas considérer ces faits avec quelque rancœur que ce soit. Ils sont dans l’ordre naturel des choses, car la dissuasion est exclusivement nationale.’ (FR 1972, p. 5).

34 ‘La dissuasion nucléaire reste l’un de ses fondements. La France doit s’attendre à ce que ses choix dans ce domaine soient toujours contestés par d’autres au plan international, de plus en plus
The 1994 white paper includes deterrence among the four major strategic functions of the armed forces: dissuasion, action, prevention, protection (FR 1994). Deterrence retains this fundamental role in French strategy in both the 1996 and 2003 military programming laws, and continues to ensure French strategic autonomy and security in an uncertain international environment where regional powers are increasingly attempting to gain access to WMDs.\(^{35}\) The 2008 white paper, published by the Sarkozy government, purported to offer a second major review of French post-Cold War strategy, one that adapted it to the contemporary, post-September 11\(^{th}\) world. Yet, deterrence is still one of the (now) five major functions of the armed forces - (nuclear) deterrence, protection of the national territory, projection, anticipation (intelligence), and prevention. Moreover, despite the reintegration of French forces into NATO, the nuclear deterrent ‘remains one of the foundations of France’s strategy’, where ‘it is the ultimate guarantee of national security and independence’, the ‘sole function’ of which ‘is to prevent a state-originated aggression against the vital interests of the country, from whatever direction and in whatever form’. These vital interests include ‘the elements constituting [French] identity and existence as a nation-State, and in particular [French] territory, our population, and the free exercise of [French] sovereignty’ (FR 2008, p. 64).

**Conditions for the use of force**

The conditions for the use of force underline the diverging assumptions on threats and allies in the four states. The recurring sense of vulnerability in American documents is reflected in these conditions. To European critics, the 2003 controversy over Iraq made clear the tendency of the Bush (43) administration towards unilateralist policies and pre-emptive use of force. The 2002 strategy exemplifies that tendency, when it states that, if necessary, to defend ‘the US, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad’, the US will ‘identify and destroy the threat before it reaches our borders’, and ‘while the US will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country’ (US 2002, p. 6). The text states that the ‘reasons will be
clear’ and ‘the cause just’ of any pre-emptive action (US 2002, p. 16). Specifically, it is the perceived inability to deter contemporary threats that is used to justify the need for pre-emption in the 2002 NSS (US 2002, p. 25). Pre-emption remained an explicit part of the potential use of force in the 2006 security strategy (US 2006, pp. 1, 36).

However, unilateralism was not a radical policy departure from previous administrations by the Bush (43) administration. The Clinton administration was equally willing to take unilateral action, because when ‘national security interests are threatened, we will, as America always has, use diplomacy when we can, but force if we must. We will act with others when we can, but alone when we must’ (US 1995, p. ii); or as the 1999 strategy states that ‘as long as terrorists continue to target American citizens, we reserve the right to act in self-defense by striking at their bases and those who sponsor, assist or actively support them.... We act in alliance or partnership when others share our interests, but unilaterally when compelling national interests so demand’ (US 1999, p. 14). There is no essential difference between the 1995 and 1999 strategies and the 2002 or 2006 strategies. Neither is the 2010 strategy that was published by the Obama administration substantially different. It states that ‘while the use of force is sometimes necessary, we will exhaust other options before war when we can... When force is necessary, we will continue to do so in a way that reflects our values and strengthens our legitimacy, and we will seek broad international support’, but ‘the US reserves the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend our nation and our interests’ (US 2010, p. 22).

Nor is the unilateral option unique to the American documents. While on the one hand the French texts stress the need for international legitimization of force by the United Nations Security Council, on the other the 2003 paper is explicit that France must have the means ‘to identify and prevent threats as soon as possible’ and that consequently ‘possible pre-emptive action is not out of the question, where an explicit and confirmed threat has been recognized’ (FR 2003, p. 6).36

Unsurprisingly, the German conditions on the use of force are the most constraining, due to the constitutional restrictions on the use of German forces. The Bundeswehr will only operate as part of a multinational mission, ‘conscious of its responsibility in the eyes of history’ (DE 1994, par 470; DE 2003, p. 10). Though the British and French documents also state that they expect the armed forces to operate with allies, they are not as categorical as the German texts.

---

36 Generally, the likely uses of force are highly specific and prioritised (FR 1994, pp. 24-26).
Other instruments

Instruments other than military force and diplomacy have historically been part of grand strategy. Financial inducements and bribes, religious fiat, public communications of propaganda, covert operations, trade and other large scale economic transactions are classic tools of statecraft. While in some cases they played decisive roles in achieving policy goals, they operate at a less fundamental and formalised level than force and diplomacy. However, the choice of national security strategies and defence white papers could increase a military bias in the results. Other instruments are still referenced, and increasingly so over the past two decades. The coding scheme incorporates: (1) promotion of democracy; (2) development aid; (3) promotion of free markets, trade and other economic policies; (4) comprehensive use of all instruments; (5) intelligence; and (6) treaties. What is particularly relevant here is to assess which other instruments are – or are not – considered and how they relate to the overall attention to military means.

Tables 13 to 16 show that after the end of the Cold War, the notion of a comprehensive approach that incorporates multiple instruments was advocated in all four states to varying degrees, to deal with the various challenges they faced from non-state actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States Other Instruments</th>
<th>60-70</th>
<th>71-80</th>
<th>81-90</th>
<th>91-00</th>
<th>01-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade/free market</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated / comprehensive</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaties for nuclear and conventional arms control</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Other instruments. US policy documents (1960-2010)

Though military force is accorded the highest importance in the American papers, non-military means are often stressed as crucial for the successful pursuit of American power. The 1988 strategy argues against conceptualising American power as exclusively military and calls to recognise it ‘is also derived from a nation’s moral legitimacy and leadership, as we exemplified by the Marshall Plan after World War II – an act of strengthening allies, of enlightened self-interest’ (US 1988, p. 19). The 1995 documents argue that the ‘extraordinary diplomatic leverage to reshape existing security and economic structures’ relies upon American power, which consists of ‘economic and military might, as well as the power of [American] ideals’. Yet, the paper emphasises that
‘military force remains an indispensable element of our nation’s power’ (US 1995, p. ii). Similarly, in spite of 2002 strategy’s emphasis on the universal nature of American values, it also states that ‘it is time to reaffirm the essential role of American military strength’. In order do so effectively, the US ‘must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge’, so the American military can ‘assure our allies and friends; dissuade future military competition; deter threats against US interests, allies, and friends; and decisively defeat any adversary if deterrence fails’ (US 2002, 29). The explicit avocation of primacy during the Bush administration seems to be rejected in the 2010 document, published by the Obama administration, that stresses moral leadership and explicitly rejects depending on military force alone. Moreover, the American texts consistently emphasise promotion of free markets and democracy, in line with the values that are part of the stated policy goals (see section below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Other Instruments</th>
<th>60-70</th>
<th>71-80</th>
<th>81-90</th>
<th>91-00</th>
<th>01-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade/free market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated / comprehensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaties for nuclear and conventional arms control</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Other instruments. UK policy documents (1960-2010)

37 ‘America’s commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are essential sources of our strength and influence in the world. ..... America has always been a beacon to the peoples of the world when we ensure that the light of America’s example burns bright’ (US 2010, p. 2).
38 ‘But when we overuse our military might, or fail to invest in or deploy complementary tools, or act without partners, then our military is overstretched, Americans bear a greater burden, and our leadership around the world is too narrowly identified with military force’ (US 2010, p. 18).
The British and German post-Cold War documents stress the value of the comprehensive approach, specifically at the level of missions, whether stabilisation, peace building, or counterinsurgency. The British papers argue that the less-conventional security challenges require ‘ever more integrated planning of military, diplomatic and economic instruments at both national and international levels’ (UK 2003, p. 1). The 2008 paper argues that the problems that the British forces encountered during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan should be taken into account as ‘building stability out of conflict or state failure is a complex undertaking which requires concerted, sustained, and integrated effort across security, politics and governance, and economic development’ (UK 2008, p. 37). In the German documents, the stress on non-military means has been in place in a consistent manner. Non-military means are coherent with the German assessment of the international environment as being challenged mainly by non-state threats, by instability itself, and the wider range of economic, demographic, environmental, social, and other trends and developments driving this instability. The response to these challenges is a comprehensive approach to
the root causes of conflict (DE 1994, par 212; DE 2003, p. 8; DE 2006, p. 6). The French papers do not stress the comprehensive approach to the same extent as the German or British documents, but similar ideas of cohesively integrating instruments appear in the French publications (for example: FR 2008, p. 56).

The difference in emphasis between the German and British documents seems to be that the German approach is focused on addressing the root causes of instability, while the British application of the comprehensive approach is more attuned to operational effectiveness. The latter can also be said about the French policy approach. The American papers mostly discuss how the US can use its power comprehensively at the national level. These different conceptualisations of both the causes of conflict and the efficacy of instruments to deal with conflict indicate differences in perspectives between the US and the Europe on the relationship between state and society. The stress in the threat assessments of the American texts was mostly on rogue states, which suggests that policymakers perceive both active intentions on the part of these states, and attribute an important role to ideology. The European states emphasise to a greater extent how different stress factors contribute to the absence of responsible governments and lead to conflict, and that addressing the ‘root causes’ of conflicts is essential to solve them. All the European states seem to share a view that directly connects the nature of states to the broader political, cultural, and economical developments within the societies of these states, as well as to the relationship of these states to their societies.
Policy goals and the domestic environment

The previous sections showed that – as expected – the four states share broad patterns in their perception of threats and the manner with which to deal with these threats: from the focus on the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc during the Cold War, to the broader array of diverse, non-traditional, non-state threats; the centrality of NATO; and the shift from Cold War emphases on collective defence and deterrence to a broader set of tasks, including interventions and the use of military force as part of a comprehensive set of instruments.

Yet, differences between the states were also evident, and became more so in the post-Cold War period. The American documents evidence a broad scope of threats that is more diverse but also interconnected that demonstrate a high sense of vulnerability. Based on this, the American papers argue that a broad range of alliances and the global deployment of forces are required - though one that is more and more flexible and less institutionalised - along with the instruments to achieve US national interests. The British documents presented a broad range of non-traditional threats that paralleled the perception of the American texts, an expanded scope of tasks for the armed forces that is beyond the financial means of the UK. The French documents showed a greater prominence of deterrence, a more differentiated attitude towards NATO, and a clear hierarchy of threats with state threats to national security as the highest priority. The French papers specifically pay attention to the distribution of power, as evidenced in their emphasis on state threats, and of allies. The papers of reunified Germany still evidenced a limited scope – geographically and in terms of range of tasks – for its armed forces, along with a broad, but less intensive perception of threats, and strong preferences for institutionalised frameworks of international cooperation.

The section that follows shows how the references to policy goals and the domestic environment are even more disparate than the discussions of the international environment and the diplomatic and military instruments.

The expressed policy goals reflect the broad possibilities of theory and consists of the following categories: (1) values (such as human rights, democracy, and freedom); (2) security (whether expressed in a broad sense or as the state's territorial integrity); (3) economy (including prosperity, open and free markets, and access to resources); (4) international commitments (to organisations, alliances, or in bilateral agreements); (5) leadership; and (6) autonomy. The policy documents inherently focus more on international than domestic factors. However, when present, textual references on (1) budget constraints; (2) calls for domestic support; and (3) civil-military relations were noted.
US: policy goals and domestic environment

In the American documents, two themes dominate the discussions of policy goals that are unique to the US. These themes are also defended through historical references. The first theme prevalent in the American texts is a stress on values (freedom, human rights and democracy), open economies, and security, as figure 32 shows. This emphasis on values increases gradually, from the Carter administration onwards. Unlike the documents of the other states, in the US documents these goals are not only emphasised as important by themselves, but in fact are presented as mutually constitutive and as reinforcing one another.39

Figure 32. Policy goals: values, security, and economy. US policy documents (1960-2010)

---

39 The emphasis on values is also reflected in the inclusion of democracy and free market promotion among the other strategic instruments (see table 13).
The following excerpts from the 1988, 1991, 1995, and 2010 strategies illustrate this worldview, and they use strikingly similar language in spite of the Party or ideological differences that are claimed to exist between these administrations:

From the 1988 NSS, published by the Reagan administration: ‘The survival of the US as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure; a healthy and growing US economy to provide opportunity for individual prosperity and a resource base for our national endeavors; a stable and secure world, free of major threats to US interests; the growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system; healthy and vigorous alliance relationships.’ (US 1988, p. 3);

From the 1991 NSS, published by the Bush (41) administration: ‘The survival of the US as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure. ... A healthy and growing US economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national
endeavors at home and abroad. ... Healthy, cooperative and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations.’ (US 1991, pp. 3-4);

From the 1995 NSS, published by the Clinton administration: ‘We believe that our goals of enhancing our security, bolstering our economic prosperity, and promoting democracy are mutually supportive. Secure nations are more likely to support free trade and maintain democratic structures. Nations with growing economies and strong trade ties are more likely to feel secure and to work toward freedom. And democratic states are less likely to threaten our interests and more likely to cooperate with the US to meet security threats and promote free trade and sustainable development.’ (US 1995, p. i); and

From the 2010 NSS, published by the Obama administration: ‘American interests are enduring. They are: the security of the US, its citizens, and US allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing US economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and an international order advanced by US leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.’ (US 2010, p. 7).

The underlying argument of the documents is an assertive liberal internationalism: free market democracies do not have motives to threaten the US. The papers that came out in the aftermath of the Cold War explicitly make this point. 40 The 1999 strategy underlines that ‘the spread of democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law not only reflects American values, it also advances both our security and prosperity’, because ‘democratic governments are more likely to cooperate with each other against common threats, encourage free trade, promote sustainable economic development, uphold the rule of law, and protect the rights of their people’ (US 1999, p. 4).

The Bush (43) administration was considered an explicitly ideological departure from the administrations that preceded it, and the scores do indeed reflect the high prominence of ‘values’ (see figure 32). The 2002 strategy, for example, argues that the US must ‘help make the world not just safer but better’ (US 2002, p.1), that ‘the US must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere’, and that ‘no nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them’ (US 2002, p. 3). The 2006 document juxtaposes freedom against tyranny, ‘the combination of brutality, poverty, instability, corruption, and suffering, forged under the rule of despots and despotic systems’, and argues that ‘all tyrannies threaten the world’s

40 ‘America will continue to support an international economic system as open and inclusive as possible, as the best way to strengthen global economic development, political stability and the growth of free societies.’ (US 1991, p. 2); ‘The core of our strategy is to help democracy and markets expand and survive in other places where we have the strongest security concerns and where we can make the greatest difference. This is not a democratic crusade; it is a pragmatic commitment to see freedom take hold where that will help us most.’ (US 1995, p. 23).
interest in freedom’s expansion, and some tyrannies, in their pursuit of WMD or sponsorship of terrorism, threaten our immediate security interests as well’ (US 2006, p. 3). The 2002 and 2006 strategies also argue that economic freedoms ward off the threat of tyranny, and that ‘economic freedom is a moral imperative’, and is ‘fundamental to human nature and foundational to a free society’ (US 2006, pp. 3, 27). The 2010 security strategy published by the Obama administration attempts to distance itself from its direct predecessor by using a less ideological tone to the text, which is also reflected in the scores for ‘values’ and ‘security’ reversing (see figure 32. Yet, the 2010 document still stresses that ‘the US believes certain values are universal and will work to promote them worldwide’, and also underlines that ‘nations that embrace these values for their citizens are ultimately more successful—and friendly to the US—than those that do not’ (US 2010, p. 35).

The second major theme is that all the US papers stress that the US has the responsibility to act as a leader in the global order (see figure 33). The documents argue that the US must engage and reject isolationism and that it has a specific role to play in protecting these freedoms against threats originating from authoritarian states or extremist movements. If the US does not act, there is no other state that can. It is also part of the same overall worldview shown in the previous sections, with the global perception of threats within the American documents and the globally activist approaches to frameworks of international cooperation and tasks for the armed forces. As figure 33 shows, this theme becomes increasingly prominent from the late 1970s onwards. The language used is again largely consistent, regardless of administration:

From the 1978 defence paper, published by the Carter administration: ‘Our power does not permit us a secondary role; our interests do not allow us the luxury of passivity. The dedication of the US to the principles of human rights, peace, and stability impels us toward goals abroad as well as at home. The rest of our coalition would be too weak and fragmented without us; our political opponents would be too powerful. If the conditions of US security are to be maintained, the US must still take the lead and carry the heaviest load in the coalition. There is no else to take our place.’ (US 1978, pp. 16-17);

From the 1988 NSS, published by the Reagan administration: ‘... we have taken up a major role of world leadership, our interests and political values call for a deepening partnership with like-minded nations to advance the cause of peace and freedom.’ (US 1988, p. 5);

From the 1991 NSS, published by the Bush (41) administration: ‘For America, there can be no retreat from the world’s problems. Within the broader community of nations, we see our own role clearly. ... We must work with others, but we must also be a leader.’ (US 1991, p. v);
From the 1995 NSS, published by the Clinton administration: ‘Never has American leadership been more essential — to navigate the shoals of the world’s new dangers and to capitalize on its opportunities.’ (US 1995, p. i);

From the 1999 NSS, published by the Clinton administration: ‘Our strategy is founded on continued US engagement and leadership abroad. The US must lead abroad if we are to be secure at home.’ (US 1999, p. 3);

From the 2010 NSS, published by the Obama administration: ‘The US must renew its leadership in the world by building and cultivating the sources of our strength and influence. Our national security depends upon America’s ability to leverage our unique national attributes, just as global security depends upon strong and responsible American leadership.’ (US 2010, p. 7).

The costs for this leadership are not entirely unproblematic, as there is a real need to maintain a domestic consensus to support expansive US policies, and this consensus is often linked to the budget. From the end of the Cold War onwards, there is also an increase in praise for the armed forces.

The grand strategic system of the US thus links together a series of goals and instruments in an internally coherent manner. Consistently expressed throughout the texts is the need to establish an democratic and open economic international order, and that the US has crucial role to play in leading this order. This justifies the broad engagement of the US in terms of the use of force abroad, whether through intervention or continued presence, and in participation in international organisations and other agreements. This is the fundament of the strategic system for the past four decades and more. The emphasis on the need for American leadership, the mutually constitutive elements of values, security and interests, the globally activist outlooks on cooperation and the possible use of force – together these form the central puzzle of American grand strategy, raised in the first chapter, discussed and developed in chapters four, five, and six, and further shown in the sections above. These elements are puzzling because they raise the costs of American grand strategy beyond what it needs to secure itself, and the US risks provoking countervailing responses from other states. The need to convince a sceptical American public is also apparent (see table 17).

273
The next chapter shows that two sets of historical references to American history are used to validate precisely the elements that are most puzzling. Leadership is justified by the American experience with isolationism in the interwar era and leadership in the Second World War. The successful struggle against successive authoritarian threats is used to underline the strength of American values.
UK: policy goals and domestic environment

In the British documents, two sequential themes are apparent with regard to the stated policy goals, one during and one after the Cold War (as can been seen from figures 34 and 35). The first theme is the consistent prominence of security during the Cold War. The second is a change from the 1980s - the Thatcher government’s papers - onwards, when values and economic interests become more prominent in the papers. Values are especially emphasised during Prime Minister Blair’s time in government (1997-2007). The 1998 papers state that the goal of British defence is to ‘act as a force for good’ by strengthening international peace and stability (UK 1998, par 21). The ‘force for good’ phrase in fact appears eight different times in the 1998 SDR. The 1998 paper’s ‘vision of Britain’s role’ is ‘strong in defence; resolute in standing up for [British] interests and as an advocate of human rights and democracy the world over; a reliable and powerful ally; and a leader in Europe and the international community’ (UK 1998, par 13). Moreover, the 1998 paper, like its contemporary American counterparts, argues that British ‘national security and prosperity thus depend on promoting international stability, freedom and economic development’. The paper underlines that Britain, as ‘a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and as a country both willing and able to play a leading role internationally’, has the ‘responsibility to act as a force for good in the world’ (UK1998, par 21).

Figure 34. Policy goals: values, security, and economy. UK policy documents (1960-2010)
The expansive view of British international responsibilities was paralleled by the expanding scope of tasks for the armed forces, both in terms of the intensity and geographic range. The 1998 text dismisses any alternative to this internationalism, should Britain ‘as a country, choose to take a narrow view of our role and responsibilities which did not require a significant military capability’. Yet, this ‘would mean that we would not wish and would not be able to contribute effectively to resolving crises such as Bosnia, Kosovo, or the invasion of Kuwait’. This is ‘a real choice, but not one the Government could recommend for Britain’ (UK 1998, par 59). The 2008 security strategy published by the Brown government, strongly emphasises security (see figure 34), and, tellingly, its first sentence is: ‘Providing security for the nation and for its citizens remains the most important responsibility of government.’ (UK 2008, p.3). However, the 2008 text still argues that ‘the single biggest positive driver of security within and between states is the presence of legitimise, accountable and capable government operating by the rule of law’ (UK 2008, p. 20).

![Figure 35. Policy goals: international commitments. UK policy documents(1960-2010)](image)

The difficulty for Britain in keeping up with the US is apparent from the constant discussions on budgetary shortcomings (see table 18) – during the Cold War as it is shedding its colonial possessions (‘the long retreat’) – and during the post-Cold War period, when it takes on new ambitious tasks. Consistent over time is also the praise for
the armed forces, praise that only becomes more prominent as the budgetary pressures increase. The next chapter shows how British responsibilities are rhetorically linked to a longer-view of British history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Kingdom Domestic Environment</th>
<th>60-70</th>
<th>71-80</th>
<th>81-90</th>
<th>91-00</th>
<th>01-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic consensus</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil-military relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise armed forces</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscription</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Domestic environment. UK policy documents (1960-2010)
France: policy goals and domestic environment

The French documents strongly emphasise security and strategic autonomy. Figures 36 and 37 show the high level of continuity of both security and autonomy in the French documents, and the relative absence – also after the Cold War – of ‘values’ and ‘economic interests’ as stated policy goals, unlike the American, British or German documents. The documents emphasise security. They also define it narrowly as foremost the protection of French population and territory, and only then wider security in Europe and the regions bordering Europe. Autonomy is of course emphasised during the Gaullist era, but it remains a consistent feature regardless of the party affiliation (including the 1981 to 1995 era when Mitterrand, previously one of De Gaulle’s strongest critics, was President of France). In each instance, autonomy and territorial security are used to justify the need for France’s nuclear deterrent.

The 1994 white paper is the first major restatement of French strategy after the Cold War, and also the first new white paper since 1972. Like its predecessors, it defines French policy goals as strategic autonomy and defence of its vital interests, and links both to the nuclear deterrent (FR 1994, foreword). In fact, the paper explicitly restates the motivation for strategic autonomy is to ‘not depend on others for the defence of French vital interests,’ in spite of the improved strategic situation, for situations when ‘French vital interests do not coincide with those of its neighbours’ (FR 1994, p. 26).

---


42 ´La France doit disposer des moyens de préserver son indépendance et de protéger l´intégrité de son territoire ainsi que ses intérêts vitaux, en particulier en Europe.´ (FR 1987 in David 1989 p. 216); ´La France, seule puissance nucléaire d’Europe occidentale avec la Grande-Bretagne, présente sur cinq océans et quatre continents, a choisi d’assurer elle-même sa défense pour garantir son indépendance et maintenir son identité.´ (FR 1990).
The removal of the constraints of the Cold War, leads to the US, UK, and Germany, albeit in different ways, to explicitly incorporate values as policy goals. Yet, in the French papers, values such as human rights, freedom, and democracy remain relatively marginal compared to autonomy and security (see figures 36 and 37). The second major post-Cold War statement of French strategy came with the 2008 white paper - published during the Sarkozy presidency. Despite what was at the time perceived as a policy shift, in the foreword to the 2008 document, President Sarkozy reiterates that his ‘two goals are to ensure that France remains a major military and diplomatic power, ready to take on the challenges congruent with our international obligations, and that the State has the capacity to guarantee the independence of France and the protection of all French citizens’ (FR 2008, p. 9).
The discussion in contemporary French documents has also remained fairly consistent in the references to domestic consensus and to praise for the armed forces (see table 19). The French policy documents spend less effort on directly addressing the domestic audience than the German papers. Compared to the emphasis placed on civil-military relations in the German texts is minimal in the French texts, after the 1960s.
The stress on security and emphasis on autonomy in the French texts fit the preoccupation with power distribution within the international system and the fear of dependence on outside powers for security. The focus on interventionary capabilities and deterrence fits the hierarchically ordering of vital and strategic interests, and the likeliness and impact of threats. The next chapter shows that these themes are consistently argued through French historical experiences, specifically the trauma of 1940.

Germany: policy goals and domestic environment

The German documents consistently emphasise values and international commitments. Notably, values substantiate a broad, non-nationally exclusive, definition of security, and in the German documents they are generally defined as individual human rights and democracy. Security and values are presented in the German papers as mutually constitutive. Legitimacy and internal stability of state and armed forces are considered to be maintained by membership of NATO, thereby ensuring both external and internal German security needs and guaranteeing the continued democratic nature of the German state. The government strives for a ‘dignified life for its citizens’ and ‘peoples to live together in peace through a consistent policy of peace’, and this is only possible if ‘external security’ is guaranteed through ‘alliances and military protection’ (DE 1976, foreword). The German contribution of armed forces to NATO is then the necessary condition to maintain these main objectives (DE 1983, foreword). There is a difficult rhetorical balance between restraint and commitment to NATO (DE 1983, foreword). The strong emphasis in the German Cold War papers on values is nearly absent in the British and French security papers of the same period. The emphasis on the citizen as an individual in this discussion of values is an obvious response to the total warfare state of Germany’s wartime past.

The relative prominence of security strongly declines after the disappearance of the Soviet threat in the 1994 white paper (see figure 38), yet the need for alliances is stressed (see figure 39). This underlines the German discomfort with thinking in terms of security. Yet, regardless of the decline in threats, which is apparent from the post-Cold War German paper, the prominence of NATO in the papers increases, as does the scope of its mission. In the foreword to the 1994 white paper, Chancellor Kohl argues that ‘Germany will not enjoy a secure future in peace and freedom’ unless it continues to make its ‘contribution, as a member of the Euro-Atlantic community of shared values with a common fate’, in order to prevent war and build ‘a just and stable international

order in which human and minority rights are effectively protected’ (DE 1994, foreword). The 1994 paper stresses that ‘German policy is committed to peace’ and that ‘its foremost task is to safeguard, promote and shape peace, both within Germany and in the international community’ (DE 1994, par. 303). Revealingly, it argues that ‘peace prevails when freedom and justice are realised and the dignity of man is protected’, because ‘these supreme values are the universally binding core of human rights, which every state, regardless of different religious persuasions and cultural traditions, has to respect and protect’, which means that ‘serving peace also means striving for a world in which everyone can live in freedom, peace and dignity’ (DE 1994, par 303). Peace, it seems, is not a matter of security narrowly defined, belonging to states, but is comprehensive and personal by nature.

Figure 38. Policy goals: values, security, and economy. DE policy documents (1960-2010)

The German documents are striking for the attention they pay to the domestic environment of policymaking, often spending half of the considerable page counts of the white papers discussing specifically civil-military relations and conscription (see table 20). The manner in which these are discussed are explicitly connected to the German legacy of the Second World War.
The next chapter shows that German experiences with war shaped both German beliefs towards force and diplomacy, and, specifically, the domestic relations between state, society, and the armed forces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Germany Domestic Environment</th>
<th>60-70</th>
<th>71-80</th>
<th>81-90</th>
<th>91-00</th>
<th>01-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic consensus</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil-military relations</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise armed forces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscription</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20. Domestic environment. DE policy documents (1960-2010)
Conclusion

This chapter shows that the policy documents of the US, UK, France, and Germany consistently display unique national beliefs on threats, alliances, force, and domestic relations, as well as persistently prioritise the same broad policy goals, regardless of which party is in power. These beliefs are consistent with the foreign and defence policy behaviour discussed in the chapters that preceded this chapter. The American documents stress the need for American leadership and values, without which the international system, and the US itself, would be less secure. They contrast the necessity of US leadership and the global diplomatic and military commitments that the US must undertake against the alternative of isolationism. In light of the pervasive and interlinked threats that are present globally, the documents make clear that isolationism cannot be an option. The British documents in turn approach the international system in a similar manner to the US, with a similar appraisal of threats, and with the NATO as the key alliance commitment. They emphasise the importance of continental commitments, and minimise the role of the British nuclear deterrent. In contrast, the French documents underline the need for autonomy and security. To maintain these, intervention forces and independent nuclear weapons are placed centrally in French strategy, including in the texts published after the Cold War. Threats are prioritised in the French texts from those that impact vital interests to those that are more peripheral, with significant attention paid to powerful states first and foremost. Finally, the German documents relate NATO and the EU not only to prosperity and security from international threats, but also as a way to normalise the disturbed relations between state, society, and the armed forces. Force is discussed in a cautious manner in the German texts, and after the Cold War they deemphasise the seriousness of the remaining threats.

It could be argued that the themes found in the policy texts, such as those mentioned above, are not surprising, considering what we know about these four states. The next chapter will, however, show that those beliefs and policy choices are also consistently framed through the same, nationally particular historical experiences, in policy documents, speeches, and interviews throughout the seven decades that followed the Second World War.
Chapter Eight
Perpetual Past:
The Use of History in Policymaking
This chapter seeks to address the questions of whether, why, and how the experiences with the Second World War have indeed left lasting legacies on the behaviour of policymakers. It also seeks to answer whether, why, and how subsequent conflicts and crises reinforced or undermined the legacy of the war. This chapter also illustrates how American, British, French, and German policymakers make and have made use of their specific experiences with the Second World War to diagnose and defend their choices. References heavy with symbolic meaning such as Munich, appeasement, 1940, isolationism, Yalta as well as others recur in speeches, interviews, and policy documents. They are used for choices that affect long-term grand strategy as well as short-term foreign policy crises, to argue for international commitments or autonomy, for shows of force or restraint, and for assessing a foreign threat or cautioning against domestic authority. The chapter demonstrates that policymakers applied the experiences with the Second World War to later conflicts and crises, but also that these same conflicts were then used by later generations of policymakers. Shared or nationally specific experiences in, for example, Suez (the UK, France), Algeria (France), Vietnam (the US), Falklands (the UK), the Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq reinforced or undermined the legacies of the Second World War. What this chapter accomplishes, is to show that the legacies of wars strongly shape the beliefs of policymakers and the domestic relations within which they operate, yet they are not static or apolitical.

It builds on the previous chapter that showed that policymakers motivate their strategic choices in nationally specific and consistent manners through analysis of the policy documents published by the US, UK, France, and Germany between 1960 and 2010. The American documents a recurring sense of vulnerability appears that necessitates shows of national strength and international leadership. The British papers emphasise a special role and responsibility for the UK in an insecure world. The French documents reiterate the importance of nuclear deterrence and a wide array of international relations to achieve security and strategic autonomy. The German papers emphasise domestic constraints and international commitments. This chapter uses that selection of documents, but expands upon them with interviews with, and speeches and books by, civilian and military policymakers to show the recurring use of the past both in grand strategy and in conflicts and crises. (For a complete overview of the historical references found in the policy documents, see the annex of this chapter).

The interviews took place over the course of 2012 and 2013, and were used to explore and validate the ideas and findings of the research. In each of the states, I attempted to find a selection of civilian policymakers, members of the armed forces, and security professionals, from different political backgrounds.

For the US, I spoke with: Major General Peter C. Bayer Jr.; Hans Binnendijk; Shawn Brimley; Stephen P. Cohen; Daniel Fata; Douglas Feith; Nathan Freier; Ambassador Robert E. Hunter; Ambassador Robert Kimmitt; Lawrence Korb; Lindsay Krasnoff; Robert Lieber; Franklin Miller; Johna Ohtagaki; Paul R. Pillar; Bruce Riedel; Julianne
Smith; Walter Slocombe; and Ambassador Kurt Volker. For the UK, I spoke with: Malcolm Chalmers; Michael Clarke; Julian Lindley-French; Kevan Jones; David Omand; Lord John Roper; Ash Shetty; Simon Strickland; Major General Julian Thompson; Tom Tugendhat; and James de Waal. For France, I spoke with: Patrick Allard; Arnaud d'Andurain; Frederic Charillon; Dominique David; Barbara Jankowksi; Colomban Lebas; Bruno Tertrais. For Germany, I spoke with: Thomas Bagger; Jan Eichenstadt; Christoph Grams; Lieutenant Colonel Axel Jancke; Jörn Hasler; Winfried Nachtwei; Marco Overhaus; Ann Kristin Otto; Henning Riecke; Brigadier General Hans-Werner Wiermann; and Markus Woehlke. (For a complete overview of the interviewees and their backgrounds, see the annex of this chapter).

This chapter does not have the pretension to offer a monocausal explanation of seven decades of grand strategy; yet, the past, and specifically the Second World War, appears again and again as a gravitational force on policymakers. For each of the states, the decades since the war are divided by major keystone events into different eras. This chapter discusses, for each of these states, how the Second World War was applied in subsequent conflicts and crises, and how these experiences in turn reinforced or undermined strategic beliefs and relations.

**United States**

**Era 1. The Second World War to Vietnam**

The decades that followed the Second World War saw policymakers applying what they perceived to be the lessons of the war, in which they had themselves often served or been involved in setting policy, to diagnose the Soviet threat and the reliability of American allies.\(^1\) Stalin’s Soviet Union was equated to Hitler’s Germany\(^2\), and ‘Munich’ and ‘appeasement’ therefore figured prominently in scepticism towards post-war negotiations with the Soviet Union.\(^3\) Containment of Germany would prevent the

---

\(^1\) For example, Eisenhower to Churchill in 1955: ‘Two decades earlier, the world had entertained the ‘fatuous hope’ that Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese war lords might let it live in peace; ‘we saw the results’. Yet, ‘The Communist sweep over the world since World War II has been much faster and much more relentless than the 1930s sweep of dictators.’ It was necessary ‘to look some of the unpleasant facts squarely in the face and meet them exactly as our Grand Alliance of the 1940s met our enemies and vanquished them’. (Eisenhower to Churchill, March 29, 1955, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file: DDE Diary, Box 6).

\(^2\) Secretary of the Navy Forrestal believed the Soviet communist threat had become more serious than the Nazi challenge of the 1930s. (Forrestal to Clarence Dillon, April 11, 1946, ML, JFP, box 11, cited in Leffler, 1984).

\(^3\) On Yalta, Senator Arthur Vandenberg indicated that among the members of the American delegation to the San Francisco United Nations meeting ‘there is a general disposition to stop this
resurrection of the ‘old German power’, as Truman’s Secretary of State Acheson put it. The weaknesses of US allies similarly played into the assessments of the need for US commitments to Europe. Eisenhower’s Secretary of State Dulles judged the British to be weak not just militarily, but also morally (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 266). He saw a ‘Chamberlain attitude’ prevalent among British policymakers, and also had little confidence in France’s ability to protect the Free World’s boundaries. The irresponsible behaviour of France and Britain in the Suez Crisis reinforced their hesitations, and the post-war assumption that Britain could be counted on to deal with the Middle East abruptly ended (Kyle 1991, p. 526).

The US remained vulnerable, its geographical advantages were negated by technological advantages and a world that had become increasingly interconnected. The 1968 defense program argues that: ‘...[we] know that the policies of unarmed isolationism and attempted neutrality, which we followed prior to World War II, were in the end far more costly in lives and property’, and the US is denied such an ‘easy option’ in an ‘age of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles’ (US 1968, p. 28).

The expanding influence of communism in Asia was also seen through the lens of the Second World War, reinforced by the ‘loss’ of China (Gaddis 2005, p. 107). Dulles argued that Chinese communists possessed an ‘aggressive fanaticism [that] presents a certain parallel to that of Hitler’. President Truman himself linked a defeat in Korea to US security, arguing that it would make it impossible to ‘maintain freedom [of the US] if freedom elsewhere is wiped out’. Similarly, General MacArthur considered the policy of containing rather than unleashing Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek to be ‘appeasement,’ and Adlai Stevenson, the Democrat candidate for the 1952 presidential elections, presented a US withdrawal as risking a Munich in the Far East, with the possibility of a third world war not far behind. Truman considered the parallels with ‘Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria’, as he remembered how each time that ‘the democracies

---

6 Against the Germans in 1940 France had demonstrated a lack of military capabilities and national will. Dulles had attributed these shortcomings to France since World War I (Immerman 2010, p. 183).
8 Truman radio television address September 1, 1950.
failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead' and that ‘communism
was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen,
and twenty years earlier’ (cited in May 1975, pp. 81-83).

The outcome of the Korean War, ambiguous at best, did not diminish the use of the
Munich analogy in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Credibility and
demonstrations of strength in fact increased in importance due the central role of
deterrence in the Cold War. Kennedy’s references primarily drew from the Second
World War: Pearl Harbor, Dunkirk and Munich (Shelly 1995, p. 244). During the Cuba
Crisis, Air Force Chief of Staff General LeMay told Kennedy that failing to invade the
island would be ‘almost as bad as the appeasement at Munich’. 10 Yet, for later
generations, the Cuba Crisis seemed to underline the myth of Munich, demonstrating
that authoritarian adversaries would fold only if the US stood up to them.

The Munich analogy indeed dominated US policymaking on Vietnam. The perceived
necessity of avoiding loss of face made American commitment inflexible. For example,
Secretary of State Rusk commented in August 1962 that there were always costs in
meeting ‘commitments of honour’, but ‘if we look at the history of the last 30 to 40
years, that the costs of not meeting your obligations are far greater than those of meeting
your obligations’ (cited in Gaddis 2005, p. 260). In a 1965 memorandum to the
President, Secretary of Defense McNamara, argued that deployment of US forces and
the decision to bomb North Vietnam made sense only in support of a ‘long-run United
States policy to contain Communist China’, which ‘like Germany in 1917, like Germany
in the West and Japan in the East in the late 30’s, and like the USSR in 1947’ threatened
to undermine the US position in the world and ‘to organize all of Asia against us’.
Moreover, McNamara pointed out that US policy was to ‘move toward economic well-
being, toward open societies, and toward cooperation between nations’. The US could
not ‘achieve these ends’ and ‘play its leadership role’ if a ‘powerful and virulent nation—
whether Germany, Japan, Russia or China—is allowed to organize their part of the world
according to a philosophy contrary to ours’. 11 Foremost, the shadow of appeasement
loomed over Vietnam. ‘Surrender anywhere threatens defeat everywhere’, President
Johnson said in 1964 (cited in Gaddis 2005, p. 211), a point he reiterated at a press
conference on July 28, 1965, when he argued that the US ‘did not choose to be the
guardians at the gate, but there is no one else’. The US could not afford not to lead.
Moreover, ‘surrender in Vietnam’ would not ‘bring peace, because we learned from
Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression’ (Gaddis 2005, p.
268). In his later autobiography, President Johnson maintained that ‘if I left that war
and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and
my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would both find it impossible to

11 Draft Memorandum From Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Johnson. Foreign
189.
accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe’. Though the policymakers considered other analogies like the Korean War and the French experience in Indochina, these were never equal in importance (Khong 1992; Shelly 1995, p. 169). Nixon’s views barely differed from Johnson. He warned against trying to ‘reach an agreement with our adversaries – as Chamberlain reached an agreement with Hitler at Munich in 1938.’ As in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, for Nixon Vietnam was a matter of resolve of ‘our will to win – and the courage to use our power – now’ (cited in Shelly 1995, p. 286).

Legacy

The failure in Vietnam led to the most powerful challenge to the triumphalist paradigm, as the US expanded blood and treasure in a conflict far removed from the central struggle of the Cold War. Vietnam also initially seemed to undermine the core beliefs that US interests were global and to be maintained with military commitments, and that credibility in peripheral conflicts was crucial. A thorough strategic reinvention never materialised though, as blame was assigned to a defeatist, if not disloyal, attitude on the part of the American left. The shift in blame mirrored class divisions. Middle-class and working-class Americans – especially if they were white, conservative Catholics or Protestants, and indebted to the patriotic culture of the Second World War – grew resentful and sometimes violent towards privileged and more highly educated young people. Less economically advantaged Americans therefore came to consider ‘the antiwar movement as an elitist attack on American troops by people who could themselves avoid conscription into service’ (Appy 1993, pp. 41, 42). The Nixon administration attempted to harness this ‘silent majority’ against the protestors. This myth – analogous to the stab in the back – had been engineered by the Nixon-Agnew administration to discredit the opposition and galvanize support for the war (Lembcke 1998, p. 2). The myth that anti-war activists had spit on veterans returning from Vietnam had become a staple of pop culture (De Carvalho 2006). The sense of betrayal of the US soldier was represented and reiterated in popular culture from the 1970s into the 1990s. In post-Vietnam domestic politics the sense remained that the veterans had gone to war in an alien land, for a domestic public who did not understand and for foreigners who did not appreciate their sacrifices – ‘support the troops’ became a show of solidarity as well as a shield against criticism of the policies that sent out the troops.

For the military, the mistakes of Vietnam were obvious, namely that it had been a conflict that had been entered half-heartedly, then escalated and fought incoherently, for

---

13 Cited in Rose, 2010, p. 183. Ironically so, considering the fear, at least in Kissinger’s mind, that defeat in Vietnam might spark a backlash that could be similar to that of Weimar Germany.
vague political objectives and with constrained military means. The armed forces avoided organisational disintegration by redirecting their efforts towards their key strengths – large-scale conventional warfare against state threats - and they actively resisted involvement in more complex operations (Campbell 1998). The resultant doctrine – overwhelming force for limited and clear political goals (Rose 2010, pp. 219-220) – became known as the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, named after the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chief of Staff. Professionalisation in the wake of Vietnam gave US armed forces a group identity that distinguished them from society at large (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 205).

The lessons that civilian policymakers took from Vietnam were also simple: they could wage war as long as they did not inconvenience the public with demands of financial and human resources (Shelly 1995, p. 336; Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 271). This de facto constrained the use of force by post-Vietnam administrations. Yet, the Gates Commission had examined the elimination of military conscription, and had concluded that the vast majority of resistance to the war was due to the draft. The consequent professionalisation further centralised presidential control (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 266). For Congress, the lessons were also simple: constrain again the Presidential power that had been unleashed in the aftermath of the Second World War. The 1973 War Powers Act curbed the executive’s autonomy to use force for more than ninety days with congressional authorization. The Church Committee was a similar attempt to curb the executive’s ability to use intelligence agencies for covert action. In the years following Vietnam, Presidents did use American forces on their own initiative. They always did so, however, on the periphery of great power conflict with a low risk of escalation, where the risks and the stakes were limited and mostly symbolic.

Era 2. Vietnam to the end of the Cold War

The discomfort with Vietnam was apparent in the second half of the 1970s. President Ford warned that pondering the defeat would undermine American self-confidence. Carter cited Vietnam as an illustration of how overreaching and insulated governmental leaders can produce disastrously counterproductive policies’. 14 The Carter administration’s 1978 defense program poses more questions about the continued American role in Asia (US 1978, p. 16) and Europe (US, 1978, pp. 17-18) than previous texts had. Still, it also highlights the vulnerability of the US since the Second World War, and argues that the US ‘cannot afford to let the rest of the world fall under the dominion or hegemony of another great power’, as ‘isolation never has been, and is not now, a workable policy’ for the US (US 1978, pp. 16-17). A critical appraisal of Vietnam’s strategic mistakes never happened, however, due to a series of events reinforced that the

notion that it had been domestic weakness in the face of adversity, rather than any fundamental strategic miscalculation, that had led to failure in Vietnam. These events included the failure to liberate the hostages held captive in the American embassy in Iran, and the series of setbacks for US policies in Afghanistan (1979), Poland (1981), and across Central America. The promise of an aspiring presidential candidate Reagan to reinvigorate American pride was in step with the time.

Once in power, the Reagan administration again made the show of strength and the perception of power central goals of US policy. The classified 1982 strategy argues that Moscow perceives the US as politically constrained by ‘the trauma of Vietnam’ and ‘an inability to achieve domestic consensus on foreign policy’. The Soviets were now testing US resolve in the Third World (US 1982, p. 9). The 1988 security strategy argues that the US must restore ‘our nation’s military strength after a period of decline’; ‘our nation’s economic strength’; ‘the nation’s international prestige as a world leader’; and ‘pride among all Americans’ (US 1988, foreword ix). ‘Our challenge today,’ argued Reagan after noting Anglo-American sacrifices in the Second World War, ‘is to ensure that belligerence is not attempted again’ as a result of ‘the false perception of weakness.’ The United States, having ‘unilaterally disarmed, you might say’ during the 1970s, had emboldened reckless Soviet behaviour across the globe. Similarly, Democratic senator Jackson equated the SALT II treaties to ‘appeasement in its purest form. ... It is all ominously reminiscent of Great Britain in the 1930s’ where ‘the British public’ was assured that ‘Hitler’s Germany would never achieve military equality – let alone superiority’. Yet, throughout the 1970s and 1980s Presidents were reticent towards deploying force in major operations, preferring to only send in American troops when the odds overwhelmingly favoured their eventual success, such as in Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989).

Together with the ideological victory at the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War brought the post-Vietnam era to a close. In response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President Bush (41) returned to the comfortable analogy of appeasement, because ‘if history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression or it’ will destroy our freedoms. Appeasement does not work. As was the case in the 1930’s, we see in Saddam Hussein an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbors’. Bush again compared the Iraqi invasion to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, when he visited Prague months later. The theme was also picked up by commentators. In his 1991 State of the Union

---

15Reagan states that ‘individuals and not governments should control their economic, spiritual and political destinies’ (US 1988, foreword ix).
17 Grenada followed right on the heels of the October 1983 attack on US marines barracks in Lebanon, where 241 US Marines were killed, as a symbolic show of strength.
18 Bush, George H. W., August 8, 1990, ‘Address on Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait’.
Bush repeatedly compared 1938 and 1990. Bush stressed the ‘two centuries’ in which the US had a unique responsibility to do ‘the hard work of freedom’, for ‘what is at stake is more than one small country’, but instead ‘a new world order’. 21 Again, ‘Saddam Hussein’s unprovoked invasion, his ruthless, systematic rape of a peaceful neighbor’, demonstrated that ‘the world [should resist] the trap of appeasement, cynicism and isolation that gives temptation to tyrants’. In this new world, the ‘United States bears a major share of leadership in this effort’, as only it has ‘both the moral standing and the means to back it up’.22 Analogies were not only part of the President’s public statements, in private he made the same comparisons to Secretary Scowcroft23, inspired by his reading material24.

Behind closed doors, Vietnam was the analogy that haunted the decisions of the President and his policymakers whether it was the fear of incurring casualties, or undermining the civil-military chain of command. Bush later wrote ‘I did not want to repeat the problems of the Vietnam War where the political leadership meddled with military operations. I would avoid micromanaging the military’ (Bush and Scowcroft 1998, p. 354). In sharp contrast to Nixon administration or the Johnson administration, where the war was run from the war room, in the Bush administration civilian leaders picked national goals and left military professionals largely alone to decide how they should be achieved (Rose 2010, p. 220). Also, for Powell, ‘Vietnam [was] running through my mind very much’.25 Bush specifically told the Chiefs, ‘Don’t give me another Vietnam’, and promised at a November 1990 press conference ‘this will not be another Vietnam’.26 The administration also deliberately avoided a long-term commitment in Iraq to nation-building that would have followed a regime overthrow (Rose 2010, p. 9). Shortly after the 100-hour ground war ended in victory, Bush’s euphoric exclamation

---

1990. President Bush: ‘It is no coincidence that appeasement’s lonely victim half a century ago should be among the first to understand that there is right and there is wrong. There is good and there is evil. And there are sacrifices worth making.’


23 In August 1990, Bush spoke with Scowcroft in private during fishing expedition, about importance of making UN do what is was intended to by its founders. ‘Bush said that Saddam was just the kind of villain who could force ‘civilized nations’ so see the importance of stopping ‘another Hitler’ (Beschloss and Talbott 1993, p. 255).

24 When the President took his decision to double the forces sent to the Gulf, he reported that he had been reading Martin Gilbert’s lengthy history of the Second World War (Freedman and Karsh 1993, p. 212).


that ‘by God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all...The spectre of Vietnam has been buried forever in the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula’ illustrated how much Vietnam had weighed on the administration’s minds.

**Legacy**

The aftermath of the Gulf War reinforced the belief in American military power. Institutional developments reinforced the ability of the executive to use force. The combination of the burgeoning defence budgets and reinvigorated patriotic pride from the Reagan period reflected on the military men and women and made them feel more valued (Shelly 1995, p.402). The 1983 intervention in Grenada was presented as a victory for the US in general, and the military in particular –similar to the near-simultaneous British war over the Falklands.27 The military was now further redeemed by the Gulf War victory. A new sense of pride was palatable among members of the military – now well-funded and professionalised – in the period that followed. 28 Worryingly, if any lesson was drawn from the Gulf War it was that citizen policymakers had again denied victory by leashing the military, as they had done previously in Vietnam. Moreover, while the intention of the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act (Goldwater-Nichols) was to increase the transparency of the strategic process, it also significantly increased the power of the JCS chairman, the defense secretary, and the president to determine military missions and set procurement policies (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 266).

**Era 3. Gulf War to Iraq**

The Second World War remained the dominant foreign policy metaphor for third era that began with the end of the Cold War. In both public and private speeches, and in policy documents throughout the 1990s and beyond, the reinforcement of the essential need for continued US leadership and engagement was continually reiterated. The 1991 security strategy argues, there can be ´no retreat from the world’s problems´, and for this ‘American leadership is indispensable’(US 1991, p. v).29 Continuity prevailed in the

---

27 According to L.K., there is a worrying tendency within the US to overreact to the outcomes of conflicts. Certainly, there was a pronounced ‘realist’ strain after Vietnam that was lost after the Gulf War. American policymakers and society cannot seem to find a happy medium (L.K., 2013, interview with author, June 19).
29 Introduction: ‘It is up to us – our generation in America and the world – to bring these extraordinary possibilities to fruition. And in doing this, American leadership is indispensable. That is our challenge.’ (US 1991, p. v) ‘For America, there can be no retreat from the world’s problems. Within the broader community of nations, we see our own role clearly. We must not
1990s. As a candidate, President Clinton had already made clear that he would continue the course set in by his predecessor (Bacevich 2013, 119-121). Both the 1991 (Bush) and the 1995 (Clinton) strategies invoke the periods preceding and following the Second World War to argue that isolationism must be avoided and US leadership is crucial. The 1995 strategy argues that ‘as our nation learned after World War I, we can find no security for America in isolationism nor prosperity in protectionism’, and US grand strategy must ‘deter would-be aggressors, open foreign markets, promote the spread of democracy abroad’. Though the Cold War may be over, ‘the need for American leadership abroad remains as strong as ever’ (US 1995, p. 2). The 1999 NSS is even more straightforward on the vulnerability of the US in an interdependent world. What American policymakers found difficult to accept was a world that was too diverse and complex, without a monopoly on power, and abandoning leadership was therefore not seriously considered by political system.

A recurring theme of the speeches and documents is that the US has over the course of the twentieth century been engaged in a successful struggle against various forms of...
authoritarianism – imperialism, fascism, communism, or new extremist ideologies. ‘The collapse of the Communist idea has shown’, the 1991 strategy argues, ‘that our vision of individual rights – a vision imbedded in the faith of our Founders – speaks to humanity’s enduring hopes and aspirations’ (US 1991, p. v). In fact, the 1995, 2002 and 2010 security strategies are strikingly similar in their wordings:

From the 1995 NSS published by the Clinton administration: ‘American leadership in the world has never been more important, for there is a simple truth about this new world: the same idea that was under attack three times in this Century – first by imperialism and then by fascism and communism – remains under attack today, but on many fronts at once. It is an idea that comes under many names – democracy, liberty, civility, pluralism.’ (US 1995, p. 2);

From the 2002 NSS published by the Bush (43) administration: ‘The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. …. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society.’ (US 2002, p. i);

From the 2010 NSS, published by the Obama administration: ‘When the world was confronted by fascism, America prepared itself to win a war and to shape the peace that followed. When the United States encountered an ideological, economic, and military threat from communism, we shaped our practices and institutions at home—and policies abroad—to meet this challenge.’ (US 2010, p. 9).

American goals concerning German reunification were driven by broader concerns about future European stability, since Germany had already plunged Europe into war twice during the 20th century (Beschloss and Talbott 1993, pp.136-137).34 Pessimism on Europe generally reigned, as evidenced by Richard Holbrooke’s – then the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe - contention that ‘Europe cannot maintain stability on its own. American power and presence remain essential’.35 The 1995 paper later points out that the US should remain in Europe, because ‘European stability is vital to our own

---

34 There was a perceived need to settle factors that had already several times led to civil wars within Europe over the past centuries, foremost the problem of German power (Amb. R.H., 2013, interview with author, June 28).
security, a lesson we have learned twice at great cost this century. Vibrant European economies mean more jobs for Americans at home and investment opportunities abroad. Our goal is an integrated democratic Europe cooperating with the United States to keep the peace and promote prosperity’ (US 1995, p. 25). The possible development of an European capability independent from NATO was mostly considered unwelcome. After French-British reconciliation in St. Malo, Secretary of State Albright told the Europeans that the ESDP could not duplicate NATO capabilities, discriminate against non-NATO members, or diminish NATO. It would seem a lost opportunity to pass the costs of European security to the Europeans.36

The foreign policy myths surrounding the Second World War remained accessible to the post-Cold War generation due to the constant stream of anniversaries, books and movies about the war in the 1990s. That public memory of the war as one of the nation’s most glorious and righteous moments therefore became more engrained and accessible over time. The longing for the idealised past of the ‘good war’ was evidenced by the success of books such as Tom Brokaw’s ‘The Greatest Generation’ and Stephen Ambrose’s various common-soldiers-as-heroes bestsellers, as well as the enormous popularity of recent films such as ‘Saving Private Ryan’ (1998) and ‘Pearl Harbor’ (2001)’ (McMahon 2002; Hoogland Noon 2004). The 1990s also offered uncomfortable comparisons to the past: humanitarian crisis, ethnic conflict, and genocide. The anniversaries and commemorations therefore connected the need to act to historical necessity.37 President Clinton himself evoked the Holocaust, and Elie Wiesel’s request to him to ‘do something, anything, to stop the fighting’. Clinton argued that ‘America should lead. Ethnic cleansing is the kind of inhumanity the Holocaust took to the nth degree. You have to stand up against it’.38 The perceived ability of the US to lead was called into question.39 In Bosnia the analogy of Munich clashed with the memory of Vietnam.40

36 W.S. noted that there was some divergence on the issue between the State and the Defense Departments, with the State Department considering the diminishment of NATO a particularly bad idea (W.S., 2013, interview with author, June 25). J.S. pointed out that when the Obama administration came to power in 2009, it signaled the Europeans that intra-European cooperation was back on the table from the US' point of view. However, the timing for increased European integration was bad, because of the Euro-crisis (J.S., 2013, interview with author, June 27). K.V. argued that the US had stopped caring already during the first Bush (43) administration (K.V., 2013, interview with author, June 26). Then again, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld was already dismissive of NATO, due to the underperforming Europeans (J.S., 2013, interview with author, June 27).


39 Richard Holbrooke called Bosnia ‘the disastrous results of our early non-involvement in the Yugoslav tragedy’ that had changed Bosnia into ‘the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s.’ Vice-President Gore focused on how the alliance must respond to an even larger
Indeed, former Secretary of Defence, and future vice-President Cheney and General Powell pessimistically made the point that Bosnia was more like Vietnam than Iraq (Sale 2009, pp. 24-25). Moreover, Vietnam still anguished US policymakers.41

The 1999 Kosovo campaign produced more Second World War analogies. In a speech to justify US policy, Clinton asked how many lives might have been saved, ‘if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolf Hitler earlier?’ Later in the same speech, he underlined that the US needed ‘a Europe that is safe, secure, free, united, a good partner with us for trading. That’s what this Kosovo thing is all about’.42 Later the same week, Clinton explained that the US had acted in Kosovo to ‘protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive’, and ‘to defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results’.43 The campaign personalised the threat that Milosevic presented when Clinton asked ‘Do you think the Germans would have perpetrated the Holocaust on their own, without Hitler?’44 The need to prevent a new Holocaust was close to the need to demonstrate the credibility of US leadership.46 (Though here too, Vietnam was never far away).47

The rush of triumphalism that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the easy victory of the Gulf War came to a sudden end with the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade
Center and Pentagon. Attacks on the nation’s capital would have been shocking in any state, but they were jarring for American policymakers and public who were unused to the possibility of direct attacks on American territory. Popular culture had long been obsessed though with terrorist attacks, alien invasions, and the destruction of American landmarks. Vulnerability was a preoccupation, but one without real points of reference.\textsuperscript{48} Within the administration there was a broad consensus that the immediate response to the attacks – the overthrow of the Taliban in the Fall of 2002 and the removal of Al Qaeda’s home base - were insufficient. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Undersecretary of Defense Feith were soon advocating a demonstration of American power (Gordon and Trainor 2006, pp. 11, 15, 21). It would be reductionist to suggest that the decisions the administration took that led to the costly, if not disastrous, invasion of Iraq can be reduced to a single cause. Iraq as a target of a possible US intervention predated 9/11.\textsuperscript{49} Still, at least certain cognitive biases made certain appraisals of problems, and certain solutions more likely, and the Second World War featured prominently in the diagnosis of the Iraqi threat.

In one of Bush’s first major speeches soon after 9/11, on the 60th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attacks, he defined Al Qaeda as ‘the heirs to fascism’, who ‘wield the same wield of power, the same disdain for the individual, the same mad global ambitions’, and who ‘will be dealt with in just the same way’. Bush was unequivocal that ‘like all fascists, the terrorists cannot be appeased’, only ‘defeated’. Like 9/11, ‘the attack on Pearl Harbor was plotted in secrecy, waged without mercy’, but, the struggle against terrorism will ‘end in victory for the United States, our friends and for the cause of freedom’. Bush underlined the need for displays of US strength and resolve, as its enemies ‘believe that free societies are weak societies’.\textsuperscript{50}

The road to Iraq began in earnest in the summer of 2002, and continued to be framed by references to the Second World War. In his biography, Bush outlined the decision in starkly moral terms.\textsuperscript{51} He recounts a meeting with Elie Wiesel, similar to the one Clinton

\textsuperscript{48} Interviewees still discussed the attacks ‘upending everything’. For example, [N.F., 2013, personal interviews with author, June 26). After 9/11, the comparison with Pearl Harbor were obvious, R.L. argues, and led to the question ‘what else is out there?’(R.L., 2013, interview with author, June 24). F.J. considered 9/11 an overreaction, because Americans were so unused to direct attacks on American territory (F.J., 2013, interview with author, June 26). B.R. argued that during the 1990s the US had been trying to ‘find an enemy’, and 9/11 brought the world into focus for policymakers, unfortunately (B.R., 2013, interview with author, June 20).

\textsuperscript{49} In December 19th 2000, a month before the inauguration, Bush met with Clinton to discuss US foreign policy. Bush affirmed that the two priorities of his administration were going to be missile defence and Iraq. Clinton proposed a different set of priorities, which included Al Qaeda, Middle East diplomacy, North Korea, the nuclear competition in South Asia, and, only then, Iraq (Gordon and Trainor 2006, p. 15).

\textsuperscript{50} Bush Marks Pearl Harbor Anniversary Norfolk, Va., Dec. 7 Text: President Bush on Pearl Harbor Friday, Dec. 7, 2001

\textsuperscript{51} “The best way to protect our countries in the long run was to counter their dark vision with a more compelling alternative” (Bush 2010, p. 232).
had, in which Wiesel compared Saddam Hussein’s brutality to the Nazi genocide in conversation with Bush, and emphasised that Bush had ‘a moral obligation to act against evil’ (Bush 2010, pp. 247-248). Bush sees a ‘kindred spirit’ in the British prime minister, who shared his ‘faith in the transformative power of liberty’ (Bush 2010, p. 231). In Bush’s account of his relationship with Blair, the glory days of Anglo-American relations of Roosevelt and Churchill, real or imagined, are never out of mind.52 The failure of UN to act without US leadership reminded Bush of the interwar failure of the League of Nations.53 After French president Chirac cautioned against threatening military force, Bush considered that ‘the problem with his logic was that without credible threat of force, the diplomacy would be toothless once again.’ Bush also cast aspersions on French motives for its opposition, as France ‘had significant economic interests in Iraq’ (Bush 2010, p. 233). Bush shared Blair’s view of the Europeans (read: the French) as not only unreliable, but even as positioning themselves as a possible competitor to the US.54 Bush did not forgive the French veto: he used the 2004 commemoration of the D-Day landings to remind the French of their debt to the US.55 German opposition on the other hand, stung Bush in other ways, and specifically some of the rhetoric directed at him personally.56

The members of Bush’s administration were similarly prone to fall back to Second World War analogies in their rhetoric. In August 2002, Vice-President Cheney argued in a speech at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) national convention that ‘old doctrines of security do not apply’, whereas ‘in the days of the Cold War, we were able to manage the threat with strategies of deterrence and containment’, now ‘it’s a lot tougher to deter enemies who have no country to defend’. Cheney points out it was only after the attack on Pearl Harbor that the US recognised the danger to the country, but already ‘our nation was plunged into a two-front war resulting in more than a million American casualties’. Historians continue to speculate ‘how we might have prevented Pearl Harbor’, Cheney underlines that, with regards to authoritarian regimes and terrorist

---

52 In Blair’s stated commitment to Iraq policy, in spite of resistance from within Labour, Bush ‘heard an echo of Winston Churchill in my friend’s voice. It was a moment of courage that will stay with me forever’ (Bush 2010, p. 246).
53 Bush would remind the UN that ‘Saddam’s defiance was a threat to the credibility of the institution. Either the words of the Security Council would be enforced, or the UN would exist only as a useless international body like the League of Nations.’ (Bush 2010, p. 239).
54 After French refusal of 2nd resolution in February 2003, Blair wrote to Bush that ‘the stakes are now much higher. It is apparent to me from the EU summit that France wants to make this a crucial test: Is Europe America’s partner or competitor?’ (Bush 2010, p. 245).
55 Public Papers of the Presidents June 14, 2004, ‘The President’s News Conference With President Jacques Chirac of France in Paris, France’.
56 Referring to Germany’s justice minister invoking Hitler to denounce Bush’s policies, that ‘it was hard to think of anything more insulting than being compared to Hitler by a German official’ (Bush 2010, p. 234).
organisations with access to weapons of mass destruction, ‘the risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action’. 57

Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Perle appealed to British audiences, and underlined that the decision to use force is ‘most difficult when democratic societies are challenged to act pre-emptively’, and that that is why ‘the Continental powers [note emphasis] waited until Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 and America waited until after September 11 to go after Osama bin Laden’. Crucially, they should have been surprised as ‘Hitler’s self-declared ambitions and military build-up, like bin Laden’s demented agenda, were under constant scrutiny long before the acts of aggression’ and both could have been stopped by ‘a relatively modest well-timed pre-emption’. While, ‘a pre-emptive strike against Hitler at the time of Munich would have meant an immediate war’, the one that came later was ‘much worse’. 58 Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld similarly drew upon the 1930s as an indication of what horrors might have been prevented if Hitler’s intentions had been recognised for what they were on the basis of Mein Kampf. 59 Rumsfeld underlined the perpetual insecurity of the US in his infamous remarks on unknown unknowns in February 2002 on the lack of evidence that Iraq possessed WMDs. 60 Undersecretary of Defence Feith argued that ‘prudence and self-restraint in the face of affronts and attacks’ by the US in recent decades were viewed by bin Laden and Saddam Hussein as ‘evidence of weakness and cowardice’ and ‘emboldened our enemies to defy and attack the United States’. He argues that ‘the French lost their country in 1940 because they waited too long to confront Hitler’ (Feith 2008, p. 525). 61 Deputy secretary for Defence Wolfowitz had already become a convert to pre-emption and argued that despots of ‘the order of evil’ of Hitler, Stalin, and Saddam ‘tend not to keep evil at home, they tend to export it in various ways and eventually it bites us’ (cited in Ricks 2006, pp. 6-7). Here, as elsewhere, Republicans and Democrats were in agreement. 62

57 Full text of Cheney, Dick 2004 ‘Speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee’, transcript, The Guardian, August 27. ‘Another argument holds that opposing Saddam Hussein would cause even greater troubles in that part of the world, and interfere with the larger war against terror. I believe the opposite is true. Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace’.


59 Rumsfeld, Donald, August 19, 2002 ‘Fox Special Report with Brit Hume’.

60 Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers, February 12, 2002 ‘Department of Defense Briefing’.

61 Feith in his book on Iraq, also referenced learning from the efforts of British leaders to manage the rise of Hitler. He concludes that, while diplomacy is always preferable, ‘it was also obvious to me, with hindsight, that nothing short of war could have stopped, let alone reversed, Nazi aggression’, and this informed his views on Vietnam (Feith 2008, p. 23).

62 Both Republicans and Democrats: ‘Had Hitler’s regime been taken out in a timely fashion, the 51 million innocent people who lost their lives during the Second World War would have been able to finish their normal life cycles. ‘Mr. Chairman, if we appease Saddam Hussein, we will stand
The post-war reconstruction of defeated adversaries Germany and Japan and their transformation from fascist imperial states into exemplary democracies served as role models for planning post-war Iraq. Yet, many of the early policies used in the first phase of the American occupation – i.e. de-Baathification, a relatively small number of US ground forces, simplistic institution building in emerging democracies, poor cooperation between the Pentagon and the State Department - are considered the root causes of the later failures. These failures eventually culminated in the insurgencies and near total collapse of Iraq security from 2004 to 2007. For Feith, the analogies figured in his planning for the post-war environment, as ‘twentieth-century history offers quite a few examples of democracy’s growth’ in ‘lands that hardly seemed rich with democratic potential’ (Feith 2008, p. 236). According to Secretary of State Powell, should it come to war, there was an ‘obligation really to put in place a better regime’, and ‘there are lots of different models from history that one can look at: Japan, Germany, but I wouldn’t say that anything is settled upon’. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld even tasked the CIA in August 2002 with drawing up a comparative study of the implications of the post-war occupations of Germany and Japan for the coming American presence in Iraq. In the decisive first months of the occupation, Paul Bremer, as Iraq's administrator, compared purging the Senior Members of Saddam’s Baath party to the de-Nazification of Germany after Second World War and also compared the aid package for Iraq to the Marshall plan in his September 2003 testimony to four congressional committees (Chandrasekaran 2006, pp. 76, 180).

Surprisingly, the experiences of the first Gulf War hardly played a role in the planning of the Bush (43) administration, despite the obvious parallels and familiarity of several key administration officials. Instead it was the quick and easy (at that point) Fall 2001
Afghanistan campaign that convinced the administration to depend on a rapid and overwhelming ‘shock and awe’ assault with small ground presence but with maximum utilisation of the technological advantages of US forces (Rose 2010, pp. 257-258).67

Legacy

The legacy of the third era produced a paradoxical combination of diminished executive legitimacy clashes with the growing institutional power of the President. For the first Gulf War, both houses of Congress voted to authorize military action against Iraq - though the senate only by the narrowest of margins. – but president Bush (41) signalled that in any case he did not feel bound by any congressional declaration and was prepared to go to war with or without Congress’s assent. He had avoided a request for authorisation since it might imply that Congress ‘had the final say in... an executive decision’ (Crenson and Ginsberg 2007, p. 274). The expansion of executive authority had continued apace during the Clinton administration, but it was rapidly expanded after the 9/11 attacks, when Cheney pushed Congress on September 14th to grant special powers to the President’s office. The contrast with the first Gulf War proved striking: there the model had been Huntington’s ‘objective civilian control’ and deference to the professional military on matters of strategy, while the model during the Iraq War was its opposite. After decades of experience with the military, Secretary Rumsfeld was left with disdain for the conventional wisdom of the defense department’s bureaucracy. As his deputy Feith words it in his biography, ‘governments populated almost entirely by career officials, however, suffer from their own problems – including insularity, lack of energy, and stale thought’ (Feith 2008, p. 33).68 Rumsfeld set about methodologically undermining the Pentagon’s bureaucracy and making it subservient to his political leadership (Rose 2010, pp. 266 - 267). As Rose argues, a combination of developments69 removed all institutional obstacles from the path of Rumsfeld and his allies, and set the stage for their beliefs to fully shape the events that led to and followed the fall of Baghdad (Rose 2010, p. 263).

The Iraq War proved a failure for US policy that started with the absence of WMDs. The Saddam regime was rotten to the core, but it had left a corrosive legacy in Iraqi society and factional warfare emerged as soon as the state had crumbled. The unilateral action

67 Critics that pointed out the poor performance of the US in the post-war operations of the post-Cold War period were routinely ignored (Rose 2010, pp. 261-2).
68 When interviewed, D.F. repeatedly raised this point (D.F., 2013, interview with author, June 25).
69 This was part of a larger White House policy to move all responsibilities for post-war planning and operations to the Defence Department (Rose 2010, p. 266). Bush allowed Clinton’s the presidential directive 56, which had created an interagency group to coordinate nation-building operation, to expire, while Rumsfeld closed the Peacekeeping Institutions of the Army (Zelizer 2010, p. 452).

303
of the US undermined its position as benign hegemon that allowed its allies to constrain it. The dismissive attitude of certain administration officials towards key allies (Rumsfeld’s dismissal of France and Germany as ‘old Europe’ for example) needlessly threw away political goodwill.

The failure in Iraq also brought to an end, for now, a cycle of Trinitarian relations that had begun during Vietnam, as Iraq had shown the return of civilian ideologues and a powerful but isolated military that resented civilians. One interpretation of the outcome was that the 2003 invasion had demonstrated the superiority of US armed forces, but that political leaders had shackled the military and wasted its victory, as they had in Vietnam. To others, the occupation demonstrated that the armed forces had been poorly prepared and force was a poor tool to spread democracy. Both groups primarily accorded blame to political leaders and not the armed forces. Bush and his administration could be blamed for entering the war on a false premise, while Obama could be blamed for squandering the victory achieved through the surge by Petreaus and the other ‘savior generals’.

**Era 4. Post Iraq**

The debacle of Iraq marks the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth era after the Second World War. It remains unclear what the long-term consequences of the Iraq War, and to a lesser degree the conflict in Afghanistan, actually are. However, it has already left at least a short-term legacy. For one, more than a decade of continual counterinsurgency operations has undermined the belief in the effectiveness of the transformative mission of the US, and it has diminished the willingness of policymakers to commit large-scale forces abroad, specifically ground forces. The growing reliance on special forces and drones during the Obama administration is a sign of such reluctance, and, in many ways, it is an updated version of the preference for covert actions during the 1970s and 1980s in the wake of Vietnam. Within the departments of Defense and State, and within the army and marine corps, the faith in the capabilities of US forces to conduct stabilization missions has not diminished. Years of operational experience with interagency cooperation have built an organisational self-confidence. Ironically, the

---

70 S.B. argues that the Iraq experience broke down the hawkish consensus on the right (S.B., 2013, interview with author, June 21).
71 From the personal experiences of defence and military personnel who served in Iraq, there was no great understanding of, or appreciation for, how best to integrate different instrument of national policy before or immediately after the invasion. As P.C.B. stated, to illustrate this point, at the time he was genuinely perplexed how State could contribute. He thinks the current generation of State and Defense department policymakers and military has learned the lesson of interagency cooperation well [Gen. P.C.B., 2013, interview with the author, June 24; N.F., 2013, interview with author, June 26).
generation that has acquired the skills is unlikely to use them, and it remains to be seen how much of these capabilities the organisations will retain in the future.

Assigning the blame for the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan was mostly directly attributed to President Bush and the members of his administration, largely because they initially played such outsized roles in pushing the policies. This public scepticism towards the executive has constrained his successor in all domains, noticeably so with regards to the large scale use of military force. Another similarity to the post-Vietnam era. Such limits were visible in Libya in 2011, where President Obama hesitantly deployed US airpower, and only to support a British-French effort to halt Gadhafi’s forces and later overthrow the regime. The question of whether to intervene in Syria in 2013 showed even more prominently how difficult it was to gather together enough political, military and societal support to militarily intervene. This is even though many of the threats emanating from the Syrian conflict – WMDs, regional spillover, new generation of extremists, migratory waves – are more imminent than those of Iraq in 2003. Obama’s personal legitimacy is weakened by struggles over domestic issues, though the elimination of Osama bin Laden invigorated his foreign policy credentials. Yet, there has been repeated criticism of Obama from conservatives for being too reactive and passive: ‘weakness is a provocation’.72 The near-collapse of Iraq in 2014 has lent credence to those critiques.

What is crucial, however, is that the internationalist foundations of American grand strategy have not changed.73 On the surface they have become more subdued than they were in their mid1990s heyday. Obama has sought to ‘rebalance’ US resources towards Asia (the so-called Pacific Pivot), and, in relative terms, to move them out of Europe and the Middle East. The 2011 QDR the force posture reflected the change from the 1997 QDR’s planning assumptions of fighting and winning two major regional conflict, to instead winning one and denying success to the adversary in another. Political developments intruded upon these plans. The chaos that followed in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring forced a greater role in the Middle East than Obama had wished for, and the 2014 Crimean Crisis is likely to redirect US commitments to NATO Europe.

Emphasising the rebalancing of US strategy is problematic, because there is a risk of overlooking how little actually changes. In the decade that followed the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the new generation of American policymakers did not challenge the fundamentals of


73 The majority of the interviewees involved with US policymaking considered US interests to start far away from borders. There was no real discussion of relinquishing commitments and perceived responsibilities in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East. [N.F., 2013, interview with author, June 26]; [D.F., 2013, interview with author, June 27]; [Amb. K.V., 2013, personal interview author, June 18 and 26]; (H.B. 2013, interview with author, June 19).
US strategy and instead shifted relative priorities around. Indeed, they expressed the same beliefs of US insecurity and vulnerability and did not put the need for American leadership in doubt. These tenets were not questioned in the Bush administration’s 2006 security strategy, nor in the Obama administration’s 2010 security strategy. In the former, the ‘time has long since passed’, when ‘two oceans seemed to provide protection from problems in other lands’ and the US ‘could know peace, security, and prosperity by retreating from the world’. Instead, ‘America must lead by deed as well as by example’ (US 2006, p. 49). In the latter, the Obama administration vows to engage the world, for this is ‘the opposite of a self-imposed isolation that denies us the ability to shape outcomes’, and through which ‘America has never succeeded’ (US 2010, p. 11). Instead, in the twenty-first century the US should emulate the example of leadership it set after the Second World War.

The sense of historical mission is underlined with continued references to Munich – even in the wake of the transparent failure of the analogy in Iraq. In 2006, Rumsfeld, still Secretary of Defense, accused critics of the administration’s Iraq policies of ‘appeasement’ attitudes and ‘moral confusion’ in a speech to the American Legion about the dangers of extremism as ‘a new type of fascism’. The appeasement slur was again in the 2008 election year. During a visit to the Knesset, Bush said, that to consider negotiating with extremists and terrorists merely offered ‘the false comfort of appeasement’ that has been ‘repeatedly discredited by history’. Yet, the same episode also showed that as a phrase appeasement has become a red flag practically disconnected from the Second World War.

Appeasement remains a powerful analogy, also for Democrats. Secretary of State Kerry told House Democrats that the United States faced a ‘Munich moment’ in deciding

---

75 ‘Just as US foresight and leadership were essential to forging the architecture for international cooperation after World War II, we must again lead global efforts to modernize the infrastructure for international cooperation in the 21st century’ (US 2010, p. 46).
76 CBS’3 Dems Bash Rumsfeld’s Nazi Comments’ August 29, 2006; Robinson, Eugene 2006, ‘Final Edition Who Set the Wayback Machine for 1939?’, September 5. Democrats took Rumsfeld to task for ‘vilification’ of critics of the war, with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi remarking that: ‘If Mr. Rumsfeld is so concerned with comparisons to World War II, he should explain why our troops have now been fighting in Iraq longer than it took our forces to defeat the Nazis in Europe’. MacAskill, Ewen and Suzanne Goldenberg 2008, ‘Friday International: Bush appeasement slur angers Democrats: Obama outraged by president’s claim that talking to US foes in Middle East is like negotiating with Hitler’, The Guardian, May 16.
77 Conservative commentator Kevin James’ went on the May 15th, 2008 episode of the MSNBC program Hardball with Chris Matthews to express his support for Bush’s comparison. However, when host Chris Matthews pushed James in the interview to specify how Chamberlain were relevant to the current debate, James failed to give an answer more specific than ‘he was an appeaser’. Matthews eventually clarified that Chamberlain’s appeasement was more substantial than merely talking to Hitler, and instead consisted of large territorial concessions in the form of giving away half of Czechoslovakia.
whether to respond to the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government. He went on to say that Assad ‘now joins the list of Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein [who] have used these weapons in time of war’. President Obama, in his address to the UN in September 2014, referenced the 1930s, the ‘Russian aggression in Europe recalls the days when large nations trampled small ones in pursuit of territorial ambition’. In the same speech, bringing to mind Bush’s 2002 State of the Union address, though this time more appropriately, Obama referred in clear moral tones to the Islamic State’s ‘brand of evil’, as ‘killers’ who cannot be reasoned or negotiated with, and who only understand ‘the language of force’.

**Legacy**

However, the geopolitical changes that have taken since the 2003 invasion might make this period of subdued attitudes to interventions short-lived. The collapse of security in Iraq in 2014 has partially reopened the case for war in 2003. It has reflected unfavourably on Obama’s decision to withdraw forces from Iraq in 2011 without long-term basing agreements. Critics allege a fatal failure of nerve, absence of personal leadership, and undermining the credibility of the US. The Russian incursion into the Crimea has similarly been construed as a consequence of perceived American weakness emboldening an authoritarian adversary. The sequencing of these events, together with the peaceful, but insistent rise of China as an economic rival and a military power may

---

79 Friedersdorp, Conor 2013 ‘Godwin’s Corollary: In War Debates, the Probability of Hawks Invoking Hitler Approaches One’. *The Atlantic*, September 4. They invoke World War II because it is popular, not because any of its lessons are applicable.

80 *The Washington Post*, September 24, 2014, ‘Address to the United Nations General Assembly. Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by President Barack Obama’. Obama added that, ‘America stands for something different. We believe that right makes might – that bigger nations should not be able to bully smaller ones; that people should be able to choose their own future. [...] These are simple truths, but they must be defended. America and our allies will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. We will reinforce our NATO allies, and uphold our commitment to collective defense. We will impose a cost on Russia for aggression, and counter falsehoods with the truth. We call upon others to join us on the right side of history – for while small gains can be won at the barrel of a gun, they will ultimately be turned back if enough voices support the freedom of nations and peoples to make their own decisions.’

81 *The Washington Post*, September 24, 2014, ‘Address to the United Nations General Assembly. Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by President Barack Obama’. ‘No God condones this terror. No grievance justifies these actions. There can be no reasoning – no negotiation – with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death.’
prove to be influential. Taken together they could – and are likely to – reinforce the US sense of vulnerability and the perceived necessity of its leadership.\textsuperscript{82}

Internationalist elites have certainly been more constrained during the decade that followed Iraq.\textsuperscript{83} Anti-war sentiments brought Obama to power and a strong populist movement grew within the Republican Party. Trust in civilian policymakers is low, as it is in the legislature, while in contrast, support for the armed forces remains high. This had made the basis of support for internationalist policies more brittle, and limited the executive’s ability to use diplomacy effectively.

**United Kingdom**

**Era 1. The Second World War to Suez**

In the decades that followed the Second World War, British policymakers applied the lessons and their own experiences from the war to the emerging Cold War world. The war had reordered the domestic relations: while the Conservative party built on the Churchillian legacy, it was also haunted by the failure of Chamberlain in Munich. Yet, much to Churchill’s credit, the Conservatives also remained the party of foreign policy for which empire was crucial to British power and identity. The Conservative Party had contradictory examples of both strong and weak leadership. In turn, the legitimacy of the Labour Party was based on its wartime domestic performance that allowed it to develop the British welfare state into one of the most comprehensive in Europe. The left’s power was traditionally based in the unions, who had been strengthened by the demands for wartime social cohesion and mobilisation. The unions also held the more idealist and pacifist strains within the British left.

The post-war debates over British strategy mirrored divided domestic priorities, whether to hold onto the crumbling British Empire through a maritime strategy or to contribute to the protection of Europe against the Soviet Union through a continental strategy. The maritime strategy required investments in the navy, while the continental strategy required investments in the army and permanent placement of forces on the mainland.

\textsuperscript{82} F.J. argued that the US leadership is still essential to manage the process of change towards a more multipolar world. The US should – and is – shoring up the international institutional frameworks (F.J., 2013, interview with author, June 27).

\textsuperscript{83} American elite recognizes value of alliances, however (B.R., 2013, interview with author, June 20).
The Suez Crisis exposed these fissures and brought to an end the hopes that the UK could continue as it had before the war. The crisis also forced other choices on British policymakers, not only between continental security and global ambitions, but also between an European and an Anglo-American orientation. The Suez Canal was perceived as the lynchpin of British security and the proposed Egyptian nationalization of the canal risked cutting off British access to its maritime empire. British policymakers saw a Soviet design in these plans. They remembered British isolation between June 1940 and December 1941, and believed the loss of Suez would lead to renewed encirclement of Europe, and by extension, Britain. British PM Eden had been a figure of the pre-war government, but had broken with Chamberlain in 1938 over the policy of appeasing Mussolini. When the initially popular appeasement policy fell into rapid disrepute, Eden was second only to Churchill as a credible alternative Tory leader, separate from the ‘guilty men’ who had failed Britain in the 1930s. His main regret was the earlier decision, in which he had fully participated, to make no stand against Hitler’s reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 (Kyle 1991, p. 11). For Eden, Egyptian President Nasser was a new Hitler (Beloff 1989, p. 329). In his proposed nationalization of the Canal, Nasser was another authoritarian figure willing to annex the established interests of others and who should be firmly resisted. Even if there was disagreement within the government on the aptness of the comparisons between Nasser and Hitler, there was general consensus among British policymakers that Nasser was a dangerous figure cut from the same cloth as the authoritarians of the 1930s. British newspapers consistently compared Nasser to Hitler (Kyle 1991, p.137).

Unlike the Falklands War a generation later, the Labour Party was divided on the Suez Crisis (Beloff 1989, pp. 321-322). Nation-wide anti-war protests were organised by Labour and the Trade Union Congress under the slogan ‘Law, not war!’ At a protest rally on 4 November 1956, the largest of its kind since 1945, Labour MP Bevan accused the government of a ‘policy of bankruptcy and despair’. In his argument against the use of force by the strong against the weak, he referenced Britain’s own status as an island, weaker than many others. In contrast, Hugh Gaitskell, Labour’s Leader, was more conflicted, but publically supported the government’s position on Suez. Though Gaitskell expressed doubts in his diary, he did not question that Nasser was a dangerous aggressor in the mode of Hitler. He too was haunted by the memory of Munich. The Suez intervention failed when the US put financial pressure on the UK, which then abandoned its French and Israeli allies. The British response underlined how dependent on the US Britain had become. British policymakers soon acquiesced to American

84 As Lord Hankey put it in 1953: ‘If we cannot hold the Suez Canal, the jugular vein of World and Empire shipping communications, what can we hold?’ Hankey, /PREM 11/636 Lord Hankey, ‘The Suez Canal Company. Military Evacuation of the Zone’, February 2, 1953.
85 Foreign Secretary Lloyd. ‘It isn’t Hitler that Nasser should be compared to; it is rather Mussolini or Peron, who gets involved with a bigger, wickeder (and more anti-British) power.’ FO 371/118861
87 Williams (1983, pp. 547-622).
leadership, after a short wave of anti-Americanism directed at the US supplanting British influence in the Middle East (Beloff 1989, p. 327).

Legacy

The Suez crisis reinforced the belief among British policymakers that a strong bilateral relationship with the US should lie at the core of British Cold War strategy. It was the only manner in which Britain could maintain its status and security in the Cold War era. In future crises, British policymakers should - and would - never again choose its European allies over its American ally. Yet, European security should be prioritised over imperial ambitions, as without an active US role in Europe, the Soviet Union could not be resisted. The aftermath of the crisis therefore further entangled British futures to the US, and reinforced French perceptions of British unreliability. The Suez Crisis also further strengthened the anti-war sentiments and idealism of the British political left, while reinforcing the notion of the executive as irresponsible. It was another extreme example in British politics of leadership on the international stage.

Era 2. Suez to Falklands

A strong idealist strand existed in post-war British politics that had its political base in the Labour party and the trade unions. This strand strongly supported nuclear disarmament and apprehensiveness towards nuclear weapons. Historically, disarmament had appealed to the British public since the First World War (Bialer 1980, p. 9). The devastation of the Blitz further increased the apprehension towards increasingly technologically advanced weapons that could inflict increasingly massive destruction. This opposition was also an illustration of a peculiarly British sense of moral superiority: one of the arguments for unilateral disarmament in the first CND campaign was that Britain would ‘lead the way by its behaviour’ and ‘set an example for the world’ (cited in Barnett 1982, pp. 32-33). Anti-nuclear policies enjoyed huge grass roots support and this translated into Labour Party politics, when the 1960 party...
conference voted in favour of the ‘unilateral renunciation’ of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling, and basing of all nuclear weapons in the UK. In 1964, under Wilson, Labour campaigned against an independent British nuclear deterrent with the manifesto declaration that Polaris ‘will not be independent and it will not be British and it will not deter.’ Clement Attlee appeared on a party political broadcast to state that the ‘idea of an independent deterrent is a nonsense... They cannot tell me of any possible occasion on which we ourselves independently should want to use a weapon. Or how you can use it as a threat’ (Butler and King 1965, p.130). In fact, the 1984 Labour party conference adopted a 44 page statement (‘Defence and Security for Britain’) that made a detailed case for a non-nuclear Britain, but did so as within the context of a clear commitment to NATO. The role of the nuclear deterrent in British strategy was consequently diminished despite the strategic advantages the weapon offered Britain (see chapters five and six). Among the Labour Party, anti-nuclear beliefs were so strong that in the 1987 elections the Party even ran on unilateral British disarmament. But it had badly misjudged the unpopularity of the position and misunderstood the political mood had shifted far towards the right due to the Thatcherite revolution. The loss of the 1987 elections started a debate within the Labour Party as a younger generation within the party was sick of being out of power (Scott 2006). The debate resulted in the Third Way brand of politics that brought Blair’s New Labour to power.

Thatcher’s government was a fundamental turning point in British post-war politics. It is impossible to understand without the Falklands War, which in turn cannot be understood without the Second World War and the Suez Crisis. After Suez, British policymakers had consistently prioritised continental security over British worldwide interests. This meant the UK had slowly divested itself of its colonial possessions, the ‘long retreat’ from East of Suez. Policy papers from this period first frame Britain’s global aspirations as continuing the traditional internationalism of ‘an island with world-wide interests’ that must balance its commitments (UK 1962). A few years later, the ‘foundation of Britain’s security now, as for centuries past, lies in the maintenance of peace in Europe’. Britain’s ‘first priority must, therefore, still be to give the fullest possible support to the North Atlantic Alliance’ (UK 1968, par 10). By the mid-1970s, though Britain has always had a role in Europe and in its global empire, these now clearly ‘reflect former aspirations to a world-wide role’ (UK 1975, par 33). Simultaneously, the British welfare state was under attack by the middle of the 1970s due to high unemployment, inflation, strikes, decolonization, the loss of the position of

---

91 On why Britain is almost the only NATO country without conscription: ‘Our decision was not so much a departure from the past as a reversion to our normal well tried practice. This country, an island with world-wide interests, has always needed long-service men in balanced sea, land, and (more recently) air forces. Balance and mobility have been as important for us as numerical strength. Although our direct involvement on the mainland of Europe has increased and our other overseas commitments have diminished, the fundamental importance to us of balance and mobility remains.’ (UK 1962, Survival p. 139).
the Pound, and the worsening of Britain’s economy compared to its European
neighbours.

Thatcher brought this era to a close. She did not do so in the 1979 elections, when she
was first elected, but in her 1983 re-election, which in turn was made possible by the
British victory in the Falklands. Before the 1982 Falklands War, Thatcher’s government
had been the most unpopular of the post-war era, afterwards it was one of the most
popular (Barnett 1982; Calder 1992; Smith 2000; Eley 2001). Victory in the Falklands
provided Thatcher with reserves of personal legitimacy that she then used to deconstruct
the post-war social democracy. The Falklands also reinvigorated the belief in British
exceptionalism that Suez had undermined.

For British policymakers, the seizure by the Argentinian junta of the Falkland islands
perfectly fit the existing frame of Munich and Churchill. As in 1940, it was Britain,
standing alone and led by a strong leader, that stood up to an authoritarian and
expansionist regime (Barnett 1982, pp. 47-48). Unlike Suez, the British left strongly
supported the Conservative push towards war in the Falklands, as was clear from the
April 1982 Parliamentary Debate that sanctioned the deployment. Rhetoric from
Conservative and Labour MPs alike was rooted in 1940, the formative moment of
contemporary Britain. Sir Fisher, a centrist Tory, clearly sent a signal to the PM when he
compared the Argentine fait accompli to the Nazi seizure of Norway in 1940 that, he
pointed out, had led to the fall of Chamberlain (cited in Barnett 1982, p. 37). The Leader
of the Opposition, Michael Foot, the co-author of the book on the ‘Guilty Men’ of forty
years before, argued that Britain was ‘a defender of people’s freedom throughout the
world’, that it must ‘ensure that foul and brutal aggression does not succeed in the
world’, for if it does not ‘there will be a danger not merely to the Falkland Islands, but to
people all over this dangerous planet’ (cited in Barnett 1982, p. 32; Smith 2000, p. 126).
The Foreign Office was criticised as too weak, as Tory MP du Cann pointed out that ‘for
all our alliances and for all the social politeness which the diplomats so often mistake for
trust, in the end in life it is self-reliance and only self-reliance that counts’ (cited in
Barnett 1982, pp. 34-35). Labour MP Jay similarly argued that ‘the Foreign Office is a bit
too much saturated with the spirit of appeasement’, while ‘as the whole history of this
century has shown […] if one gives way to this sort of desperate, illegal action, things will
not get better, they will get worse’ (cited in Barnett 1982 42; Smith 2000, p. 126).

Politicians might have opportunistically invoked Munich to challenge Thatcher for
political reasons as much as out of deeply felt beliefs. Whatever the reason, it ended up
strengthening the PM’s hand when she lived up to what the analogy demanded of her.

Thatcher herself utilised the Munich analogy to the fullest. On the evening of the victory
at Port Stanley, she emerged from No 10 to say ‘Today has put the Great back into
Britain’. During her 1983 bid for re-election she pointed out that even though some
claimed ‘Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of
the world’, ‘the lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed’. The British rose
to the occasion, as ‘the spirit has stirred and the nation has begun to reassert itself. [...] Britain has ceased to be a nation in retreat. [It has] found herself again in the South Atlantic and will not look back from the victory she has won’.92 In her autobiography, Thatcher underlines that the ‘significance of the Falklands War was enormous, both ‘for Britain’s self-confidence and for our standing in the world’. It signalled the end of the ‘long retreat’ that Britain had been engaged in since the ‘Suez fiasco’, and the ‘tacit assumption’ by British and foreign governments that the British ‘world role was doomed steadily to diminish’ (Thatcher 1995, p. 173). She argues that ‘the Britain that woke up on the morning after 1945 was not only a nation drained by two great military efforts in defence of common civilization, but also one suffering from a prolonged bout of economic and financial anaemia’ (Thatcher 1995, p. 5). That weakness led to the ‘most painful experience of the country’s reduced circumstances’ that was ‘the failure of the Suez expedition in 1956’. As a result, Britain ‘developed what might be called the ‘Suez syndrome’: having previously exaggerated our power, we now exaggerated our impotence’ (Thatcher 1995, 8-9).93

Thatcher drew from ‘the failure of appeasement the lesson that aggression must always be firmly resisted’. Yet, she does not share ‘the hostility towards the nation-state’ of the continental Europeans, because effective internationalism can only come through ‘strong nations which are able to call upon the loyalty of their citizens’ (Thatcher 1995, pp. 11-12). Thatcher takes the left to task for always thinking ‘the worst of American motives’, because it is seen as ‘the most vigorous, powerful and self-confident force for capitalism’. Thatcher was more worried about the popular feeling that ‘the Soviets were the model of sweet reason, the United States of recklessness’ (Thatcher 1995, p. 437). That stance against moral ambiguity was to become influential in the decades that followed.

**Legacy**

The Falklands War reinvigorated the victory myths of leadership and British fortitude that surrounded the Second World War, and it reinforced the legitimacy of the British executive as well as that of the armed forces, whose professionalism had been showcased in the Falklands (Smith 2000, pp. 125-127). Ironically, the war also led to the transformation of the mythologised solidarity of the ‘people’s war’, as by 1983 Thatcher had exchanged ideals of social justice for pure patriotism (Eley 2001). The Thatcher

---

92 Thatcher, Margaret, July 3, 1982, ‘Speaking to a Conservative Rally at Cheltenham Race Course on Saturday’, Conservative Central Office.

93 Interestingly, Thatcher draws the parallel between the repercussions of Suez and the ‘crisis of morale’ in the US that followed Vietnam, which she argues might in fact have been ‘more debilitating as it embodied the conviction that ‘intervention would almost certainly be inimical to morality, the world’s poor, or the revolutionary tides of history’ (Thatcher 1995, p. 9).
The government’s 1982-1985 policies were able to undo the national institutional credibility of the left, starting with the trade unions.

On the international stage, the Falklands validated a renewed assertiveness in British foreign policy. After decades of middling military successes by other European powers, if not outright defeats, the British victory against Argentina (a minor Third World power) reinforced the myth of Britain’s ‘difference’ and superiority towards the continent (Varsori 1998, p. 153). The British victory brought back a sense of pride for the military as well. For British policymakers, it remained attractive to invoke the former empire (Deighton 2002, p. 101). The Falklands War also reversed the course towards a near-exclusively European focus of the British defence posture. That focus was apparent in the Nott review that had come out in 1981 a year before the Falklands. This defence white paper argued that amidst general budget cuts the army should be prioritised over the Royal Navy, yet the Falklands War was held up by the Navy lobby as proof of the need for a partial return to the maritime strategy.

Era 3. Falklands to Iraq

The third era showed an increasingly moralistic streak in British foreign policy. British policymakers considered the end of the Cold War a clear victory where ‘the lowering of the Red Flag over the Kremlin on Christmas Day last year’ brought ‘to an end the menace of a discredited ideology, with its struggle for global dominance’ (UK 1992, p. 5 foreword). The British papers published during the Cold War, but before the Falklands, rarely made moral claims on the Soviet Union - unlike the American and German papers. The Thatcher government’s policy documents are a departure. The 1987 paper, for example, argues that ‘although we have no reason to believe that the Soviet Union would run the risk – as long as NATO remains strong and united – of a direct military incursion into Western Europe, it is difficult to ignore the evidence of past Russian and Soviet history, which has been living proof of the idea that the best form of defence is expansion’. The events of recent years suggest that Soviet policymakers ‘are always ready to extend Soviet political influence wherever possible, often using military means to that end’ (UK 1987, p. 5). The white papers from the 1980s onwards stress the value of NATO, which was based on the ‘political and social values, not least among them a deep

94 Falklands brought back to policymaker sthoughts about the use of force more broadly (L.R., 2012, interview with author, May 25).
95 That sense of pride and respect from the public was clear upon return to the UK, in the personal experience of those present, and gave policymakers the confidence to operate elsewhere (J.L.F., 2012, personal interview author, September 4; Maj.Gen. J.T., 2013, personal interview author, May 22).
96 ‘Regrettably, history has repeatedly shown that the temptation to use armed force for national ends can often prove irresistible – a message which the Soviet Union has reinforced only too recently.’ (UK 1982, p. 25).
commitment to the principles of democracy and freedom’ that Western Europe and America shared, and which were ‘well demonstrated during the last war’, when they came under their ‘fiercest attack ever, from Hitler’s totalitarian Nazism’ (UK 1987, p. 18).

The Fall of the Wall in 1989 upset the European Cold War status quo. The likely reunification of Germany would again make it the most dominant power in Europe, an unhappy prospect to a generation with memories of the war. During the EC summit in the Strasbourg in December 1989, Thatcher exclaimed: ‘We defeated the Germans twice! And now they’re back!’ During a meeting with Gorbachev, she was the first to say ‘I am firmly against a unified Germany’. When Thatcher met with President Bush, she argued that both the Soviet Union and the United States should be included in a post-Cold War settlement, and this would not only help ‘avoid Soviet isolation, it would help balance German dominance in Europe’. She reminded Bush that ‘Germany was surrounded by countries, most of which it had attacked or occupied in the course of this century’. Germany had changed, but ‘other countries would become alarmed if there was no sort of counter-balance’.97 American Secretary of State Baker told her that the Germans appeared to accept their 1937 frontiers, but Thatcher rather doubted this.98 Thatcher complained to Mitterrand that ‘Chancellor Kohl had no conception of the sensitivities of others in Europe, and seemed to have forgotten that the division of Germany was the result of a war which Germany had started’.99 The wariness towards a reunified Germany was by no means personal to Thatcher. The Foreign Office considered that a reunified Germany might produce the following problems: the re-emergence of a (real or perceived) German military threat, including the possibility of a nuclear Germany; major shift in German foreign policy, either to neutrality or to some kind of adventurism in the East; or German economic dominance of Europe.100 The European integration project had made the idea of a German invasion of France unthinkable, yet the ‘division of Europe into nation states’ was not the ‘cause of successive European wars’.101 At the commemoration of the war in 1995 PM Major struck a different tone: ‘Europe is emerging from a century of violence and ideology. Traumatised in the first half of this

97 No. 155. Letter from Mr. Powell (No. 10) to Mr. Wall. [PREM: Internal Situation in East Germany] 10 Downing Street, February 24, 1990.
98 No. 93. Minute from Mr. Wall to Mr. Weston [WRL 020/1], FCO, January 10, 1990.
99 No. 71. Letter from Mr. Powell (Strasbourg) to Mr. Wall [PREM: Internal Situation in East Germany] Strasbourg, 8 December 1989: (meeting that afternoon between Prime Minister Thatcher and President Mitterrand). Mitterrand answered that, ‘in history Germany had never found its true frontiers: they were a people in constant movement and flux. Thatcher agreed and then produced her map showing various configurations of Germany from her handbag to underline President Mitterrand’s point.
100 No. 210. Draft Paper by the Policy Planning Staff. [WRL 020/1] FCO, June, 15 1990. The document goes on to stress that the Western political orientation and Franco German reconciliation were ‘historically exceptional.’
century by brutality and destruction, Europe has lived the second half of this century half frozen in a trance. We are, as it were, still rubbing our eyes after 1989 wondering if it can be real but thankfully it is real’.\textsuperscript{102}

During the Gulf War, British policymakers again resorted to the Munich analogy to argue the case for intervention against Saddam (MacDonald 2002). Thatcher again had no doubts on how ‘to deal with an aggressor’, remembering her ‘experience of the Falklands’. She, and President Bush, knew that ‘a terrible World War […] had been caused because we didn’t deal firmly enough with Hitler in the early stages, and of course the Japanese came into Pearl Harbor, so we knew the importance of stopping it quickly and then reversing it’. The lesson remained that ‘dictators must be stopped’.\textsuperscript{103}

The Gulf War was added to the Falklands and the Second World War as a central reference point.\textsuperscript{104} When the 1992 paper – published by Major government - surveys the uncertainty after the end of the Cold War, it references both the Gulf War and the Falklands conflict as ‘a cogent reminder of the risk of unexpected conflict’ (UK 1992, p. 5 foreword). The paper even includes an entire chapter on lessons learned. Iraq and its attempts to attain WMDs validate also the need for an expansion of British interventionary capabilities (UK 1992, p. 68).\textsuperscript{105}

The Falklands, the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War had reinforced the claims to moral exceptionalism of the British, and their image of themselves as a global power with distinct international responsibilities.\textsuperscript{106} The 1990s showed that the longing for empire had become universal and no longer to be predominantly associated with the Conservative Party. New Labour’s government attempted to rebrand the United Kingdom with its 1998 ‘Cool Britannia’ campaign that invoked empire to a new generation (Deighton 2002, pp. 108-109). The notion of Britain as a moral power was expressed most clearly by the Blair government’s approach to the wars in the Balkans. The sense of historical mission was made all the easier by the obvious comparison between the ethnic conflict and genocide in former Yugoslavia, and the one fifty years earlier commemorated at the same time. Cooperation with France was strengthened

\textsuperscript{102} Mr. Major’s Speech at German State Ceremony. Below is the transcript of Mr. Major’s speech at the German State Ceremony at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin on Monday 8th May 1995. The international order built in the aftermath of the war (the UN, NATO, and the EU) had created a set of alternatives that allowed Europeans to settle their differences without resorting to violence. Though, Major cautions, ‘the price of that peace will be perpetual vigilance’.

\textsuperscript{103} Thatcher, Margaret, 1995 ‘Gulf War. Oral History’, PBS.

\textsuperscript{104} In fact, M.C. argued that the Gulf War and the conflict in the Balkans were more important than the Falklands war for later British thinking on defence and foreign policy (M.C., 2012, interview with author, May 26).

\textsuperscript{105} The paper strikes a cautious note on the likelihood of the ‘favourable circumstances’ of this victory being repeated (UK 1992, p.68).

\textsuperscript{106} The British self-image is indeed one that is global, based on a long history of trade and maritime power (D.O., 2013, interview with author, May 20; M.C., 2013, interview with author, May 21).
after the European failure in the Balkans, leading to the development of the ESDP. Yet, there remained a scepticism whether Europe could ever generate the necessary capabilities. 107

Blair articulated his case for liberal internationalism and humanitarian interventionism in his 1999 speech at the Chicago Economic Club, where he defended the intervention in Kosovo as ‘a just war, based [...] on values’ and emphasised that ‘we cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand’. Blair argued that we have learned ‘twice before in this century that appeasement does not work’, because ‘if we let an evil dictator range unchallenged, we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him later’. NATO failure in Kosovo, might mean that ‘the next dictator to be threatened with military force may well not believe our resolve to carry the threat through’. 108 The 1998 strategic defence review was permeated by the Blair government’s beliefs towards values and interventionism. In its introduction, Secretary Robertson stated that ‘the British are, by instinct, an internationalist people’, who should defend their rights, but also ‘discharge our responsibilities in the world’. The British ‘do not want to stand idly by and watch humanitarian disasters or the aggression of dictators go unchecked’. Instead, the UK wanted to give ‘a lead, we want to be a force for good’ (UK 1998, par. 19 introduction). Blair believed Kosovo and Iraq showed that we now live ‘in a world where isolationism has ceased to have a reason to exist’, and he argued that ‘the doctrine of isolationism had been a casualty of a world war, where the United States and others finally realised standing aside was not an option’. Blair told his Chicago audience to ‘never fall again for the doctrine of isolationism. The world cannot afford it’. Blair and the other members of New Labour ideologues preferred a centrist approach, as ‘the political debates of the 20th century – the massive ideological battleground between left and right [were] over’. Globalisation necessitates cooperation, it showed the need to untie the hands of business. 109

The 9/11 attacks were a massive shock to British policymakers, but they fit established ideas. At a Labour Party Conference speech Blair argued that the war against extremists was ‘a battle of values’, between ‘those who believe in strong public services and those who don’t’. To go to war against these extremists is ‘not out of bloodlust’, but ‘because it is just’. In such a battle, there ‘is no compromise possible with such people, no meeting of minds, no point of understanding with such terror’, but only a choice to ‘defeat it or be defeated by it’. Blair again emphasises that globalisation cannot only work for ‘the few’, but must be in ‘the hands of the many’. If its benefits are widely shared, then ‘it will be a force for good’, because ‘the alternative to globalization is isolation’. ‘The 20th century killed [the rigid forms of economic and social theory] and their passing causes little

---

107 The lack of political will in Europe was noted, and the proven effectiveness of NATO as well. NATO had after all take a long time to build (D.O., 2013, interview with author, May 20).
regret’, Blair argued, but what has not passed is ‘the sense of a governing idea in politics, based on values’.

In his autobiography Blair claims he tried to avoid and even disowned ‘glib comparisons between 2003 and 1933’. However, he saw the similarities in Western attitudes towards ‘the general ideology of this extremism based on a perversion of Islam’ and towards ‘the rising threat of fascism’. In both cases, he argued, ‘there is enormous reluctance to believe we are necessarily in a war’, and ‘our longing for peace blinds us to our enemies’ determination to have their way’. He empathises with the difficulty of Chamberlain’s choices in Munich (Blair 2010, pp. 208-209, 436).

On Iraq, Blair argued that ‘the world has to learn the lesson all over again that weakness in the face of a threat from a tyrant, is the surest way not to peace but to war’. The origin lay in ‘our own desire to placate the implacable, to persuade towards reason the utterly unreasonable, to hope that there was some genuine intent to do good in a regime whose mind is in fact evil’. He would not make ‘glib and sometimes foolish comparisons with the 1930s’, as ‘no one here is an appeaser’. Though the world is now peaceful, it is also ever more interdependent. The real threat, in Blair’s view, is ‘chaos’, and the two begetters of chaos are ‘tyrannical regimes with WMD and extreme terrorist groups who profess a perverted and false view of Islam’. Blair was hardly alone in seeing Iraq as logical and archetypical illustration of the regimes and groups holding out against the wave of democracies, or the parallels between them and the fascists and other authoritarian ideologies. Also within the Foreign Office, civil servants remembered the failure to stop genocide in Bosnia a decade before when they were still fairly junior and they were anxious to get it right this time.

**Legacy**

The long and costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan undermined the belief that Britain had a specific responsibility to maintain global order, but reinforced the sense that Britain was distinct from the continent, standing mostly together with the US. The wars in Iraq

---


112 For example: ‘... as Ernie Bevin knew, sometimes the threat and even the use of force is necessary to ensure a greater peace. The League of Nations failed because it lacked the means to enforce its principles and decisions against the aggression of dictatorships and totalitarianism’. Foreign Secretary Straw, Jack, 2002 ‘Speech at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool’, September 30, 2002.

113 Then-junior policymakers during the break-up of Yugoslavia were now senior policymakers during the lead-up to Iraq. They experienced a strong sense of history repeating itself, and were determined to ‘get it right’ this time (J.D.W., 2012, interview with author, June 27).
and Afghanistan undermined the trust in Britain’s leaders. The case of the Blair government for the invasion of Iraq had rested on the presence of WMDs, and their absence destroyed Blair’s personal credibility.\textsuperscript{114} It also diminished executive autonomy more generally. Popular resentment against foreign interventions followed the costly stays in Iraq and Afghanistan, and led to the unprecedented collapse of Parliamentary support in September 2013 as action against Syria was being prepared. Though the British government had in 2011 managed to act in Libya, Syria showed that the manoeuvre space for the British executive had contracted. Years after, Blair notes ‘a charge – bolstered by some of the Civil Service grandees…that there were mistakes in Iraq because not enough was discussed in the bigger Cabinet’. However, Blair argues, ‘It really is nonsense. I wasn’t there during the Second World War or the Falklands, but if Winston Churchill or Margaret Thatcher used to do everything through formal Cabinet meetings, I would eat my proverbial hat. … You can’t take decisions by vast committees of people’. Yet, the effect of that autonomy proved detrimental to his successors. He does note that the ‘American and British forces performed brilliantly’ (Blair 2010, p. 447). Indeed, the British papers tend to stress the praiseworthy contributions and exemplary behaviour by British troops.\textsuperscript{115} Similarly, the resiliency of ‘the British people’ is often praised.\textsuperscript{116} The sense was strong, however, that the government had betrayed British armed forces by sending them to fight an unwinnable war, for false reasons, and with insufficient resources.\textsuperscript{117} Policies might be militarist, but ‘society is not’, though there is a sense that the use of force is proper.\textsuperscript{118} This built upon resentments over the increasing stress that has been put on British troops that had been building before Afghanistan and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{114}Iraq is ‘almost forgotten’ and treated as ‘Blair’s War’. Within Cameron government (but already in Brown government) there was a strong desire to move on from Iraq, for policymakers to distance themselves from it. (J.D.W., 2012, interview with author, June 27).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{115} For example: ‘All too often, we focus on military hardware. But we know from our many visits to Afghanistan and to military units around our country, that ultimately it is our people that really make the difference. […] We will renew the military covenant, that vital contract between the Armed Forces, their families, our veterans and the country they sacrifice so much to keep safe.’ (UK 2010, p. 6).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{116} For example: ‘The British people have repeatedly shown their resilience in the face of severe disruptions whether from war, terrorism, or natural disasters. Communities and individuals harness local resources and expertise to help themselves, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services.’ (UK 2008, p. 42).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{117} Iraq has left a legacy of scepticism, also within the armed forces (K.J., 2013, interview with author, May 21). D.O. underlined that the British public is proud of the armed forces, but highly sceptical of policymakers. In some ways this is a hangover from the Second World War (‘Help for Heroes’), but also a real sense that the troops were badly misused in Iraq (D.O., 2013, personal interview with the author, June 20). Armed forces are more popular with the public and seen as victim of policymakers. However, they do not want sympathy (M.C., 2012, interview with author, May 26).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{118} The difference is that the US glorifies the use of force, while the UK does not (M.O., 2013, interview with author, May 21).
\end{flushleft}
Iraq. One attempt to redress this imbalance, and institutionalise continued support for members of the military during and after deployments had been the 2000 Military Covenant. The resentment reinforced a decades-long trend where civilian policymakers have been less and less likely to challenge military policymakers, often resulting in poor integration of political ends and means.

Era 4. Post Iraq

It remains to be seen whether these limitations remain in place, and Iraq spelled an end to British international activism. The 2010 British national security strategy - published by the Cameron government - articulates the British international role in a strikingly similar way, when it argues that 'our country has always had global responsibilities and global ambitions. We have a proud history of standing up for the values we believe in and we should have no less ambition for our country in the decades to come’ (UK 2010, p.23). Similarly, there has been a deliberate return to an East of Suez strategy, as Britain is expanding its naval capabilities (aircraft carrier) to play a role in Asia. The Remembrance Day for the First World War has been infused with new meaning as a consequence of the British deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the Ukraine crisis in 2014 the similar analogies and comparisons with Hitler were present. For Prime Minister Cameron, there was no doubt what the appropriate historical analogy was. The response of the UK government was to reinforce the British commitment to continental security.

---

119 ‘I certainly viewed Brown as unsympathetic to defence’ says Lord Guthrie, the former Chief of the Defence Staff, who told the Independent that he came within a ‘couple of hours’ of resigning over the 1998 defence review.
121 Part of the motivation for the British attempt to return to ‘East of Suez’ is to be more interesting to the US, which was (until 2014) deemphasising the importance of Europe. For the UK, focusing on Europe would make more sense, but that is not the prevailing sense among political class (M.C., 2013, interview with author, May 21).
122 Traynor, I. and Ewen MacAskill, 2014, ‘David Cameron Warns of ‘Appeasing Putin as we did Hitler’, The Guardian, September 2. ‘We run the risk of repeating the mistakes made in Munich in ’38. We cannot know what will happen next,’ Cameron was reported as saying. ‘This time we cannot meet Putin’s demands. He has already taken Crimea and we cannot allow him to take the whole country.’
123 ‘David Cameron: west needs stronger military presence on Russia’s borders’, The Guardian, August 2 2014. PM’s letter to NATO calls to review its relationship with Russia and reassure allies in Eastern Europe in wake of Ukraine crisis. The same week, the House of Commons defense committee warned that NATO is poorly prepared to confront new threats posed by Russia, and members of the western military alliance may lack the collective political will to take concerted action to deter an attack.
France

Era 1. The Second World War to Suez

Post-war governments had to rebuild France from its wartime devastation, humiliation, and internal divisions, while absorbing and applying the lessons of the Second World War. The failure of France’s pre-war alliances and the absence of military preparedness in 1940 offered lessons that were applied in, and reinforced by, the conflicts of the immediate post-war decades: Indochina, Algeria, and Suez. These convinced French policymakers that the United States had ‘morally and materially’ turned against France and violated the Alliance by actively undermining French anti-communist policies (Heuser 1998; Harrison 1981, p. 48).125

For French policymakers, the words Munich and Yalta signalled abandonment and dependence. But, like their British and American counterparts, French policymakers also applied the myth of Munich to justify decisive and assertive policies in Indochina, Algeria, and Suez. In Indochina, Admiral D’Argenlieu refused to negotiate a favourable agreement with Ho Chi Minh that would have kept Vietnam in the French Union, because he claimed it represented ‘a new Munich’ (Chuter 1998, p. 68). In Suez, it was rather French prime minister Mollet who described Nasser as a Hitler, while British PM Eden instead subscribed to the Mussolini analogy. Mollet considered the destruction of Nasser crucial to achieve a negotiated settlement in Algeria, while Eden in turn saw Nasser acting as Russia’s stooge to destroy the British access to Middle Eastern oil (Kyle 1991, p. 554). French policymakers thought the loss of Algeria would permit the success of a vast Soviet flanking manoeuvre ‘through China, the Far East, the Indies, the Middle East, Egypt and Africa … to encircle Europe’ (Girardet 1964, p. 177). Mollet believed France was facing an alliance between Pan-Slavism and Pan-Islam in North Africa, and ‘all this [is] in the works of Nasser, just as Hitler’s policy [was] written down in Mein Kampf. Nasser [has] the ambition to recreate the conquests of Islam’.126 Munich was also foremost on the mind of the French policymakers who conducted Algerian policy during its most crucial and disastrous phase, between 1954 and 1958 (Grosser 1989, p. 13).

The three conflicts enforced French beliefs on the reliability of their allies. When in 1954 French forces were besieged in the battle of Diên Biên Phu - the key to victory or defeat in Indochina as a whole - the French government requested the use of American nuclear weapons. It argued that this would be in line with the American strategy of massive retaliation (Heuser 1998, p. 164). Yet, as the doctrine had been designed specifically for

---

125 The title of Heuser’s (1998) chapter says it all: ‘Dunkirk, Dien Bien Phu, Suez or why France does not trust allies and has learnt to love the bomb’.

126 FO 80-0/734 ‘Record of a Meeting Held at Chequers, Sunday, 11 March, 1956’.
the Korean war, the Eisenhower-Dulles administration refused to aid the French, with full support from the British. Consequently, when Điện Biên Phu fell, French policymakers saw it as another example of Anglo-Saxon betrayal, Albion perfide now joined by perfidious America (Heuser 1998 p. 164-165).

The 1956 Suez Crisis further demonstrated the faithlessness of France’s British and American allies. From the French perspective, the Americans were already responsible for the crisis by withdrawing their offer to finance the Aswan dam. Their lack of solidarity during the diplomatic phase became an out-and-out ‘abandonment’ when US did not respond forcefully to the implicit Soviet threat, and then tempted the British forces to again abandon the French. As one ambassador remarked: ‘during this crisis [the Americans] chose to ensure our defeat’, yet ‘it has now become clear as a self-evident truth that France’s security depends entirely on the American alliance’. Suez became the ‘resurgence of the spirit of Yalta’. The combination of the Suez crisis and the simultaneous uprising in Hungary left the sense that the US was unwilling to follow through on its commitments. It highlighted Europe’s weakness in a world dominated by the two superpowers (Pitman 2000). The outcome of Suez was resented as another humiliation for France (Vaisse 1989, p. 336).

The failure of British–French military cooperation during crisis further reinforced the French turn towards Europe, and specifically towards a bilateral relationship with Germany. Previously, French policymakers had still held out hope for ‘a Franco-English magic formula’, but the outcome of Suez had demonstrated that the ‘two countries lack the weight sufficient to influence seriously the balance of power’. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that the British ally had proven to be hesitant, poor in execution and indecisive when it mattered, crucially when Britain abandoned France under American pressure (cited in Vaisse 1998, p. 337). The need to create a more self-sufficient Europe therefore became apparent. Indeed, as Konrad Adenauer is supposed to have told Mollet, as the latter was informed that the British withdrawal had forced the halt of the Suez operations, that ‘Europe will be your revenge’. The French PM agreed that the only solution to prevent future French humiliation was the rapid conclusion of a European treaty (Vaisse 1989 p. 337). In the 1957 debate over the EEC in the French parliament, one speaker who favoured the common market thanked Nasser

127 De Gaulle, Memoirs of Hope, p. 200. Buron, Robert, 1956 ‘La France face aux Etats-Unis’, Le Monde, December 6, in Heuser, 1998, p. 169. A widely held French belief was that Americans were either naïve about international politics and blind to Nasser’s Communist connections, or seeking to replace Britain and France in the Middle East.

128 Note by E. de Crouy-Chanel for the Secretary-General, 1956, diplomatic archives, November 10.


130 Ironically, the US was constrained by British and French action in Suez from properly condemning Soviet imperialism when it used brute force in Hungary.

and Bulganin for helping Western Europeans understand the need for unity. In response, a deputy shouted: is there not also a General named Eisenhower?132

The experiences in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria together reinforced the lessons of abandonment and distrust that were the legacy of the French experience in the Second World War. NATO’s value to France never recovered from the three successive failures of France’s key allies to support its cause. De Gaulle argued that, perhaps, France could ‘end up with a new Western retreat. If so, France will take no part in it’,133 French policymakers concluded that true strategic autonomy required nuclear weapons (though they could have noted that possession over them had not strengthened Britain’s hand in the crisis) (Harrison 1981, p.43; Heuser 1998, p. 169). The failure of the US and UK to stand up to Soviet pressure and to come to France’s aid further undermined guarantee of extended nuclear deterrence of the US.134 France had learned to never depend or trust ‘certain countries’ (the United States and Britain), to have an autonomous deployable intervention force, and never again to put French forces under the command of another state (Heuser 1998, p. 169).

Legacy

The three sequential crises also affected French domestic relations, though the effects of Suez were less severe for the French government than they were for the British government. Mollet remained Prime Minister, and received a clear majority vote of confidence in the French national assembly, largely because the Suez adventure had not been as unpopular in France. Blame was foremost accorded to the allies who had failed France. However, Indochina, Suez and Algeria also further worsened the rift between the army and the Fourth Republic. The army had strongly supported the intervention in Egypt against Nasser to erase the failure of Indochina, and to strengthen the commitment in Algeria. Suez caused a profound crisis of morale and marked the third failure of civilians to give adequate leadership in the army’s recent institutional memory: 1940, Indochina, and now Suez. The army therefore returned to their tasks in Algeria bearing a grudge against their civilian leaders and having learned a dangerous lesson about following orders (Vaisse 1989, p. 337).

132 Journal official, Assemblée nationale. Débats, 17 January 1957, p.107. (‘N’y a-t-il pas aussi un général qui s’appelle Eisenhower’).
133 Account of de Gaulle remarks to MRP representatives, quoted in Rumbold to Shuckburgh, September 27, 1961, FO 371/160554, PRO.
134 The 1972 white paper is explicit on this: ‘Il ne faudrait d’ailleurs pas considérer ces faits avec quelque rancœur que ce soit. Ils sont dans l’ordre naturel des choses, car la dissuasion est exclusivement nationale.’ (French White Paper on Defense 1972, par 32).
Era 2. Algeria to the Gulf War

The formation of the Fifth Republic and General De Gaulle’s return to power led to the reconstitution of French grand strategy around strategic autonomy, because it was clear that, as the 1972 paper argues, since the ‘dramatic failure of 1940, and the appearance of the gigantic powers of the US, USSR, and also China’, it is presumptuous for ‘a middle power to depend on one of the great powers for its protection’ (FR 1972, p.2). This inevitable result of this line of thinking was the 1966 exit from NATO, the centrality of nuclear weapons, and the end of French colonial possessions. France had been further alienated by its inability to reach a deal with the Americans on sharing nuclear technology. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had both been willing to make concessions to De Gaulle, but first Dulles and then Ball sabotaged the agreements. The nuclear issue also exposed the true allegiances of the British. De Gaulle therefore considered Britain a Trojan horse for the US that would undermine the ‘European Europe’ he was attempting to create (Trachtenberg 1999, p. 369), and responded by vetoing Britain’s admission to the Common Market. The Suez crisis had the opposite effect on France than on the UK, and reinforced France’s pursuit of strategic autonomy and the redirection of its orientation from the US towards Europe (and specifically Germany).

Even after the acquisition of the deterrent, French policymakers remained as apprehensive of abandonment by the US. For these reasons, they distrusted the American policy of détente during the 1960s and 1970s. The joint efforts by the US and the USSR to arrive at arms control agreements, to ban atmospheric nuclear tests, and to contain further nuclear proliferation were variously compared to Yalta, or worse still, to Munich. De Gaulle considered the 1963 Test Ban Treaty ‘another Yalta’, a new division of Europe between the US and the Soviets, and rejected it. Similarly, when the SALT agreements changed the balance of forces in favour of the Soviets, (specifically in 1978 when it appeared the US would include Cruise missiles into the agreement) French distrust was again reinforced. Security and autonomy guided French strategy, regardless of whether the Presidency was Gaullist, as the policy documents of the previous chapter showed.

---

135 ‘Sans doute a-t-il pu être dit après le dramatique échec de 1940, et l’apparition de puissances gigantesques, tels les Etats-Unis, l’Union Soviétique et bientôt la Chine, que la défense nationale est une prétention vaine pour une puissance moyenne qui devrait s’en remettre à l’un des grands du sein d’assurer sa protection. En apparence, la séparation du monde en deux blocs après 1945 a pu donner un semblant de démonstration à cette thèse.’ (FR 1972, p. 2)
The end of the Cold War, combined with the Gulf War, signalled the end of the second era for France. German reunification forced France to adapt to a drastic change in the distribution of power. Yet, it arguably also fit the dominant French concerns and anxieties. The Gulf War was more troubling as it demonstrated to French policymakers that France’s 1966 exit from NATO’s integrated military structure had caused it to miss out on allied doctrinal developments and technological innovations. French forces joined the Gulf War coalition, but they were purposely kept away from fighting missions alongside the US and Britain that would expose their lacks. France’s difficulties in the Gulf put its credibility at stake (Chirac 2011, pp. 129-133). The unchallengeable military supremacy of American forces, clearly on display in Desert Storm, highlighted again the choice for France to either attempt to correct the balance of power, or to bandwagon with the US.140

Legacy

The Algerian War led to the return to power of General de Gaulle, as the French army called upon him to save the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle’s leadership was crucial in recasting the French project in Algeria from a transformative mission to a restorative venture directed at France itself (Krebs in Kier and Krebs 2010, p. 204). He no longer framed Algeria as a goal of policy, but instead an obstacle ‘in the march of the French nation towards power and prosperity and the re-establishment of her international position’ (De Gaulle 1964, pp. 71, 104-110, 127, 134, 155). As a symbol of wartime French resistance and perseverance, De Gaulle was the only political player with the legitimacy to resist the right-wing elements that aimed to save Algeria for the French empire, and this included the army that had brought him to power. De Gaulle’s role in recreating France through the Fifth Republic through sheer willpower, symbolic acts, and astute realpolitik machinations is astounding. He forged the disparate elements of French strategy into a new and powerful vision, in which grandeur, rank and status were key elements (Utley 2000, p. 12). As Krebs argues, the ‘restorative’ French withdrawal from Algeria entrenched the unparalleled and unconstrained power of the office of the President of the Fifth Republic, in contrast to the ‘transformative’ US campaign in Vietnam that sparked a backlash against the ‘imperial presidency’ (Krebs in Kier and Krebs, 2010, p. 188). Casting foreign- and defence policy as belonging to the Presidential ‘reserved domain’ ensures the autonomy of the French executive to act decisively, and undermines broader public debates on policy. There is consequently less need for charged rhetoric to justify many of the larger strategic decisions. Consider that French governments from the left, once in power, never challenged the need for the nuclear

140 From the British perspective, the French could not match up in quality with the other allies at that point in time (J.L.F., 2012, interview with author, September 4; D.O., 2013, interview with author, May 20).
deterrent, while in Britain, Labour continued with its anti-nuclear position in and out of power.

The Gaullist movement did all in its power to recreate the shredded ‘unified character’ of the French nation, and drew from a particularly Gaullist version of the Second World War. Within two decades 43 military museums opened in dedication to the First World War, the Resistance movement during the Second World War, and the Liberation. In the Gaullist version of the war, every French man, woman, and child was a courageous resistance fighter who fought against the Nazis to protect Free France (Davidson 1998). The war in Algeria therefore offered an uncomfortable comparison with the German occupation as former resistance member Claude Bourdet phrased it – ‘votre Gestapo d’Algérie’ (Davidson 1998; Wieviorka 2010, p. 22). It made a quick exit all the more attractive.

The emphasis on the role of the French armed forces reinforced their legitimacy at precisely the moment they were politicised and tainted by their actions in the postcolonial wars.141 De Gaulle then further diminished their autonomy by the new centrality of nuclear weapons.142 The second era, between Algeria and the start of the Fifth Republic on the one hand, and the Gulf War on the other, established the enduring post-war domestic consensus on which French strategy was built.

**Era 3. The End of the Cold War to Iraq**

A reunified Germany reignited French fears for the re-emergence of German dominance in Europe (Bozo 2008). Publically, President Mitterrand claimed not to be afraid of reunification, seeing it as legitimate.143 However, Mitterrand’s private discussions with PM Thatcher reveal an entirely different perspective.144 Mitterrand feared that ‘he and the Prime Minister would find themselves in the situation of their predecessors in the 1930s who had failed to react in the face of constant pressing forward by the Germans’. He emphasised that at ‘moments of great danger in the past France had always

---

141 Ironically, the Free French forces had their basis in the colonial armies, traditionally very much politically on the right, and exactly the forces that were immersed deepest in Indochina and Algeria.

142 After 1962, there were no serious clashes between French military and civilian leaders, which is surprising, considering how overt that hostility was in preceding decades and how it had been expressed during the 1950s (B.J., 2012, interview with author, September 10).

143 Mitterrand at a press conference on November 3, 1989 following a Franco–German summit: ‘If they want it and can achieve it, then France will adapt its policy so as to be able to act in the best interests of Europe and of France’.

144 No. 71. Letter from Mr. Powell (Strasbourg) to Mr. Wall [PREM: Internal Situation in East Germany] Strasbourg, 8 December 1989 (meeting that afternoon between Prime Minister Thatcher and President Mitterrand).
established special relations with Britain’, and that such a time had come again. At a later meeting, President Mitterrand revealed to Thatcher, in strict confidence, that he had bluntly told Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher that without doubt Germany could ‘achieve reunification, bring Austria into the European Community and even regain other territories which it had lost as a result of the war’. In fact, he told them, ‘they might make even more ground than had Hitler. But they had to bear in mind the implications. He would take a bet in such circumstances the Soviet Union would send an envoy to London to propose a Re-insurance Treaty and the United Kingdom would agree. The envoy would then go on to Paris with the same proposal and France would agree. And then we would all be back in 1913’.  

The minister of defence, Chevènement, in a 1990 interview, frames German reunification entirely in light of the Second World War (he remarks at the article’s beginning that he was born on the date Hitler entered Prague). He believed that, as a great economic and political power, Germany will again become the heart of the European continent. Chevènement underlines that ‘we often forget that 1940 was made possible by the incompetence of governments and staffs, from the mid-1920s, when they chose a military strategy that depended on the Maginot line rather than on a mechanised armoured force’, though this contradicted ‘the requirements of France’s foreign policy at the time’.  

French support for a unified Europe to prevent such a return of past dynamics was therefore high, as was France’s desire to keep the US committed to Europe, preferably through NATO. French fear of Germany seemed much more intense, as the British Ambassador noted, and therefore their enthusiasm for accelerated European integration

145 No. 71. Letter from Mr. Powell (Strasbourg) to Mr. Wall [PREM: Internal Situation in East Germany] Strasbourg, 8 December 1989 (meeting that afternoon between Prime Minister Thatcher and President Mitterrand).
146 No. 103. Letter from Mr. Powell (No. 10) to Mr. Wall [WRL 020/1], 10 Downing Street, 20 January 1990. ‘The attitude of Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain, and France at the Strasbourg European Council should have been a warning to the Germans. Was it really in their interest to ignore this?’ Mitterrand focuses on their lack of means to force Germany; clearly they were not going to declare war on her.
148 No. 125. Sir E. Fergusson (Paris) to Mr. Hurd. No. 142 Telegraphic [PREM: Internal Situation in East Germany]. Paris, 5 February 1990, 5.43 p.m., Personal for Ambassadors, Cabinet Office for Powell No 10. ‘The French continue to hold to the principle of a strong alliance a continued US presence in Europe, surprisingly strong on the latter. They are worried about the future role of a united Germany within NATO. They are dismayed at the German willingness to talk and without thoroughly thinking this question through’.

327
to lock Germany into its commitment to Europe was much higher. At a EC lunch, the French Foreign Minister, whose own father had paid with his life for his resistance against the Nazis, reiterated that ‘we could either let the post-war Europe decompose into pre-First World War nationalism or we could build on the existing level of European construction’. In his autobiography, Chirac discusses the French-German relationship, as consisting of, in De Gaulle’s words, two exhausted fighters. He notes that both departed from similar weaknesses in the post-war period: while Germany was completely destroyed militarily and morally and France belonged to the camp of the victors, France was nonetheless marked by the terrible ordeals of the defeat and the occupation. Yet, both France and Germany recovered and found their places among those of the other great nations (Chirac 2011, p.43).

The same sense of hard-won idealism towards Europe thematically runs through President Chirac’s statements on the Bosnian and Kosovar crises. In July 1995, Chirac appealed to France's allies that inaction would in effect make UN forces ‘accomplices to ethnic cleansing’. He compared the responsibility of Western leaders towards former Yugoslavia to that of Chamberlain and Daladier at Munich. Days later, he called upon French allies again to ‘learn the lessons of history', and warned that ‘the values on which our democracies are founded are being flouted in Europe before our very eyes’. ‘If we have the will,’ Chirac added, ‘we can stop an enterprise that threatens yet again to destroy our values and which is coming ever closer to threatening Europe as a whole’. In his autobiography, he remembers a conversation with Prime Minister Major, where he argued that, regarding Western impotence (‘impuissance’), ‘if I were Serb, I would laugh like Hitler towards Chamberlain and Daladier in Munich’ (Chirac 2011, p. 58).

In a speech at the 1999 Kosovo peace conference in Rambouillet, Chirac emphasised that France ‘has known the horrors of war. It has seen the face of barbarism’. Yet, it recognised that ‘the desire for peace can be stronger than the temptation of war. That is the message that makes sense here, in the place where general De Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer built the future’ (Chirac 2011, p. 240). In 1995, at the 50th anniversary of the

150 No. 118. Sir E. Fergusson (Paris) to Mr. Hurd. No 139 Telegraphic [WRL 020/1]. Paris, 2 February 1990, 6.56 p.m.
153 Chirac’s thoughts on Bosnia and the role of the French army were also shaped by his own experience in Algeria, and how he wanted to prevent a repeat (Chirac 2011, p. 48).
end of the war, Mitterrand, in the company of his successor Chirac, had delivered a passionate hymn to Europe and French-German reconciliation. The enemy of yesterday is the friend of today,’ declared Mitterrand. V-E Day, he said, ‘was a victory of Europe over itself’.  

Like his predecessors, President Chirac lived with the pressure not to repeat the strategic mistakes that preceded 1940, when the French armed forces were left ill-prepared for the Wehrmacht onslaught. That sense of history, and specifically 1940, permeates Chirac’s own writing. The second chapter of Chirac’s autobiography is devoted to the ‘lessons of history’ - where he argues that ‘those that govern must pay heed to the lessons of history, since it repeats’, specifically ‘when it comes to matters of defence and national security’ (Chirac 2011, pp. 62-63). Chirac invokes the debacle of 1940 as ‘demonstrating the mortal danger of a country that abandons its army to the pressures of routine, neglect, of outdated concepts’ (Chirac 2011, p. 62). In Chirac’s telling of French post-war strategy De Gaulle looms large, as deterrence and European defence are the uncontested legacy of De Gaulle (Chirac 2011, pp. 63, 68). In the paean to France that closes his biography, Chirac emphasis how France has overcome defeat many times throughout his history (Chirac 2011, p. 599). The closing note of the book focuses on ‘the light’ in those ‘dark days’: the rejection of capitulation on June 18th 1940, when General de Gaulle vowed to continue the struggle, thereby ‘salvaging courage and honour’ for France (Chirac 2011, p.595). It is telling that Chirac focuses on the episode of the Call as a closing statement to bring together France’s past and future. Defeat has become a symbol of national perseverance.

As seen in the previous chapter, the nuclear deterrent remains the central element of the French strategy throughout the post-Cold War period. In newspapers, the nuclear weapon is ascribed ‘mutatis mutandis’ the ‘role that armoured divisions would have played in 1940’. Though, as the 1994 white paper states, ‘for the first time in French history, at the end of an experience spanning multiple centuries’, there is ‘no direct threat on the French borders’, and this has provided France with a strategic depth ‘of thousands of kilometres to the East of France’, the sense of insecurity remains pervasive (FR 1994, p. 7). The 1994 paper warns France not to ‘drop its guard’, as ‘peace is the dividend of defence, not the inverse’, because ‘France’s military history consists of...’

---

155 Les cauchemars des présidents face aux choix stratégiques; Comme ses prédécesseurs, Jacques Chirac vit avec le complexe Albert Lebrun, accusé d’avoir très mal préparé l’armée française à la dernière guerre mondiale. Isnard, Jacques.
156 Conscription strengthened the ties between the people and the army (Chirac 2011, p. 131).
Continued nuclear testing in the Pacific is necessary, because, in spite of all the ‘good intentions’ of ideologues, the ‘Hitler phenomenon’ was one of ‘the consequences of the Versailles Treaty and the foreign policy of the Third Republic’. An appeasement policy that was, ‘encouraged, by the way, by the English’. President Chirac was right to continue testing, Bourget argues, ‘what will ensure peace for France in the coming century?’

329
unstable borders, alliances, invasions, resistance, reconquest – these mark the territory, collective memory and the culture' (FR 1994, foreword). It is clear that ‘history has proven’ that ‘it is illusionary and dangerous to pretend that classic technologies of deterrence could have the same effect as nuclear weapons in preventing war’ (FR 1994, p. 56). The 2003 paper reiterates that France ‘enjoys a strategic depth of thousands of kilometres to the east’ and that ‘this is the first time this has happened in our history’ (FR 2003, p. 2).

Throughout the post-Cold War period, France had resisted European dependence on excessive preponderance of the US in a unipolar world. France had most vigorously pursued ESDP. After 9/11 the French government rushed to express solidarity with the US. However, that transatlantic cohesion evaporated during the confrontation over Iraq. The promised French veto in the Security Council for the use of military force led to an especially bitter response from the US administration. Though Germany had joined France’s opposition, the US vitriol was particularly directed at France. In its criticism of American policy, the French government focused on the dangers of exacerbating tensions and further destabilising the Middle East. President Chirac stated that ‘a system of occupation’ will ‘generate more and more reaction against this system’, due to the existing ethnic cleavages.158 His own experience fighting in Algeria informed his understanding of the complexities of war (Chirac 2011, p. 78), and he compared the French failure in Algeria with the resistance against the German occupation in France.159 Like his President, French Foreign Minister De Villepin continually expressed the belief that action would lead to a further spiral of violence.160 In his speech at the UN Security Council in February 2003, De Villepin spoke for the alternative to war in Iraq, rather than a ‘premature recourse to the military option’ that would undermine the unity, and long-term effectiveness and legitimacy of the international community. The intervention would destabilize the Middle East further, and likely ‘exacerbate the divisions between societies, cultures and peoples, divisions that nurture terrorism’.161 De Villepin remarked again and again that, while ‘not backed by force, law is powerless’, without it, ‘force alone is futile’. Indeed, there was a responsibility to act. Everyone’s security is affected, in the contemporary highly interdependent world. 162 Both Chirac and Villepin

160 Villepin, Dominique de, February 24, 2003, ‘Towards a New Resolution’, interview of Villepin with Le Figaro: ‘Given the growing number of splits in the Middle East today, the use of force may not in itself trigger a virtuous spiral. It could even have the opposite effect. So it must remain a last resort.’
162 Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’. The 1979 war in Afghanistan seemed inconsequential at the time,
emphasised that France was not a pacifist country, despite its resistance against the war in Iraq.\footnote{Chirac, Jacques in: 2003, A lot of progress has been achieved, CNN, March 16: ‘We are not refusing or rejecting war outright. If we have to wage war, we are not pacifists’. Official Explains French Position on Iraq, March 2 ‘France is not a pacifist country. We are the first contributor in troops to NATO. We were with the US in Afghanistan. We took our share, an important share, in Bosnia and Kosovo. We had 70 soldiers, French soldiers, killed in Bosnia. That’s not being pacifist. We are ready to take our full responsibilities’.

\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de (French Minister of Foreign Affairs), February 14, 2003, ‘Address on Iraq’ at the UN Security Council New-York.}

\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’.}

\footnote{Official Explains French Position on Iraq, March 2, 2003.}

\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’. Historically, they had been the ‘best of enemies’, but ‘the Entente Cordiale brought us closer together. And since, after the tragedies and the sufferings of the world wars, we have been united in the same European destiny’. ‘When I think of that spirit, I see it embodied in the imposing silhouette of Churchill standing amidst the ruins. [...] I see it again in}}

The French cast their understanding of the dangers of escalation in war in light of Europe’s own, dark modern history. In the closing statement of his speech at the Security Council, De Villepin addressed the US administration: ‘This message comes to you today from an old country, France, from a continent like mine, Europe, that has known wars, occupation and barbarity. A country that does not forget and knows everything it owes to the freedom-fighters who came from America and elsewhere. And yet has never ceased to stand upright in the face of history and before mankind’.\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de (French Minister of Foreign Affairs), February 14, 2003, ‘Address on Iraq’ at the UN Security Council New-York.}

\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’.}

De Villepin repeated the sentiment in a speech in London later in 2003, that ‘Europe has to be one of the pillars of this new world! ... In the last century, the European continent, our common land, experienced absolute evil. This evil, vanquished and put behind us, has transformed us. The wisdom we have gained at the price of blood must lead to action. That wisdom leads to strength, it is the exact opposite of the weakness which some would like to attribute to the Europeans’.\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’.}

\footnote{Villepin, Dominique de, October 15, 2003, ‘Speech given in London’, as part of the BBC’s ‘Dimbleby Lecture Series’. Historically, they had been the ‘best of enemies’, but ‘the Entente Cordiale brought us closer together. And since, after the tragedies and the sufferings of the world wars, we have been united in the same European destiny’. ‘When I think of that spirit, I see it embodied in the imposing silhouette of Churchill standing amidst the ruins. [...] I see it again in}}
'no alternative', and Europe cannot return to its ‘divisions, which cost us so dearly in terms of war, loss of democracy and progress’.168

In its resistance of the Bush administration's Iraq policy, the accusation was levied against France that it was attempting to restrain American power. President Chirac forcefully rejected this accusation in a 2003 interview.169 A year later, Chirac emphasised ‘that the idea that Europe would build itself against the United States is an absurd idea’.170 Chirac emphasised again and again the debt that France owed the US for its sacrifice in the world wars.171 On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, Chirac reiterated that the French people are ‘deeply grateful’ for the sacrifice of American soldiers. Yet, Chirac rejected President Bush’s comparison of the war in Iraq to the liberation of Europe, as ‘history is not repetitive’.172

Chirac argued that France is ‘deeply committed to this trans-Atlantic relationship’, because it fits ‘our understanding of tomorrow's world, a multi-poled world’.173 Five years earlier, Chirac had himself argued that multipolarity was the better outcome for world order to remain stable.174 Nation Security Advisor Rice found this admiration for multipolarity troubling.175 The title of the twelfth chapter of Chirac’s autobiography is telling - ‘La solidarité dans l’indépendance’ - the principle of French solidarity embedded in independence has applied since 1958. Chirac refused direct comparisons with De Gaulle, nor did he agree that either he or the General had opposed the US, though he


169 Chirac, Jacques 2003, A lot of progress has been achieved, CNN, March 16: 'Why are we always coming back to these old myths? Why would France want to restrain American power? And even if France wanted to do so, how could we?'


171 Chirac, Jacques 2003, A lot of progress has been achieved, CNN, March 16: 'The French don’t either forget what was done in both world wars by the Americans. It is really in their minds and also deep down in their hearts'.

172 French leader rejects Bush's comparison of Iraq, WW II Chirac says history 'is not repetitive' at meeting in Paris June 06, 2004. William Neikirk. Public Papers of the Presidents June 14, 2004., The President’s News Conference With President Jacques Chirac of France in Paris, France. 'Chirac 'I will have the opportunity to say to America and to Americans just how deeply grateful we are to them today, how grateful we are in the knowledge of the sacrifices they made, of the blood that they spilled—their own blood—for the liberation of our country and of Europe as a whole. And I will say to them that France says thank you and that France does not forget.

173 Chirac, Jacques in : 2003, A lot of progress has been achieved, CNN, March 16.


drew inspiration where he could find it. Moreover, De Gaulle had not ‘slammed the door on NATO’, but instead, as the President argued, had ‘asserted France’s interests’.176

**Legacy**

For French policymakers, the clash over Iraq delivered two lessons. It reinforced the belief that the US was a hyperpower, and could be dangerous in the pursuit of its national objectives. Yet, it also underlined how difficult it was to resist any US administration. The attempt of France to form an alternative to US-dominated NATO together with Germany, Belgium, and Luxemburg in early 2003 (the Tervuren meeting) proved fruitless. Germany remains reticent to challenge US leadership, and unwilling to develop military capabilities. There were no other European powers to build a European consensus on. Ironically, the decade that followed Iraq in various ways saw the return of France to the transatlantic fold. President Sarkozy reintegrated French forces back into the NATO structure in 2009, and France has increasingly engaged with Britain and the US on a bilateral basis.

The French President remained the main actor that set foreign and defence policy, and public debate has been fairly minimised. The armed forces are respected, but clearly subservient to the President and the government. Through the end of the second and most of the third era, French politics experienced long periods of cohabitation: the Mitterrand-Chirac period (1986-1988); the Mitterrand-Balladur period (1993-1995); and the Chirac-Jospin period (1997-2002). Yet, even in periods of cohabitation, the ‘reserved domain’ was deliberately not challenged, to keep executive authority intact. Considering the mostly contentious nature of French politics, this is remarkable.

**Era 4. Post Iraq**

The past never passes, and 1940 continues to loom large in French strategic thinking. In his 2007 message to the armed forces, President Chirac underlines that in a dangerous and dynamic international context, ‘France cannot lower her guard or leave it to others to ensure her defence’. Chirac reminds his military audience, that ‘the framers of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic’, having learned ‘the lessons from the tragic experience of 1940’, wanted ‘the Head of State directly to assume responsibility for France’s armed forces and defence’.177 The French Minister of Defence Morin defended

176 Chirac, Jacques, 2003, TV interview by Patrick Poivre d’Arvor (TF1) David Pujadas (France 2), March 10.
177 Chirac, Jacques, 2007 ‘New Year greeting to the armed forces’ in Paris, speech excerpts, January 8.
the new direction within the 2008 white paper in Le Monde. If, he argued, France had listened to De Gaulle in 1934 pushing for armoured warfare, it could have prevented ‘one of the worst humiliations in history’ in 1940. The same type of conservative thinking resisted the exit from Algeria, he wrote. To prepare for a world of globalization and new threats, France must continually adapt and build a ‘defence for tomorrow, a future for our children’. An editorial in Le Figaro favourably discusses the strategic innovation of the 2008 paper, and points out that the 1940 defeat derived from a failure to engage in strategic debate. General Georgelin argued that the nuclear deterrent prevented a new war, acting as the ultimate guarantor of security. Yet, while ‘nobody expects an invasion of France, as in 1940, 1914, or 1870’, France must constantly adapt to new threats and globalisation, specifically terrorism and ballistic missiles.

The 2008 paper itself points out to that ‘France no longer appears to be at risk of invasion over the next fifteen years’, though this was the original motivation of the nuclear strike capability (FR 2008, p. 64). The paper reiterates that ‘the defence and security of France are rooted in a long history, which has left a profound mark on a territory that has been invaded on several occasions’. France ‘has played and plays an essential role in the construction and maintenance of peace, and in the progressive unification of Europe, on a continent that gave rise to two world wars’ (FR 2008, p. 57).

The 2008 paper argues that France supports ‘building a more unified Europe’ to enable ‘peace to put down roots on a continent that was twice the source of world wars in the 20th century´ (FR 2008, p. 75).

The attention to history is no accident, as in 2006 Chirac made June 18th a day of commemoration to celebrate De Gaulle’s refusal in 1940 to accept defeat. In his statement, Chirac waxed on De Gaulle’s qualities as a soldier, his courage, his role as a political visionary, his willingness to stand up to Churchill and Roosevelt, and how De Gaulle managed to extract France from Algeria. He restored ‘the authority of the French state’, and ‘twice saved France and the Republic’.

The 2008 paper has a section (Chapter 18: Rallying the Nation) that argues the need to ‘rally the nation’ by raising historical awareness to achieve ‘a greater understanding of defence and security issues’ to ‘improve the public’s ability to weigh events and put them in perspective’. This, in turn, ‘requires the existence of a collective memory, one that is shared within French society and, increasingly, across European society at large’ (FR

2008, p. 287). The French experiences in the first half of the twentieth century are considered specifically relevant: the victories of the First and the Second World War, respectively November 11 and May 8, and, significantly, the June 18th appeal of De Gaulle to continue fighting after the disastrous defeat of 1940, and these are considered occasions where ‘memories are not contentious’ (FR 2008, p. 297). On younger generations the ‘European dimension’ must be imprinted, ‘given the major role played by the EU in the construction of an area of sustained peace in Europe formerly torn apart by internecine wars’ (FR 2008, p. 297). Explicitly, ‘military ritual’ should be incorporated into public commemoration. It contributes to ‘citizens’ sense of collective identity’, and to a ‘better understanding of military questions’ (FR 2008, p. 287).

Legacy

The extent to which strategic change has taken place in France is difficult to assess. On the one hand, France has reintegrated into the NATO structure, fought in Afghanistan, initiated together with Britain an intervention in Libya in 2011, used force decisively in Mali in 2013, was willing to use it in Syria in 2013, and set in motion a broader set of bilateral initiatives to cooperate with Britain, foremost the Lancaster House Agreement of 2010. These have restored the relation with the US, and in fact boosted France’s reputation in Washington to the extent that some spoke of France as the most dependable ally of the US. On the other hand, France has had a proclivity to manoeuvre for its own gain. Its actions have largely focused on improving its position in its traditional sphere of influence in the Middle East and Africa. The arrival of greater multipolarity in the 21st century is largely seen as an improvement, because it diffuses power across the system. Europe, in turn, remains a way for France to project power. As France looks towards Asia, the role of the French deterrent in the overall balance of power remains crucial. The Ukraine crisis exposed France’s difficult position with Russia, specifically when it came to the sale of the Mistral amphibian vehicles. Even within France, accusations emerged that the government was ‘appeasing’

---

183 ‘No, war is not what France is all about’ Dominique de Villepin, 2013, ‘How has the neoconservative virus won so many minds? No, war is not France’s way’, Voltaire Network, February 10.
185 There is still a sense within France that the excessive power of the US must be checked. Though, it is emphasised, this is not personal, not against the US itself (P.A. and A.A., 2012, interview with author, September 13).
187 C.L. argued that nuclear weapons will continue to be more important to the balance of power, despite new military technologies (C.L., 2012, interview with author, September 12).
Putin. Though the delivery of the Minstral was cancelled, or at least made contingent on Russia making peace with the Ukraine, the episode shows a continuing emphasis by French policymakers on independent decision-making.

Autonomy indeed remains central to French strategy, both in thought and in action. The French President has not declined in influence. The use of force abroad is similarly not truly part of a larger debate, once decided upon by the French executive, as exemplified by the relative ease of initiating such missions as the Ivory Coast, Libya, Central African Republic, and Mali. The armed forces are seen as instruments of the state, as *uniformé*, meaning not only that they are in uniforms, but that they are uniforms, and the risk of their death is part of the job. However, there are signs that this might be changing slightly, particularly to some heavy losses the French armed forces incurred in Afghanistan. So far though, the key domestic relations have not noticeably changed, though more debates are taking place within parliament concerning foreign and defence policy that reflect party cleavages.

**Germany**

**Era 1. Second World War to the 1955 constitution of the Bundeswehr**

In the first post-war era, German allies contained the FRG, both by embedding in NATO and the EC, and by recreating its domestic institutions and constitution. The foreign policy choices available to the policymakers of the FRG were limited throughout the Cold War, but specifically before German armed forces were reconstituted as the Bundeswehr in 1955. There were therefore less German experiences that challenged the established paradigms throughout the post-war period, for most of the Cold War. Less choices that demanded the application of history, and less experiences with renewed conflicts that reinforced or undermined the paradigms. For the FRG, until the end of the Cold War, there were no Suez crises, Algerias, Vietnams, or Falklands. Perhaps détente and Ostpolitik are the nearest matches, yet the absence of the direct use of force as the

---


189 This point about the perception of using the French armed forces was made by P.A. and A.A. It must be underlined that the lives of the soldiers were highly valued, however, it must also be noted that France does not have a ‘bodybag syndrome’ (P.A. and A.A., 2012, interview with author, September 13).


191 Similarly, the relationship between the President and the military has now become more difficult, specifically during Sarkozy’s presidency. This might impede effective strategic integration. P.A. and A.A. (2012, interview with author, September 13).
FRG grew more and more prosperous was perhaps itself a lesson for post-war German policymakers.

The Second World War would cast a permanent and long shadow over post-war Germany. The war was unavoidable for post-war Germany, and the Nazi regime and its horrors prominently figured in the decades that followed, though often in a more nuanced manner than might be assumed.

**Legacy**

Post-war Germany did not, could not, immediately absorb what the war would come to mean in the decades that followed. In the years after the war, German society largely wanted to put its past behind it, and enjoy the material rewards of the ‘economic miracle’. For the Allies, it was far from certain in the immediate post-war years that the National Socialist ideology had been destroyed, and it was for that reason they were hesitant to fully restore German democracy. Indeed, as Frei (2002) pointed out, elected West German politicians conducted a massive effort at the Federal level after the 1949 return of sovereignty to gain amnesty for those accused of war crimes, and refused to prosecute the officials of the Nazi regime, though politicians who were not tainted by collaboration with the Nazi regime (Adenauer, Schumacher and Heuss) were successful in local elections. Tensions ran between those with a strong desire to forget the past and focus on economic recovery (Herf 1997), and those who wanted to attain justice for the Nazi atrocities. The post-war German society attempted to reconcile those two desires by building a strongly formalised and institutionalised democracy.

To embed the new Bundeswehr within society and prevent the rise of the ‘state within the state’, West Germany relied on a conscript army that was fully accountable to civilian political institutions, a ‘parliament’s army’, without a General Command or General Staff (Nolte and Krieger in Nolte, 2003, pp. 342-343, 365). The legal provisions of the Basic law (8a) emphasised that soldiers were ‘citizens in uniform’, who were mandated to receive civic education (Innere Führung). Yet, the new Bundeswehr was built on the remnants of the Wehrmacht. The armed forces managed to avoid a great deal of the blame of the defeat in the post-war years because blame could be accorded to the ideologues of the Nazi Party. The desire was strong to cling to perceptions of a ‘clean’ Wehrmacht, one that fought bravely and effectively as part of a tragic, but heroic, defeat. Denial of its past would cut the German military off from the (Prussian) tradition and its long line of battlefield successes (Wette 2006, p. 258). As Wette argues, when the Bundeswehr was founded, the West German public had already embraced a largely [337]

---

192 In this initial whitewashing, the officers of the Wehrmacht were unintentionally assisted by the Americans, as they were recruited to write histories of their warfare against the Soviets as a contribution to the formation of Cold War military doctrine (Wette 2006, p. 258).
favourable image of the Wehrmacht, also because so many within society had served in the army, or had family members who had. In contrast, the reformers remained convinced that the Wehrmacht had to be regarded as an organisation that had served a criminal regime, issued criminal orders itself, and committed crimes – all of which rendered it guilty. The reformers considered the Wehrmacht as an extension of Germany’s militaristic and authoritarian traditions, but they encountered a traditionalist backlash that attempted to rehabilitate the German soldiers (Wette 2006, pp. 259-266).

**Era 2. 1955 to unification**

Given the constraints in place on German policymakers in the first decade after the war, it is only during the second era that the experiences of the Second World War truly became felt. West German policymakers increasingly sought greater autonomy for the FRG, and paradoxically they considered closer relations to France and the expansion of European integration as the means to do so. Konrad Adenauer remarked ‘Europe will be your revenge’ to Mollet when the latter was distraught over the failure of the Suez operations (Vaisse 1989, p. 337). Chancellor Brandt in 1969 began the push for greater self-determination, but one embedded in a ‘European peace order’ that follows from the ‘result of the Second World War and the national betrayal by the Hitler regime’. The FRG benefited from a series of capable post-war Chancellors, adept at reintegrating Germany into Western-Europe, and ready to atone symbolically for the sins of their predecessor. Though Brandt was himself innocent of any association with the Nazi past – he was persecuted by the Nazis and joined the Norwegian resistance army – on his visit to Warsaw in 1970, he knelt at the monument for the victims of the Ghetto uprising against German occupation. The head of the German government kneeling represented a confession of collective guilt, one that was not relativized by reference to the German sufferings of bombing, forced relocation, or to seduction by the Nazi regime (Giesen 2004, pp. 132-133).

The German reconciliation with France ended a costly geopolitical rivalry that had given Germany a permanent sense of insecurity and encirclement. The enthusiasm for European integration increased, as it allowed Germany increased security and economic prosperity. It also demonstrated an alternative policy tool - one that led Germany to champion multilateral diplomacy. Moreover, the complex overlaying structures of the EC and later EU were easier to accept for German policymakers, used to the multi-tiered federal system of the Lander.

---

During the 1970s, the FRG attempted to gain further autonomy by opening relations with the Warsaw Pact countries. Ostpolitik vexed German allies, but its success reinforced the lesson of multilateral diplomacy to German policymakers. Particularly, when contrasted against the failures of German allies in the third world to stem the spread of communism through force – Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and, of course, South East Asia – it seemed not only that Germany had reinvented itself, but also that it had a better way of conducting foreign policy. In the 1980s, the SPD ignited the debates on whether Germany should have its role prescribed by others so long after the war. Yet, the success of Germany’s subdued policy style meant that more assertive alternatives were hardly tempting to policymakers or the public.

These various international and domestic developments ensured that a tendency towards pacifism became internalised and a powerful peace movement became politically valid and institutionally embedded, and went further than its British counterpart. The NATO doubletrack decision - the placement of US midrange nuclear weapons in Europe - was therefore deeply unpopular and strongly resisted also from within the German political mainstream. Numerous protests took place in West German cities in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and mainstream politicians spoke in broad historical terms to defend policy. For example, when CSU chairman Franz Josef Strauß spoke at his party's own peace demonstration, he defended the NATO policies of the FRG government and called upon the ‘silent majority’ to wake up and realize that this is about ‘maintaining our freedom, preserving peace in the world, and guaranteeing security for the long-suffering people of this century’. It is the experience of ‘the generation born during the First World War, [the generation] that experienced the period between the two world wars and that carried the burden and sacrifice and suffering of the Second World War’ that informs the desire for peace ‘for Germany [...]for Europe, for the entire world’. Strauß argued that ‘we have learned the lessons of history, and this distinguishes us from others who mean well but are heading down the wrong path. After the Second World War, we translated these lessons into political action’. He argued it is not about ‘more arms or more missiles’, but more realism. 194

The 1983 white paper similarly argues that ‘history shows it is not weapons that threaten the peace, but powers that are willing to use those weapons’, before enumerating the instances when the Soviet Union has used force or the threat of force against other states and societies – the Soviet occupation zone in Germany; Hungary; Czechoslovakia; Poland; and Afghanistan (DE 1983, p. 412). The paper even dismisses as unrealistic the proposed alternatives to NATO’s collective defence and deterrence that include unilateral nuclear disarmament and the possibility of non-violent resistance (in the vein of Ghandi) (DE 1983, p. 165). It emphasises that the membership of NATO allowed the German republic to reconstitute itself after the ‘traumas of the Third Reich’ as a ‘free and

democratic society’ in Europe that enables the ‘freedom and rights of individuals’ (DE 1983 p. 13). By virtue of the FRG’s embedding in NATO, the relations between German armed forces, and state and society were restored (DE 1983, p. 120). Yet, in his speech, Strauss emphasised that though German will defend itself, the Clausewitzean dictum of war as the continuation of politics by other means is no longer applicable to modern-day Germany, as ‘never again shall military might be used as a means of asserting political goals in Europe’. The introduction of weapons of mass destruction eliminated, he argued, ‘once and for all, the instrument of war as a political means’. 195 The lessons of history generally remain unspecified, but allude to the inherent uncontrollable nature of military force.

Reunification presented a challenge to the post-war domestic and international consensus towards the FRG. In a sense, the division of Germany had allowed Germans and their neighbours to avoid uncomfortable questions surrounding the future role of German power in Europe. While some of its allies had publically admonished the Soviets to ‘tear down this Wall’196, in private they preferred the status quo (and sometimes publically as well – see the sections on UK and France). Chancellor Kohl was therefore fully aware of the difficulties of reunification due to the historical memories and fears of its European neighbours. In a letter to President Bush, Kohl thanks him for rejecting ‘every parallel between Yalta and Malta’. 197 During a later conversation with Bush, Kohl is critical of Thatcher, remarking that ‘Her ideas are simply pre-Churchill. She thinks the post-war era has not come to an end. She thinks the history is not just. Germany is so rich and Great Britain is struggling. They won a war but lost an empire and their economy. She does the wrong thing. She should try to bind the Germans into the EC’. 198 At other times, Kohl rejected the language of ‘binding Germany into Europe’, and, privately, replied that ‘the people who used this language were the enemies of Germany but he would take his revenge on them by doing precisely what they suggested’. 199 Such remarks suggests a less compliant Germany than the popular image. In contrast, Kohl considered Mitterrand much ‘wiser’, because he knew it would be ‘bad to oppose [reunification]’. 200 Kohl knew that Germany’s neighbours feared two things: an

196 Reagan, speech at Brandenburger Gat, June 12, 1987
200 Document No. 4. Memorandum of Conversation of George H.W. Bush, John Sununu, Brent Scowcroft, and Helmut Kohl. December 3, 1980. Source: George Bush Presidential Library. Obtained through FOIA. On file at the National Security Archive. On the future of the EC, Mitterrand also knows it will be difficult to maintain the current structure of the European Parliament. But he can remember, from the Fourth Republic, when the parliament was too strong. Now it is too weak. … Great Britain is rather reticent.’ President Bush: ‘That is the understatement 340
eastwards drift of Germany, and the real reason, the rapid economic and demographic
growth of Germany.\textsuperscript{201}

\textit{Legacy}

During the Cold War era, the sustained peace and prosperity that Germany experienced
for the first time in a century, reinforced the beliefs that multilateralism was preferable
to isolation and restraint was more effective than the previous dependence on military
prowess. The economic growth that flowed from the Wirtschaftswunder, Ostpolitik, and
European integration, demonstrated how a future reunified Germany could coexist with
its neighbours without choosing either a Western or an Eastern orientation.

During the Cold War, the German policy documents concern domestic order within
(West)Germany in an equal amount to its strategy, and Germany’s Second World War
past is recurrent in discussions of the relations between German state, society and the
armed forces. The societal scepticism towards defence is directly related in the 1969
paper to the ’abuse of the nation’s youth through its militarist ideology’. This scepticism
undermines the effectiveness of the defence policies of the FRG (DE 1969, p. 11). The
combined measures of conscription, oversight, and civic guidance have bridged and
healed the ‘contradiction between Germany’s military and its democracy’ that has
existed ‘for more than a century’, since the ‘militarist Prussian monarchy unified and
dominated the German Länder’ (DE 1976, p. 149). In the present and in the future,
‘German society as a whole, the parliament and the government’ must carry the
‘collective responsibility for the German armed forces’ (DE 1969, p. 53). Such a sense of
mutual responsibilities have ensured that the Bundeswehr cannot and will not threaten
the German state and democracy again, and allowed the armed forces to regain the trust
of German society (DE 1976, p. 141). The decades of democratic and social stability were
unique in German history, the 1983 paper argues. Moreover, the FRG has created not
only economic prosperity, but also social security, and this has allowed it to weather the
storms of instability that have plagued its neighbours (DE 1983, p.11).\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{201} Document No. 4. Memorandum of Conversation of George H.W. Bush, John Sununu, Brent
Obtained through FOIA. On file at the National Security Archive. ‘Frankly, 62 million prosperous
Germans are difficult to tolerate – add 17 million more and they have big problems’

\textsuperscript{202} ’Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland kann auf fast 35 Jahre demokratische und soziale Stabilität
zurückblicken, die in der schwierigen Geschichte der Deutschen ohne Beispiel ist. Sie zählt unter
den Demokratien des Westens zu den stabilsten Staaten in einer labilen und unsicheren Welt. Die
politischen Institutionen sind funktionsfähig und erlauben politischen Wechsel, ohne dass die
Verfassungsordnung und der demokratische Konsens in Gefahr geraten. Die deutsche Wirtschaft
hat die Ölkrise, die weltweite Inflation und Rezession besser verwittert als andere große

341
these decades a German sense of national confidence emerged that subsumed the older, national identity that had relied on military prowess.

The legacy of the Second World War had in fact become increasingly powerful as time went on, rather than during the immediate aftermath of the war. There were straightforward causes for this seemingly paradoxical fact. Acceptance of historical responsibility had become engrained in the late 1960s, as the first truly post-war generation had arrived (Kundani 2009). While the previous generations had been guilty of inaction or of direct participation in the atrocities of the Nazi regime, and had sought to diminish societal complicity to those horrors, the angry young men and women of the protest generation had no such need. They could dissociate themselves from that preceding, but still present, generation that carried direct responsibility, and attack the myth of the new, democratic start for the FRG (Giesen 2004, p. 130). Besides high-level political acts, such as Brandt's kneeling in Warsaw, the showing of the American television series ‘Holocaust’ attracted a vast audience when it was shown on West German television in 1979. The 1986 Historikerstreit revived the debate during the 1980s and after on recent German history and reinforced the importance of the events that surrounded Germany’s role in the war in the historical and political consciousness of the younger generations.

Era 3. Unification to Iraq

The 1991 Gulf War proved the first challenge for German policymakers. Joining the coalition could be considered both a provocation or a mark that Germany was normalising in terms of fulfilling its international obligations as a middle to great power. However, constitutionally, it was still impossible to deploy German forces abroad and, according to Foreign Minister Genscher, an active German role was likely to interfere with the ratification by Moscow of the Two-Plus-Four Treaty (Genscher 1998, pp. 477-79, 482-84). Germany instead contributed financially to the alliance in 1990-91 with approximately 18 billion Deutschmarks. Of that amount, 10.3 billion Deutschmarks—more than half the total amount—went to the United States (which actually made a profit on the Gulf War) – while the rest went to Great Britain foremost, France, and Turkey.

German reunification had also ignited the debate over German power within Europe, as the previous sections showed. The 1994 white paper states that ‘today, Germany has greater international responsibility’ than others. German policymakers are aware that ‘much is expected of Germany’, but they assure domestic and international audiences


342
that ‘Germany has learned the lessons of history and will thus continue to pursue a policy of active integration and broad international cooperation’ (DE 1994, par. 307). These ‘lessons of history’ are mentioned throughout the 1994 paper (for example DE 1994, par. 318). Indeed, German policymakers were exceedingly self-conscious of the difficulties Germany faced towards its neighbours. A CDU/CSU policy paper discussed the need for further integration of Germany into Europe, because ‘if [West]European integration were not to progress, Germany might be called upon, or be tempted by its own security constraints, to try to effect the stabilization of eastern Europe on its own and in the traditional way’. However, such an assertive strategy, would ‘far exceed [German] capacities and, at the same time, erode the cohesion of the European Union, especially since everywhere memories are still very much alive that historically German policy towards the east concentrated on closer co-operation with Russia at the expense of the countries between’.

That sense of responsibility to the European order permeates statements of German officials. During the Berlin commemoration for the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, President Roman Herzog said it was now Germany’s duty to extend the European ‘isle of peace and prosperity’, and ‘no one should feel threatened by such a policy’. Herzog underlined that ‘Germany unleashed the most terrible war there had been until then, and it experienced the most terrible defeat one could imagine’. At a speech five years later, Foreign Minister Fischer considered two decisions crucial to European peace and stability: the US decision to stay in Europe, and second, the French and German commitment to integration. Expansion eastwards of the EU was inevitable, he argued, as otherwise European self-destruction would have been inevitable: a return of the old balance of power, interest-driven politics, and the permanent danger of nationalist ideologies and confrontations. Fischer underlined the ‘unique opportunity to unite our continent, wracked by war for centuries, in peace, security, democracy, and prosperity’.

Amidst these signs of normalisation and reintegration of Germany into Europe, the deployments of German forces abroad remained politically problematic. After the CDU-led federal government approved deployments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia in 1993, the FDP and the SPD filed complaints with the Federal Constitutional Court. In a landmark decision, the court ruled deployments outside of NATO territory were compatible with the Basic Law, though the Bundestag would have to give approval

---

205 Fischer, Joschka May 12, 2000, ‘From Confederacy to Federation – Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration’, speech at Humboldt University in Berlin: Auswartiges Amt (The Federal Foreign Office).
beforehand. The decision defines ‘alliances of collective self-defence’ as also possible ‘systems of mutual collective security’, insofar as they are ‘strictly confined to a peacekeeping obligation’. The definition significantly broadened the range of military operations for German forces and represented a move towards further normalisation. Chancellor Kohl assured that the decision to deploy forces was not taken lightly, but that the ‘war in the former Yugoslavia has brought a degree of suffering to the European continent that many of us no longer thought possible after the horrifying experiences of the Second World War’. Germany knows from ‘the experiences of this century’, that ‘the long-term outlook for peace on our continent cannot be good if there is peace in one part of Europe while a bloody war rages in another’. Germany therefore shares responsibility with the US, Britain, France, and other allies to secure the peace in former Yugoslavia. SPD faction chairman Scharping emphasised that his party supported the deployment and that this was a contribution to peace. He strongly rejected the German chief of staff Naumann’s statement that deployment equates to a ‘combat mission’. Foreign minister Kinkel equally argued that the deployment to Bosnia for peace operations was morally justified, as it was not war, but the prevention of one. Moreover, German participation would send the signal to Germany’s allies that, ‘Germany practices responsibility and does its share’. In the end, a large parliamentary majority approved the deployment of 4,000 Bundeswehr soldiers (Lantis 2002). Regardless of the shifts in German policy, the Balkan wars demonstrated how problematic the use of force remained to German policymakers and the public. The fractures within the pacifist Green Party between the ‘realists’ – who saw a moral responsibility to intervene – and the pacifists – who could not conceive doing so under practically any circumstance - showcased how difficult it remains to reconcile two ‘never again’ lessons. Inherent contradictions existed between the first - never again war (Nie wieder Krieg) – and the second - never again Auschwitz (Nie wieder Auschwitz) - when it came to the prevention of genocide. The Green Party’s Foreign Minister Fischer worded the choice in these terms during a famous speech on Kosovo at a special Green Party congress in May 1999, where he faced shouts of ‘warmonger’ with sarcasm (‘a warmonger is speaking here and soon you’ll be recommending Mr. Milosevic for the Nobel Peace Prize’). Fischer told the audience that he too sought peace, but ‘the prerequisite for peace is that people are not murdered, that people are not expelled, that

207 Decision by the German Federal Constitutional Court [BVerfGE 90, 286] on the Deployment of the Federal Armed Forces [Bundeswehr] in International Operations. 5. a) A system of mutual collective security in the sense of Article 24, Paragraph 2, of the Basic Law is characterized by its use of a set of rules for the preservation of peace and the establishment of its own organisation to create for each of its members the status of being bound under public international law, of being reciprocally obliged to keep the peace and of being provided with security. It is irrelevant whether the system intends exclusively or primarily to guarantee peace among the Member States or to oblige them to render collective support in the case of foreign attacks. b) Alliances of collective self-defense can also be systems of mutual collective security in the sense of Article 24, Paragraph 2, of the Basic Law, if and insofar as they are strictly confined to a peacekeeping obligation.
women are not raped. That is the prerequisite for peace!’ Then, Fischer said, ‘I believe in
two principles: never again war and never again Auschwitz. Never again genocide and
never again fascism. Both belong together for me, dear friends, and that is why I joined
the Green Party’. They might well criticize everything the German government and
NATO were doing, he said, and perhaps Milosevic did not fit the ‘old conceptions of the
enemy’, but they could not and should not accept the reemergence of ethnic warfare and
nationalism in Europe.208

Despite the controversy that surrounded the decisions to participate in Bosnia and
Kosovo, German attitudes towards the use of force seemed to gradual normalise in the
1990s, with Germany acting more and more like its NATO and European allies. However,
if such a normalisation was taking place, and this is questionable, it came to a
halt with the Iraq war in 2003. 209 Participation in Iraq was rejected by Chancellor
Schroder’s government, perhaps to improve his chances at re-election. Yet, the war was
deeply unpopular among the German public, both among the older and the younger
generation.210 It was also argued that there was no Soviet threat or necessary US ally to
justify German acquiescence. 211 Despite his opposition to the Iraq war, for Fischer it was
troubling that ‘from the very beginning, Germany’s ‘no’ to the Iraq war contradicted our
obligations within NATO, which continued to apply, and this contradiction could be
neither eliminated nor denied’. Therefore the decision required a precise balancing act,
and coordination within the innermost circle of the government. 212 Arguable as
compensation, German armed forces were deployed to Afghanistan. There, they fulfilled
the tasks required of them to the utmost, but strictly within the narrow rules of
engagement set by the German government.

208 Fischer, Joschka, May 13, 1999 ‘Speech at the Green Party Congress in Bielefeld’, reprinted in
209 The question remained for many interviewees not only whether normalisation happened, but if
it was something to strive for. Normalisation can be considered many different things, certainly
some convergence with the UK and France occurred. (A.J., 2012, interview with author, November
12; M.O., 2012, interview with author, November 16; T.B., 2012, interview with author, November
20). H.R. argues that normalisation of German policy stopped after the Iraq war (H.R. 2012,
interview with author, November 13).
210 German policymakers considered the possibility of bringing democracy to Iraq through outside
intervention was ‘wishful thinking’. N.W. perceived a certain hubris in the belief that
transformation of Iraq would be unproblematic (N.W., 2012, interview with author, November 12).
211 Jan Ross, 2003 ‘Dann gibt es nur eins: nie wieder!’, Die Zeit, No. 1. Wolfgang Schauble
(CDU/CSU), responsible foreign policy in the Stoiber campaign, did not want to rule out war
entirely. As Schauble observed, it is precisely the older people who continue to see war as the
greatest evil. In a certain way, that was always the case for the generation that experienced
Stalngrad and Dresden. But at the time, anticommunism and fear of the Soviet Union also ran
depth. Now we no longer have to fear the Russians, the war trauma has free rein so to speak. And
the United States isn’t so urgently needed anymore either.
212 Spiegel February 17, 2011 ‘I Am Not Convinced’ Joschka Fischer on Germany’s ‘No’ to the Iraq
War’. This inner circle included the chancellor, the foreign minister, the defense minister and the
head of the Chancellery.
**Legacy**

The failure of the US to establish a stable Iraqi state, certainly at least until over five years after the invasion, and the difficulties of the mission in Afghanistan reinforced existing German beliefs. It was perceived as a failure of military force, and underlined the need for a comprehensive approach that included other means. It undermined the trust in the (American) executive, and fit the pre-existing German scheme of distrust in executives who assertively wanted to use force.\(^{213}\)

The unilateral approach of the Bush administration clashed with the established multilateralist preferences of German policymakers. The administration appeared arrogant and overbearing, especially Defense Secretary Rumsfeld’s disparaging talk of ‘old’ and ‘new Europe’. It undermined the trust of the German public in the US as an outside power to keep the peace in Europe. Opinion polls showed a greater collapse of positive feelings towards the US in Germany than elsewhere in Europe, including in France, and they did not recover to their pre-Iraq levels, even after Bush left office.\(^{214}\) In that sense, the 2013 Prism eavesdropping scandal, which happened during the Obama administration, further reinforced the belief that the US was an aggressive and powerful state that did not want to play by the rules that German policymakers preferred all states to play by.

The newly unified and integrated (FRG and FDR) German armed forces continue to be built around conscription and civic education (DE 1994, par 134). The 1994 paper argues civic education allows the German Bundeswehr to be ‘an integral and natural component of our state order and society’ (DE 1994, par 706).\(^{215}\) Consistent with the Cold War texts, it is emphasised that it is the personal responsibility of members of the armed forces to adhere to international law, regardless of the orders that they receive (DE 1976, p. 133; DE 1994, par 714). Yet, this meant that the Germany’s compulsory military service was increasingly out of step with its European neighbours, who were

---

\(^{213}\) Erlanger, Steven 2002, ‘Bush-Hitler Remark Shows US as Issue In German Election’, *New York Times*, September 20. For example, according to the regional newspaper Schwäbisches Tagblatt, the government’s minister of justice, Däubler-Gmelin, said to representatives of the trade union IG Metall: ‘Bush wants to divert attention from his domestic problems. It’s a classic tactic. It’s one that Hitler also used’. She denied comparing ‘the persons Bush and Hitler’, but instead compared ‘their methods’.

\(^{214}\) German Marshall Funds Transatlantic Opinions Survey, 2014.

\(^{215}\) ‘The concept of Innere Führung has made the Bundeswehr an integral and natural component of our state order and society. It is a successful concept for the comprehensive integration of armed forces into a democratic state. This is why it has become a model for the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe and Latin America when they consider how to rebuild their armed forces. It helps to preserve internal stability in these states. Innere Führung and the model of the democratic citizen in uniform are hallmarks of the German Bundeswehr’ (DE 1994, par 706).
steadily abandoning conscription as outdated in the era of extra-European deployments.\textsuperscript{216}

The institutionally constraints created a feedback effect that further diminished the ability of Germany to use force effectively. Duffield argues that both popular support for antimilitarism, and to a lesser degree, concerns of policymakers on the reconstitution of an unaccountable state within the state constrained the improvement of Germany’s planning and command capabilities (Duffield, 1999, p. 786). The contemporary appraisal of the Bundeswehr was positive during the 1990s, yet as an actor shaping policy it was institutionally weak. Green Party MP Nachtwei was pleasantly surprised by the seriousness of the members of the military he met on a fact-finding mission. He had previously not known any Bundeswehr members.\textsuperscript{217}

The past remained uncomfortably close during the 1990s, with the constant anniversaries of beginnings and endings of the Second World War, and reminded German society of the dangerous role that military force had played. For decades, the distinction had been maintained between the regular German soldier from the Wehrmacht and the fanatics from the SS, and this had aided the post-war reconstitution of the armed forces in the FRG. Yet, in November 1995, Defence Minister Ruhe gave a speech in Munich that unambiguously stated that the Wehrmacht was part of the crimes of the Nazi regime. From March 1995 to 1999, an exhibit on the Wehrmacht entitled ‘War of Extermination: The Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941-1944’ toured Germany. It touched a raw nerve, as the Wehrmacht had truly been a people’s army, to a greater extent than the contemporary Bundeswehr (Wette 2006, pp. 270-271). While that past could no longer directly reflect upon the soldiers of the contemporary Bundeswehr, it seemed to underline to the German public a disquieting tendency that membership of the armed forces would corrupt individual morality and rights.

However, the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s also saw other tendencies gaining ground. The prominent tendency to demonize Nazi rule, Giesen argues, removed responsibility and culpability from the German society as a whole. The National Socialist regime increasingly became presented as a parasite that had attached itself to the body of German politics, rather than one that was produced by it. Discussing the Third Reich as a temporary period of intoxication, seduction, and blindness from which Germany had to be liberated, allowed Germans to regard the German nation as another victim of

\textsuperscript{216} The fact that the Wehrmacht had been a conscription army might seem paradoxical, but is explained by the perception that it had a fanatical core of military professionals that enabled the takeover of the state by the National Socialists.

\textsuperscript{217} Nachtwei told this story to illustrate how disconnected the military was from society, and certainly from the political left. The Bundeswehr was equated to the Wehrmacht. Even though there was conscription, this was unevenly spread across the political parties, with the majority of the CDU having served, about half of the SPD, and only a small minority of the Greens (W.N., 2012, interview with author, November 12).
Nazism. This narrative of victimization had been prominent in the first decade after the war, but it returned in recent history. For example, in 2000, a documentary series on German television had the title ‘The Refugees: Hitler’s Last Victims’ (Giesen 2004, pp. 123-124). That tendency was already on display at the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in 1995, when it was presented as ‘Liberation’. That means liberation from the concentration camps, the final phase of the Allied bombing campaign, the onset of streams of refugees from the East, the unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945 – but more importantly, liberation from the regime as well. That vision conflicted with those critics who believed National Socialism derived from unique features of the German body of politics - the Sonderweg argument in which the Nazi’s were the end product of centuries of militarism, authoritarianism, and nationalism. A third tendency was also present that went further than the second tendency. In 1998, the writer Martin Walser called for a Schlußstrich – a bottom-line – under the Nazi past. For the left, the end of the Cold War was itself difficult, since the appearance to light of the Communist crimes in the East also meant that the left was no longer morally unblemished when compared to the conservatives who had been part of all the negative tendencies of German history.218

Era 4. Post Iraq

From the late 1990s up to the middle of the 2000s, Germany had taken an increasingly prominent role on the international stage - be it in the Balkans, the war on terror or Berlin’s outspoken opposition to the Iraq war. Gerhard Schröder had been chancellor for that crucial period, from 1998 to 2005. His presence at the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings in June 2004 marked the first time a German chancellor had joined the heads of states and government of the states that had defeated Nazi Germany. Schröder himself considered it confirmation that ‘the post-war period is over’.219

However, in many other ways, German behaviour did not ‘normalise’ at all, if normalisation is understood as behaving concomitant with its power and status. The fourth era, which could be considered as having started with Angela Merkel’s chancellorship, showed a marked lack of German assertiveness, whether within Europe, in terms of leadership in the financial crisis, or in the transatlantic relationship, in terms of military contributions to allied missions. Particularly, the German absence from the Libya action in 2011 was remarkable, as it met all the major criteria for intervention that Germany had established for itself: a UN mandate; supported by all major allies,

including the US and France; and in order to prevent genocide. Yet, Germany already voted against the no-fly zone, because, according to Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, doing so would have made joining the military mission unavoidable. Some members of the government went even further. Development Minister Niebel blatantly attacked German allies during an appearance on a public television talkshow, when he suggested that ‘it is notable that exactly those countries which are blithely dropping bombs in Libya are still drawing oil from Libya’. He also complained that Germany had not been ‘not consulted’ by France beforehand. Moreover, Niebel considered German abstention correct ‘because not all non-military possibilities had been exhausted’. Westerwelle was more careful not to criticize German allies, because ‘we understand those who have, out of honourable motives, opted in favour of an international military intervention in Libya’.

Former minister Fischer was scathing in his comments on German absence: ‘Germany has lost its credibility in the United Nations and in the Middle East. [...] German hopes for a permanent seat on the Security Council have been permanently dashed and one is now fearful of Europe’s future.’ The former chief of staff of the German armed forces, Naumann believed that ‘Germany’s hopes for a permanent Security Council seat can be buried. Even the idea of an EU seat is damaged’. Naumann was especially critical that Germany had opposed its ‘closest partner France’ thereby breaking ‘with all constants of German foreign policy since 1949’. The French-German relationship is ‘the legacy of Adenauer and Kohl – all of Germany’s chancellors in fact’. Naumann emphasised that ‘Germany can never again be isolated’, yet it abandoned its established policies for the ‘vague risk of becoming involved in a war in Africa’. The former German ambassador to the UN, Pleuger, pointed out that Germany had been in ‘good company’ and with a ‘majority behind us’ on Iraq, while now Germany was in ‘poor company’ and with ‘the majority against us’. A Spiegel Editorial considered it ‘alarming when Westerwelle proclaims Germany’s UN abstention as the birth of a new foreign policy doctrine’, because it seemed that ‘in the future, Germany wants to cherry-pick its own partners in the world’. Moreover, the paper went on, ‘the pacifist cloak doesn’t make the new unilateralism any more appealing’. It must be clear that ‘our partners are as averse to an overbearing Germany as they are to a Germany that shirks its responsibilities’. But it saved its harshest criticism: ‘This new German exceptionalism is distasteful – just listen to how Defence Minister de Maiziere or Development Minister Niebel are more or less

---

220 Brig. Gen. H.W.W. disagreed, thought that Fischer had overused the ‘never again’ argument. The then-current German government was more sceptical, judging the situation on the ground was chaotic, with no clear opposition to the Libya regime to support. ‘We were previously too optimistic in Afghanistan. ‘Responsibility to Protect’ is too difficult’ (Brig.Gen.H.W.W., 2012, interview with author, November 14). T.B. of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflected these concerns: the process of decision-making was too hasty (T.B., 2012, interview with author, November 20).

221 Spiegel Online, Cgh., March 25, 2011.

222 Spiegel Online, Cgh., March 25, 2011.

223 Spiegel Online, Cgh., March 22, 2011.
directly accusing their allies of just bombing Libya for the sake of the country’s oil. This supposed new foreign policy doctrine smacks of domestic populism’. Euro-Parliamentarian Cohn-Bendit, a veteran of the 1960s left who had also been part of the ‘realists’ over Kosovo, asked why Germany found it so difficult to ‘realize that we have to help the rebels in Libya, primarily because a bloodbath is looming in Benghazi?’ He pointed out that ‘everyone has seen pictures of the Warsaw ghetto. Everyone knows what happens when an army takes over a city. That’s why all parties in France, including on the left, were in favour of a military intervention in Libya. In Germany, that didn’t happen’. It led to heavy criticism from German allies, specifically when the German government withdrew its supporting capabilities from the Mediterranean. Conversely, it could also be argued that Germany’s autonomous course is actually evidence of normalisation.

During the Crimean Crisis in 2014, Germany was slow to respond. The response is caught between condemning the annexation by Russia of part of the Ukraine, and the view that Russia had been unduly provoked since the end of the Cold War by the Western intrusion in its former sphere of influence. Since the downing of MH17, this clash has become more intense. In personal interviews with the author in November 2012, most interviewees saw little threats on the horizon, not in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), not even in Russia. Others were more critical and lambasted German tendencies to insularity.

---

225 Former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in a contribution to Suddeutsche Zeitung (March 2011). Ironically, according to H.R., Germany is now criticised as the ‘new France’ for its recalcitrant attitude (H.R., 2012, interview with author, November 13).
226 Spiegel interview with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. In a closed NATO meeting, Rasmussen called it absurd that the Germans opted not to make their military capabilities available.
227 Normalisation is also taking an independent position from the US, like in Iraq and Libye (A.K.O., 2012, interview with author, November 15).
228 Russia was not seen as a threat, certainly not as an existential threat, by the interviewees. It was only a risk to the Baltic states (W.N., 2012, interview with author, November 12; Brig.Gen. H.W.W., 2012, interview with author, November 14; M.O., 2012, interview with author, November 15; T.B., 2012, interview with author, November 20). H.R. argued that Germany had become used to being in a very comfortable position, where the military did not play a role. Consequently, there is no sense of threats. With regards to Russia, H.R. argued, there is the tendency to view the relationship with Russia through the lens of Ostpolitik (H.R., 2012, interview with author, November 13).
229 Multiple interviewees emphasised that domestic politics have become more and more important in Germany in the 2000s. Partly this reflects a disillussionment over Iraq (W.N., 2012, interview with author, November 12; C.G., 2012, interview with author, November 20).
Legacy

What the fourth period has shown is that the invocation of genocide has, in many ways, lost some strength. The Holocaust has become a free-floating myth or a cultural icon of horror and inhumanity (Giesen 2004, p. 142). According to Kundnani, ‘around the millennium, a shift took place – the collective memory of Germans as perpetrators started to become weaker, a collective memory in which Germans are victims starts to become stronger’. Particularly strong in this narrative of victimhood, were the Allied bombings of German cities, as for example in books like the Friedrich 2002 book ‘Der Brand – The Fire’. Yet, in 2013, Angela Merkel became the first German chancellor to visit Dachau, the concentration camp that opened close to Munich in 1933. In an election rally held in a beer tent in the nearby town that gave the camp its name, Merkel lectured the attendees in a manner that left them stunned and silent. Merkel pointed out again and again that the concentration camp had been ‘in our midst’, and that ‘those who wished to could see and hear’. She imparted on the audience that ‘we never look the other way again, and refuse to listen’.  

In other ways, Germany began emulating the institutional model of its allies, by professionalizing its armed forces and abandoning conscription. The 2011 suspension marked the end of a core post-war tradition that had begun in West Germany in 1957. Whatever it accomplished in terms of democratizing the army, its recruits could hardly be used in the modern military missions abroad in the NATO and UN frameworks. It is remarkable how sudden that change was, as the 2006 white paper had still reiterated that the purpose of universal conscription is to ‘anchor the Bundeswehr in society’ (DE 2006, p. 61). Another passage on civic education of the military explicitly links this need to Germany’s experience with military authoritarianism during the first half of its existence, and how the example set in the second half has allowed the Bundeswehr to create a new, praiseworthy tradition. The Tageszeitung remarked that ‘the fact that this reform is taking place with so little fuss is also related to the typical post-war German indifference to all things military. People would prefer to have nothing to do with it. This is a peculiar kind of historical awareness, a distant echo of the horrors of

---

230 Vasagar, Jeevan, 2013, ‘Germany and its Nazi past: forever seeking closure’, The Telegraph, September 4. A newspaper account described an atmosphere of utter silence in the beer tent, with not a mug being lifted or a fork being clinked on a plate.

231 Military tradition helps soldiers to develop the image they have of themselves and of their profession. It serves to give them self-assurance, to put their actions in the greater context of history and to give them orientation for military leadership and conduct. The cultivation of traditions therefore plays a vital role for the Bundeswehr on operations. Tradition means passing on values and standards. The cultivation of traditions in the Bundeswehr focuses on the Prussian army reforms, the military resistance to the National Socialist regime, and the history of the Bundeswehr itself. The 50 successful years of the Bundeswehr have created a tradition that deserves greater attention than in the past, and military personnel duly needs to be made aware of it.’ (DE 2006, p. 59).
World War II.²³² The former chief of staff of the German armed forces, Naumann, believed that the tradition had its value. The concept of the ‘citizen in uniform’ had created in the ‘individual soldier a much higher motivation to carry out their mission, their duty, because they feel a connection to those who protect their rights although they are also required to give them orders’. However, General Naumann considered it problematic that the German armed forces were not considered a recognised and respected and highly-regarded instrument. He argued ‘that is a consequence of the unfortunate and mainly self-inflicted history of Germany in the 20th century. That’s why we still have not found a sensible and healthy relationship to military power, to the exercise of military force. For far too long we have restricted ourselves to the idea that German armed forces exist solely to defend the country’s borders during the Cold War’.²³³ There is still a mistrust of those in uniform. In other countries, a certain prestige is attached to being a member of the armed forces. In the Prussian era that was the case in Germany, but now not any longer.²³⁴ The current armed forces do not draw from the same class as the political elite. Considering the erstwhile unease with the armed forces among the left in particular, it is fair to say that there no longer is a fear of the armed forces in contemporary German politics, but rather a ‘friendly disinterest’ as coined by President Köhler.²³⁵ Despite a decade of warfighting in Afghanistan, it remains difficult for the German public to express support for German soldiers, though yellow ribbons to mark solidarity were introduced in 2007 by a member of the public.²³⁶ Rather than commemorate military veterans on their own day, they are commemorated on Volkstrauertag, the national day of mourning for all victims who died in war and through violent oppression, soldiers and civilians alike. German policymakers and public indeed have trouble conceiving of force as ‘another’ instrument of politics.²³⁷ For

²³² Die Tageszeitung, January 4, 2011.
²³⁴ A.J. reported a real sense that the contribution of the German military was underappreciated. Moreover, he noted, this increases the problem of thinking in terms of force (A.J., 2012, interview with author, November 12). Similar sentiments were expressed by J.E. (J.E., 2012, interview with author, November 16).
²³⁷ Demmer, Ulrike and Christoph Schult, 2012, ‘Unreliable partners? Germany’s Reputation in NATO Has Hit Rock Bottom’, Spiegel Online, May 17. Also, N.W. underlines that German forces should not be used as an instrument of policy, but only to prevent war, never for own interests. The future is the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (W.N., 2012, interview with author, November 12). A.J. notes that Germany is not ready for the use of force as a normal instrument, and it is ironic that the country which produced Clausewitz is least able to think in his terms. In fact, at the academy there is only week where Clausewitz is discussed, the emphasis is on tactics (A.J., 2012, interview with author, November 12). T.B. of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs made the same point on Clausewitz (T.B., 2012, interview with author, November 20).
example, in 2010, President Köhler resigned after he suggested that Germany had deployed forces to Afghanistan for the NATO mission also out of economic interests.238

The legacy that remains of the Second World War in Germany is complex, and less central to the political stage than it has been at different points in time. However, the lack of martial experience, the absence of domestic actors to champion a more assertive role, and no real threats, have left Germany with a strong, inward-looking focus.239 Integration into international organisations for the sake of integration may summarise Germany’s current approach.240 The difficulties within Germany to generate a response to the Crimean Crisis, some considering it the inevitable and just response to Western/American provocation, demonstrates how post-war German traditions have limited its foreign and defence policies. At the same time, there is a push by the Foreign and Defence minister to expand Germany engagement though European institutions, including a possibly European army.241

---


239 It was certainly perceived as such by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (M.W., 2012, interview with author, November 20). T.B. emphasised that perception of security differed from allies. The German consensus was that it is a complex world, where it is better not to meddle (T.B., 2012, interview with author, November 20).


Conclusion

What this chapter has shown is that throughout the decades that followed the Second World War, policymakers in the US, UK, France, and Germany in their thinking and in their rhetoric repeatedly reverted back to their national experiences with the war. In many ways, subsequent generations of policymakers arguably even became more likely to reference the past as the decades went on, and the events became less personal to the majority of policymakers and public. All four cases show that the narratives of the Second World War were challenged at various moments by contradicting experiences, yet they also were continually reinvented and commemorated. American and British policymakers in particular, but also their French counterparts, remained likely to refer to Munich to justify assertive policies against authoritarian states.

The repeated invocations of the Second World War were, however, more nationally specific than Munich. The spectre of isolationism during the interwar years continues to be raised in American debates on policy to make the case that contemporary activist policies are required. Later contradictory experiences with conflicts clashed with the victorious narrative, and specifically Vietnam undermined that sense of moral rightness. Yet, the end of the Cold War seemed to underline that the US had succeeded in a struggle against another authoritarian ideology and triumphed. Leadership by the US was presented again as essential for global stability. The victory of the Second World War established a fairly autonomous executive, with even more legitimate armed forces, often in opposition to a divided society. The recurrence of triumphalist rhetoric that oversells solutions and threats therefore makes sense as the means to overcome domestic resistance to costly internationalist policies.

German policymakers, in contrast to their American counterparts, were struggling to match the ‘never again’ of isolation and the use of force abroad to the demands made upon Germany by allies to contribute its armed forces. Similarly, the legacy of the armed forces acting as a state within the state impeded decisive decision-making. Instead, German post-war history – European integration, the economic prosperity of the Wirtschaftswunder, Ostpolitik, and the peaceful reunification with the FDR - seemed to validate that force was an ineffective means to accomplish German security and prosperity.

For British policymakers, Suez undermined their own sense of a particularly British moral rightness, which the Falklands restored, and a particular internationalist sense of responsibilities and commitments abroad that include the possible use of force. What Suez had previously enforced, however, was the need for the UK to depend on close relations with the US rather than with poorer, European alternatives. The Falklands War also restored the sense of a powerful, unifying leader. The legacies of the wars also played out domestically in the UK through the struggles between conservative and social-democratic forces. In turn, those struggles were exemplified in the disdain for
nuclear weapons, that reinforced the British reticence towards depending on the nuclear deterrent.

The catastrophe of 1940 continued to haunt the decisions of French policymakers, whether concerning the adaptation to new military technologies, the internal divisions that had hampered that adaptation, or the loss of sovereignty due to France’s abandonment by its allies. Subsequent experiences in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria reinforced those French perceptions of their Anglo-American allies as basically untrustworthy. The nuclear weapon became the means to prevent the re-emergence of the dependency that France experienced during the war and its aftermath, that was exemplified by Yalta, and remembered by subsequent generations of French policymakers. The French experience with an internally divided polity in the interwar years was reinforced by the failures in Suez and Algeria, and this paved the way to an exceptionally strong executive who has remained largely unchallenged during the five decades that followed the establishment of the Fifth Republic.

This chapter, though only able to touch briefly upon what are complex and nuanced national histories, has illustrated through a series of policy documents, speeches, and interviews that the Second World War was invoked and reused in changing circumstances to articulate and defend consistent and nationally specific sets of policies. When seen in combination with the findings from the previous four chapters, this chapter offers an insight into how the core and peripheral strategic beliefs offer the binding tissue that links together the various complex components of strategy. It further clarifies why American policymakers chose costly strategies that risked entanglement; why French policymakers risked abandonment over renewed dependence; why British policymakers accepted dependence on the US but not Europe; and why German policymakers hesitated in ‘normalising’ foreign policy after reunification. This chapter also shows that specific domestic constellations of state, society, and the armed forces constrained or strengthened the position of policymakers to pursue beliefs. Taken together, it ties in the findings and insights of the previous chapters, and further makes the case for experience-driven realism.
Chapter Nine
The Future Past
This book has made the case that national experiences with victory and defeat in war strongly shape post-war grand strategies, and that they do so in two major ways. First, experiences with total war shape the core and peripheral strategic beliefs of civilian and military policymakers – the state and the armed forces. Core beliefs pertain to the core elements of grand strategy: whether the nation-state exists in a balance of power or a balance of threat world; the efficacy of alliance formation (i.e. external balancing); and the efficacy of the force posture (i.e. internal balancing). Peripheral beliefs pertain to credibility, accommodation, sovereignty, national values, and exceptionalism. Total war is particularly likely to shape core beliefs, because it shows whether abstract, grand strategic principles on external and internal balancing are likely to work. Appraisal of the efficacy of balancing behaviour is generally difficult because tests are rare and inconclusive without the outcome of war. Victory and defeat deliver a judgment on the quality of our understanding of the world and how we survive, and possible thrive, in it.

Second, experiences also shape the relations between state, society, and the armed forces. Victory will legitimize actors, particularly the executive and the armed forces, while defeat will delegitimize actors, particularly after defeat in total war, under the conditions in which no option to divert blame at home exists. Total wars involve state, society, and the armed forces, and are likely to affect all of them. Non-total wars are likely to only affect peripheral beliefs and parts of the domestic relations, by reinforcing or undermining existing core strategic beliefs. The combined argument of this book that wars shape beliefs and domestic relations is termed experience-driven realism.

Together, core and peripheral beliefs shape the likelihood and willingness of states to use force and diplomacy. They first shape external and internal balancing behaviour, which creates the conditions that make certain policies appear to be more or less feasible. They then shape the expectations on the nature of adversaries, the importance of credibility, and other peripheral beliefs. The peripheral beliefs generally reinforce the core beliefs. Core beliefs are primarily shaped by total war, which means that they rarely get updated in spite of changes in the international environment. Other conflicts and crises can, however, shape peripheral beliefs and legitimise or delegitimise certain actors. The combination of core and peripheral beliefs on the one hand, and domestic relations between state, society, and the armed forces on the other, creates relatively unique and enduring grand strategies that are resistant to change unless radical systemic shifts in power and threat take place or the states experience a new total war. Should such radical systemic shifts take place, both developments are likely to coincide, as states rarely adapt appropriately to shifts in power and threats, and thereby create the conditions that make total war a more probable outcome.

This book demonstrates how victory and defeat shape post-war beliefs and Trinitarian relations through a study of the participants of the Second World War, with a specific focus on the US, UK, France, and Germany. It shows not only that victory and defeat shape post-war use of diplomacy and force, but also how and why the experiences with
war have such effects. It therefore not only addresses the preoccupations of researchers who work on patterns of war and peace, but also to those who study decision-making in foreign policy, and the origins of grand strategy. Crucially, it offers an ideational argument that incorporates the preferences of actors, as well as the institutions within which actors operate, to explain how states respond to the international environment.

This relationship is inherently difficult to uncover, as the interaction between beliefs and structure in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany discussed in the book has shown. The past forms the minds that shape the present, and in doing so, it shapes the future. Outcomes seem inevitable, something that certainly applies to the origins of the transatlantic relationship. The two catastrophic wars in the first half of the twentieth century ended European dominance in the international system. As the conventional argument goes (Trachtenberg 1999; Gaddis 2005), in their newly weakened state and faced with external threats, the European states were forced to abandon their pretensions at global power and instead accept American leadership. Yet, change in the structure of the post-war international environment was also reinforced and amplified by the change in the strategic beliefs on both sides of the Atlantic. That combination of beliefs and structure established an American global order, one that differed from the European order of the preceding centuries, but in several crucial aspects was largely the same. Pax Americana upheld the same liberal democratic values and ideas of statehood, and allowed the European states to prosper and benefit from increased security. In fact, in most ways, Europeans arguably enjoyed security to a greater degree during American hegemony than at any other time in modern history. The outcome of the war, the structural conditions of the Cold War, and US leadership enabled the Europeans to be secure from each other. The Europeans largely stopped balancing each other, or at least became less dependent on their military capabilities to do so. The US was able to pursue its ambitions because nearly all European powers withheld active resistance to American power. It must be understood is that the stability that this combination of beliefs and structure provided is no longer guaranteed in the contemporary era. Both the US and Europe are now entering a new period where, for the first time in three centuries, the order will not be for all intents and purposes exclusively shaped by Western powers.

Strategic beliefs can be dangerous, because they shape the matching of the ends and means of strategy. The consequences of miscalculation at the highest level of statecraft place the survival of the nation at stake. It is both dangerous to overreact to threats and to changes in the distribution of power, as it is to underreact to them. Yet, while grand strategic choices are inherently high impact, it is difficult to assess the international environment, as unambiguous existential threats are comparatively rare and the long-term consequences of decisions are not immediately apparent. In order to interpret ambiguous and contradictory signals from the environment, the past is deceptively clear and seemingly instructive. Choices are perceived as transparently correct if they succeed, and transparently incorrect if they fail. The roads not taken – the ‘could have, would

359
have’ – are dismissed. For those reasons, the argument and the findings of this book matter.

**Findings and contribution**

**Three sets of claims**

The analysis of this book is built around three sets of claims that together offer the fundamentals for experience-driven realism. The first set of claims are a basic version of the central argument that victory and defeat shape post-war beliefs and behaviour, while the second and third set of claims are the sophisticated version of the argument. This book assesses these three sets of claims with a combination of quantitative analysis and case studies. Chapter three correlates the experiences of victorious and defeated states in the Second World War to their post-war propensity to use force and diplomacy; chapters four and five show how the war shaped the strategic beliefs and relations between state, society, and armed forces in the US, the UK, France, and Germany; chapter six discusses, through counterfactuals, that alternative grand strategies were available to policymakers and were often more plausible than the grand strategies actually pursued; and chapters seven and eight illustrate how consistent the policy debates were in official papers, speeches, and interviews, and how policymakers defended their policies through the use of historical analogies.

The three sets of claims that the chapters tested and explored are as follows.

**First set of claims: Victory and defeat, force and diplomacy**

The first set of claims consists of three components that refer to the relationship between victory and defeat and: (a) the use of force; (b) the use of diplomacy; and (c) the relationship between them.

**Force**

States that are victorious in war become more willing to use force afterwards, and a large victory in a total war is more important than a smaller defeat in a limited war. The experience of victory will change core beliefs of policymakers (see also the second set of claims) with regards to the use of force. States that were victorious are prone to pursue internal balancing and build military capabilities. Victorious states are also likely to hold peripheral beliefs, for example, on credibility and shows of strength. Victory is also more likely to increase the autonomy of the executive and the armed forces (see the third set
of claims). These three effects will interact and increase the momentum towards the use of force or threats of force by policymakers. Defeat, in contrast, will show an opposite effect, as the perceived effectiveness of internal balancing is low, escalation is feared, and the executive and the armed forces are more constrained.

In the regression analysis of chapter three, the belligerent states in the Second World War vary according to whether they had been occupied, had surrendered, been aggressors, or had fought on the losing side, and the number of civilian and military casualties they suffered. The results show that the states that were victorious in the Second World War were indeed significantly more likely to use or threaten to use force in the post-war decades, even after controlling for their material capabilities, regime types, and alignment. Conversely, states that experienced occupation, surrender, had aggressed, fought on the losing side, and had suffered high numbers of casualties, were significantly less likely to use force or threaten the use of force.

Chapters four and five show how the core beliefs of American and British policymakers were changed by the war (see also the third set of claims). Both adopted force postures around a forward continental presence and interventionary capabilities. Chapters seven and eight in turn show that American and British policymakers had greater autonomy to use force and used references to the past, such as Munich, to defend forceful policies in, a.o. Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and Iraq. They expressed consistent sets of beliefs in speeches, interviews, and policy documents over the post-war period up until the present.

In contrast, the core beliefs of German policymakers and the public at large drastically changed due to the war (see also the third set of claims), and chapter four shows how Germany maintained a limited and defensive force posture. The autonomy of the German executive to use force has become highly constrained, as well as the autonomy of the armed forces. The combination of beliefs and their reduced autonomy reinforced the German reticence to use force, and, as chapters seven and eight show, they were reproduced in speeches, interviews, and policy documents with references to Germany’s experiences with authoritarianism and defeat.

Chapter three also shows that France is a partial exception when we consider it a state that met defeat in 1940. It would be expected to be restrained in the use of force. However, the particular manner in which France was defeated led to a focus on internal balancing, autonomy, and executive autonomy post-war (see the second set of claims).
States that have been defeated in war become more willing to engage in multilateral diplomacy. The experience of defeat will change the core strategic beliefs of policymakers (see also the second set of claims) with regards to the use of diplomacy. States that have been defeated are more prone to pursue external balancing and form alliances to ensure their security. Policymakers are more likely to have the peripheral belief that sacrificing sovereignty and autonomy is worth it to achieve greater security. Defeat is also likely to decrease the autonomy of the executive to use force and the armed forces (see also the third set of claims), and bring into power alternative elites that prefer non-military solutions. These three effects will interact and increase the momentum that states will acquiesce to multilateral diplomacy. Victory, in contrast, will show an opposite effect, as the perceived effectiveness of external balancing is less apparent, and policymakers tend to believe in the exceptional nature of their states and refuse constraints on national sovereignty.

Chapter three shows that states that had faced defeat in the Second World War were significantly more likely to use diplomacy and be a member of international organisations, even when controlling for material capabilities, regime type, and alignment. In contrast, states that were victorious were less likely to depend on diplomacy and international organisations.

Germany has been a strong supporter of multilateral solutions, and concretely of the UN, NATO, and EU. German policymakers depended on multilateralism as the means for Germany to re-legitimise itself in Europe, as chapter four, seven, and eight show. In contrast, American and British policymakers consider multilateralism constraining, and prefer more flexible solutions. France is a strong supporter of multilateral international organisations, but seeks autonomy rather than collective defence when it comes to NATO.

Chapters seven and eight illustrate that American, British, French, and German policymakers were consistent in pursuing these beliefs towards alliances and international cooperation, whether expressed in their policy papers, speeches, and interviews, or in policies and crises. American policymakers refer to American leadership during the Second World War and the Cold War, and a lack of leadership during the interwar years. German policymakers refer to Germany’s responsibility to history to support European integration, NATO, and other multilateral frameworks that ensure the peace in Europe. British policymakers refer to a special British responsibility to global international peace and security. French policymakers refer to Europe’s history of warfare, especially between France and Germany, to underline the need for European integration, and French-German bilateral relations.
Force and diplomacy

Victories in war lead to the combination of a higher willingness to use force and a lower willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy, while conversely defeats in war lead to the combination of a lower willingness to use force and a higher willingness to engage in multilateral diplomacy. This part of the claims is distinct from the first two as it argues that policymakers can treat the use of diplomacy as a substitute for the use of force, and vice versa.

The results of the regression analysis in chapter three underline that the combination of the high use of force and low use of diplomacy are significantly correlated with victory, while the combination of the high use of diplomacy and low use of force are significantly correlated with defeat, regardless of control for material capabilities, regime, or alignment (see table 3).

The states that experience total victory or total defeat are likely to be more unbalanced in their grand strategy. Victorious states tend to overbalance threats and power, specifically through internal balancing, but have greater difficulty acquiescing to the surrender of sovereignty needed to maintain their alliances. Defeated states tend to underbalance threats and power, by specifically depending on external balancing, but having difficulty substantiating their alliances through contributions of military forces.

The US and Germany are the clearest examples, respectively, of totally victorious and totally defeated states. American strategy has emphasised force to the detriment of diplomacy. For example, the Munich analogy is not only used by American policymakers to stress the importance of credible diplomacy backed by force, but the appeasement analogy is also used in domestic debates that pertain to the question of whether to negotiate with adversaries, which undermines the value of the give-and-take of diplomacy. In the post-war evaluation, the failure in Vietnam was partially explained by the political and diplomatic constraints placed on the US military (see the third set of claims, and chapters seven and eight). Consequently, the autonomy of the Pentagon has generally been increased, often at the cost of the Department of State. The consequences thereof were particularly clear in the Gulf War and the Iraq war. In contrast, in Germany the belief that military force is inherently uncontrollable predominates and has made Germany policymakers and the public reticent to use force as anything except a last resort, and only for defensive ends (see the third set of claims, and chapters seven and eight). Similarly, in comparison to the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Ministry of Defence and the armed forces are less able to influence civilian policymakers, and are even institutionally constrained (in the case of the military) to do so. Experiences of other states – Vietnam and Iraq specifically – and Germany’s own experiences with Ostpolitik, European unification, and the French-German bilateral relationship have strengthened the German conviction that Germany is better off when
it has not depended on force, and instead relied on diplomacy, multilateral institutions, and other tools of statecraft.

The UK and France are both more complex in their choices for force and diplomacy, and these choices reflect their more ambiguous experiences. French strategy integrates diplomacy and force in a more balanced and cohesive manner because it was a failure of both alliances and military capabilities – and by implication, the military and the diplomats – and a lack of political leadership, that led to the disaster of 1940. That year is consistently referenced, as chapters seven and eight show, to make the point for strategic adaptation and internal cohesion. In the UK, similarly to the US, Munich was seen as a failure of diplomacy as much as of political leadership. The British debates showed a similar greater autonomy for the armed forces and criticism for the diplomacy of the Foreign Office. The Falklands war reinforced the tendency to preference force over diplomacy and trust the military over the Foreign Office, and it seems that the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts did as well (see the third set of claims, and chapters seven and eight).

Contribution of the first set of claims

The results found for the first set of claims make several substantial contributions to the existing literature on the legacies of war. The first result that defeat significantly decreases the likelihood of using force or threatening force, while victory increases it, substantiates a core argument in a long-lasting debate within the international relations literature on the costs of war and post-war behaviour, and therefore represents a major contribution to the war-weariness literature (such as Singer and Small 1974; Levy 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986; Garnham 1986; Nevin 1996). The increased variation within the variable of war outcome allows a serious test of the thesis, because it enables differentiation between victors such as the US and UK, and ‘victors’ such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The results underline that the costs of war should not only be understood as military casualties, but must include the possibility of civilian casualties. Moreover, the outcome of a war that has taken place far from national territory should not be equated to the outcome of a war where enemy forces occupied parts of or the entire country, nor should a military defeat be equated to a forced surrender. That such differentiation matters is not only important for arguments on war-weariness, but it also better integrates the sociological literature on collective memory (such as Ashplant, Dawson et al. 2000; McMahon 2002; Müller 2002; Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006; Winter 2006; Riera and Schaffer 2008; Echternkamp and Martens 2010; Wiewiorka 2010; Kier and Krebs 2010), and the literature on decision-making under uncertainty (such as May 1973; Jervis 1976; Khong 1992; Levy 1994; Heuser and Buffet in Buffet and Heuser 1998; Record 2007), with the large-N research of both conflict and war and peace studies.
The result that victory and defeat affect the likelihood of support for multilateral diplomacy is another contribution to the war-weariness literature, because it demonstrates that the costs of war also impact the other tools of statecraft as policymakers seek alternative means to ensure national interests. The results specifically contribute to the literature on what seems the uniquely European turn towards multilateralism based on their experiences in the first half of the twentieth century (such as Calleo 2002; Sheehan 2008). The effect of war outcomes on combinations of force and diplomacy, shows that victory and defeat result in very different strategic profiles. These findings thereby also add to the literature on the origins of grand strategy, upon which the second and third sets of claims further expand.

Second set of claims: Strategic beliefs and balancing behaviour

The second set of claims brings together the general patterns identified in claims one to three, but emphasise the consequences of specific national experiences on the nation state’s perception of the international environment and the choices of internal and external balancing behaviour. One of these claims is that specific qualities of past wars, such as the nature of the adversary or threats confronted, the type of conflict, the level of military readiness, the innovation of military technology, and the type of warfare and weapons used, alter the way victory or defeat plays out in specific post-war preferences towards the force posture. The other claim is that success and failure of pre-war and wartime alliances and post-war settlements alter the way victory or defeat plays out in specific post-war preferences towards alliances and multilateral diplomacy.

Together, the success or failure of pre-war and wartime choices affect the core and peripheral beliefs of policymakers. The core beliefs have to do with whether policymakers believe they live in a balance of threat or a balance of power world, and which combinations of alliances and force postures that are perceived as the most effective for each circumstance. These beliefs shape the quality, direction, and cohesion of the nation-state’s internal and external balancing strategies, and the coherence between both.

The United States

The sudden collapse of Europe in 1940 and the surprise attack of Pearl Harbor in 1941 left American policymakers with a sense of vulnerability and of permanent insecurity. Maintaining a far-off balance of power no longer sufficed to maintain American security. The European collapse had shown that a European or Asian power could feasibly conquer the Eurasian continent. Pearl Harbor suggested that American geography no longer guaranteed territorial security, certainly in the age of advancing technology –
long-range bombers, intercontinental missiles, and nuclear weapons. This meant that in the future, American security had to begin far from its borders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(pre)WWII</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Post WWII</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>Sudden collapse continent, vulnerability</td>
<td>Power (= threats)</td>
<td>Overbalancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Sudden collapse continent, vulnerability</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>Over- and under-balancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>Abandonment, occupation, dependence</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Over- and under-balancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Power = threats</td>
<td>Catastrophic destruction</td>
<td>Limited threat (mainly Cold War)</td>
<td>Under-balancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21. Experience in Second World War. Balance of power or threat

That sense of vulnerability caused American policymakers to believe that the US had to maintain a global balance of power against a range of threats that were global in nature and interconnected. They believed the world outside of the US was prone to fall to extremist ideology, and consisted of states that were authoritarian states, or were unwilling or unable to resist authoritarian states. This applied to the Europeans as well, who had proven themselves unable to stem the fascist movements in Europe or had even been part of them, and could therefore not be trusted to resist the communist movements. The policy elites believed they had to avoid a return to isolationism at all costs, and this presented a departure from the previous US strategy of off-shore balancing. The US had to show leadership and it had to maintain a military presence in Europe and Asia in order to prevent challengers from asserting regional hegemony. The American force posture accomplished this through a forward presence in key regions, and interventionary capabilities for potential regional challengers or sources of instability. Consequently, US grand strategy in the Cold War and post-Cold War period consisted of both global external and internal balancing (see tables 22 and 23). The resulting US grand strategy can be termed as one of overbalancing, whereby the US
sustains costs (financial and human) and risks (entanglement) that outweigh the threats (see table 21).

Chapters four, seven, and eight show that US policymakers came to hold these core beliefs, and applied them throughout the subsequent decades. These beliefs guided decisions on both not passing nuclear weapons to the Europeans in the early stages of the Cold War and maintaining a presence in Europe after the Cold War ended. They informed decisions on upsets in regional balances of power – in Korea and Vietnam – where US national interests were arguably marginal. Finally, the correctness of the beliefs were reinforced by the outcome of the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War. Defeats, such as in Vietnam, undermined these beliefs, but only to a limited degree, because blame for them could be passed on to domestic groups, specifically the political left, for supposedly not supporting American forces sufficiently (see the third set of claims).

**The United Kingdom**

The failure of British policymakers to prevent the fall of Europe to Germany in 1940 demonstrated to them that maintaining a continental balance of power no longer sufficed to maintain British security. The Fall of France, in particular, had shown how quickly the continent could fall, and demonstrated the defeatist attitudes of the continental powers. It also spelled the end of traditional British territorial security, in the age of flight and nuclear weapons. The failure of interwar strategic bombing doctrines to prevent or win the war, and the British psychological experience of being the target of such a doctrine during the Blitz, undermined post-war confidence in deterrence through nuclear weapons. Offshore balancing, or buck-passing to continental powers, were not only poor strategies, but even immensely dangerous to the UK (see table 22).

During the Cold War, the UK committed itself to the continent, through the NATO alliance and by placing permanently prepositioned forces in Europe. British policymakers did so, while still considering the UK as exceptional to the continent due to its unconquered status and because it ‘stood alone’ against a fascist continent from June 1940 until December 1941 when the US entered the war. The alliance with the US demonstrated to British policymakers that, while the UK could no longer act as the imperial power it once was, it could depend on and profit from its ‘special relationship’ with the US. Instead of a new attempt at a limited liability strategy based on nuclear weapons, during the Cold War, British policymakers maintained a forward presence on the continent and interventionary capabilities (see table 23). The resulting British grand strategy can be termed one of overbalancing threats, while underbalancing the power of
the US. As a result, the UK overextended its forces beyond its financial resources and risked entanglement in American policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(pre)WWII Alliances</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Post WWII Alliances</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Buck-passing / isolation</td>
<td>Collapse continent, hegemon Eurasia</td>
<td>Alliance, leadership</td>
<td>Leadership, global presence, NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Buck-passing / uneven alliances</td>
<td>Collapse European allies, isolation</td>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>NATO, bilateral relation US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>EUR, bilateral relation DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Two-front war, catastrophic defeat</td>
<td>Alliance, supporter</td>
<td>Multilateralism, NATO, EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22. Experience in Second World War. External balancing strategy

Chapters five, seven, and eight show that British policymakers came to hold these core beliefs and applied them throughout the subsequent decades. Policymakers applied them - and referenced Munich - in Suez, the Falklands, the Balkans, Iraq, and the Ukrainian crisis. Suez reinforced the British dependence on the US, while the Falklands reinforced the sense of British exceptionalism and sense of a particular responsibility to the international order.
France

France suffered a sudden and catastrophic defeat in June 1940. The Fall of France was a humiliating blow to one of the traditional European military powers. It was an utter failure of pre-war external and internal balancing strategies. Alliances had failed as the UK abandoned France and retreated back to the British Isles. Its force posture had failed, as French policymakers had not adapted to the changes in military technology and prepared for armoured warfare. For the restoration of its territory France depended on allies who, in Yalta, settled a post-war European order without it. Simply balancing threats no longer sufficed to safeguard France; in the future it had to avoid becoming again the victim of an uneven distribution of power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(pre)WWII posture</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Post WWII posture</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Multitheatre war, weight of numbers</td>
<td>Offensive</td>
<td>Global military presence, high technological edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Deterrent</td>
<td>No continental defence, failure strategic bombing</td>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>Permanent continental commitments, no preference for deterrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>No innovation and integration</td>
<td>Deterrent</td>
<td>Centrality nuclear weapons, national decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Offensive</td>
<td>Overdependence force, catastrophic loss despite tactical successes</td>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>Only collective defence, strict conditions on use of force, democratization of soldiers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Experience in Second World War. Internal balancing strategy

After the war, French policymakers sought to avoid dependence on others at all costs. Wartime experiences had cast doubts on the reliability and value of France’s Anglo-American allies. The outcomes of Indochina, Suez, and Algeria further affirmed that the US would not assist France, and that Britain, when pressured, would choose its American ally. French policymakers consequently perceived the NATO alliance as merely entangling France without actually securing it, since the American nuclear
deterrent could not offer credible protection (see tables 22 and 23). They therefore pursued an autonomous and high intensity force posture, as well as an autonomous French deterrent, to prevent another Munich, or another June 1940, or another Yalta. Finally, they pursued greater European integration to contain the threat of Germany and to decrease the dependence upon the US to provide for European security. The resulting French grand strategy can be considered one of overbalancing the US and underbalancing threats, as it risked alienating the US and undermining the protection that the US- led Atlantic alliance provided for France (see table 21).

Chapters five, seven, and eight show that French policymakers came to hold these core beliefs, and applied them throughout the subsequent decades. For them, 1940 remained a powerful signpost of internal divisions and the lack of military preparedness, and Yalta a symbol of further humiliation and impotence. They carried over into the post-Cold War period as French policymakers continued to prioritise autonomy over other interests, which were reinforced by their experiences in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria.

**Germany**

Germany offers the greatest contrast between its pre- and post-war strategies. In both the First and the Second World War, German policymakers had built German strategy on an extremely offensive force posture to ensure German survival against encirclement by threats to its East and its West. Its geographic position also ensured that Germany had difficulties gaining dependable allies, its power being too great and not great enough to prevent others from counterbalancing it. The extreme sense of insecurity also led policymakers to eliminate perceived domestic threats, which ended in persecution and genocide.

Germany’s total defeat reversed those beliefs, due the massive numbers of both German civilian and military casualties it itself suffered, and the occupation of Germany itself. These losses underlined the immorality of the Nazi regime’s wartime actions inside and outside of Germany. In the future, force should be considered the last recourse, to be used defensively, and no longer as an instrument of policy. Germany moved from overdependence to underdependence on force (see table 23). Even deterrence was problematic, with its latent threat of escalation. To avoid renewed isolation, German policymakers embedded Germany as deeply as possible in NATO and the European institutions (see table 22). Both reversals dealt with the traditional problem of encirclement. The resulting German grand strategy can be considered one of underbalancing threats and the uneven distributions of power (see table 21). Germany underbalances because it unevenly supports the alliances upon which it depends, and because it has not built up insurance against US or Europe.

Chapters four, seven, and eight show that German policymakers came to hold these core beliefs, and applied them throughout the subsequent decades. The war remained a
powerful symbol of all that had gone wrong in Germany’s past, and post-war policies were a conscious break with that past. The experiences of its allies in Vietnam and Iraq further entrenched German beliefs concerning the failures of force, while Germany’s own experiences with Ostpolitik, European unification, and the French-German bilateral relationship strengthened German faith in multilateral solutions. Only the use of force to stop genocide in the Balkans managed to attain enough support within Germany, as policymakers perceived a moral responsibility to act.

**Third set of claims: Trinitarian relations**

The third set of claims is that the specific wartime experiences affect the beliefs, legitimacy, and influence of state (civilian-political policymakers), the armed forces (military policymakers), and its society (civilians). The relations between state, society, and the armed forces define which strategic beliefs and institutional perspectives can shape grand strategy. Victory is likely to strengthen the institutional influence and legitimacy of civilian and military policymakers, while defeat is likely to weaken them. The greater the autonomy of the state and the armed forces, the more likely it is that the nation-state can pursue activist external and internal balancing strategies. The more constrained their autonomy, the less they can pursue activist balancing strategies. Particularly defeat changes the combinations of influence and legitimacy, as specific domestic actors are likely to be assigned blame for the failure. Should civilian policymakers be blamed, this can undermine external balancing strategies and other forms of diplomacy. Should the military be blamed, this can undermine internal balancing strategies and the integration of force into grand strategy as a whole. Domestic Trinitarian relations consequently shape the speed, intensity, and cohesion of national grand strategy. Chapters four, five, seven, and eight show how domestic relations in the US, the UK, France, and Germany were each shaped by the Second World War and how they defined the parameters of their subsequent grand strategies. The results not only substantiate the second set of claims, but further validate the conclusions of the first set of claims. Figure 40 illustrates how certain maximalist, limited, and minimalist strategies are more likely given certain domestic Trinitarian relationships. The direction of grand strategy is shaped by the lessons of past wars, though it is the distribution of power and threats that creates the need for strategy. However, the intensity of strategy depends upon the relationship between civilian policymakers and society; the coherence depends on the relationship between the civilian policymakers and military leaders; and the speed of strategic adaptation depends on the cohesion among the civilian leadership (drawing from the ideas of Schweller 2006).
**The United States**

The US victory in the Second World War came at relatively low costs as US policymakers did not need to make a great effort at mobilisation for the war effort, nor did the US suffer significant civilian casualties, or, in relative terms, high military casualties. While the war strengthened the legitimacy and institutional influence of the executive and the US military, it did not build a societal consensus to sustain the costs of war or international activism. Vietnam undermined the legitimacy of the state, and underlined that the US could only function with a volunteer military which placed few demands on society. The post-Vietnam victim narrative surrounding the armed forces de facto strengthened the military’s autonomy. This made the decisive uses of force more available. The Gulf War re-legitimised the executive and armed forces, but the legitimacy of the executive was again undermined by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Consequently, while the core beliefs of the US remain in place the consensus to sustain strategy is uneven and depends on mythmaking and shows of strength.

**The United Kingdom**

The UK’s victory in the Second World War, in contrast to that of the US, came at a much greater cost. The British executive was empowered, but in different ways. The Conservatives were associated both with the failures of the interwar period, as with the successful leadership of Churchill, while Labour was credited with running the war at home. The war made heavy extraction and mobilisation demands on British society, but also created the popular myth of the ‘people’s war’. A strong institutional, post-war role for a society traumatised by attacks from the air constrained the strategic role that the deterrent could play. However, in the Falklands, Churchillian myths enabled the return of a populist consensus that sustained an exceptionalist attitude towards the European continent and reinvigorated the sense of a particular British moral responsibility beyond the continent. That exceptionalism was on display in the Balkans and in Iraq. The failures in the latter undermined the autonomy of the executive, but it did not seem to affect the strong legitimacy of the armed forces. Together, this has led to an uneven British strategy that depends on mythmaking.

**France**

The humiliating French defeat in the Second World War was blamed on pre-war divisions between the political left and right that had impeded effective military innovation and integration with French alliance strategy. It was only the founding of the Fifth Republic and the return to power of De Gaulle that resolved the political tensions of post-war France. The post-war consensus that took hold established the French President as the legitimate sole custodian of his ‘reserved domain’ of foreign and defence policy. The armed forces had been politicised in the interwar period, during the war, and through their experiences in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria. De Gaulle re-established
control over the army, partly through his control over the nuclear deterrent. By removing strategic matters from public debate, in effect, executive powers were further solidified and so far no real challenges have emerged to Presidential power. Executive autonomy has allowed the French state to use force and diplomacy decisively and coherently.

Figure 40. Trinitarian relations and likely balancing behaviour

Germany

The total German defeat of the Second World War delegitimised the pre-war, traditional dominance of the German military and the executive. In post-war Germany, both the executive and the armed forces are therefore highly constrained within the national security institutions. This ensures greater transparency and accountability, but impedes decisive and cohesive action, especially when it comes to the use of force.
Counterfactuals

Beliefs matter and were decisive in shaping the choices of American, British, French, and German policymakers, and the choices they made during and after the Cold War were not a given. As chapter six shows, alternative strategies were available to the policymakers of the four states that were equally, or often more, plausible than the strategies they actually pursued. The actual grand strategies in certain cases carried greater risks than the counterfactual strategies.

The United States

During and after the Cold War the US could have chosen a more minimalist grand strategy, whether offshore balancing or isolationism. Such a strategy might have implied sharing nuclear weapons with the Europeans or offering them financial support to build their own military capabilities, which meant that the US would have continued its role as the ‘arsenal of democracy’. Instead, American policymakers accepted the risks of entanglement in an escalation of the Cold War in Europe, and the eventual overextension and overspending on defence. The risks and costs were considerable and it is doubtful that they would have taken them on if the sense of vulnerability, the lack of trust in a multipolar balance of power, and the lack of faith in the Europeans to defend themselves from Soviet domination had not been so prominent. That sense of insecurity remained strong enough to lead American policymakers in the post-Cold War era to maintain their maximalist grand strategy and actively pursue leadership of the global order.

The United Kingdom

Similarly, the UK could have chosen a more minimalist grand strategy during and after the Cold War. British policymakers could have continued to behave as an offshore balancer, which they could have achieved by bringing their pre-war strategic bombing doctrine to its logical culmination with the advent of nuclear weapons. Instead, they entangled the UK in a collective defence arrangement with the continent that tied British security to the future stability of the continent. Yet, British policymakers still avoided the immersion of the UK into European integration. This made the UK dependent on the US and entangled them in American policy, but, simultaneously, it would not be able to assert British dominance within Europe. The risks and costs were considerable, and it is doubtful whether policymakers would have chosen this strategy without a sense of difference from the continent and a lack of faith in European allies to prevent Soviet domination. These tendencies were strong enough for British policymakers to keep the UK apart from Europe and entangled in US policies after the Cold War.
France

France could have chosen a more maximalist grand strategy during and after the Cold War by unconditionally choosing collective defence and entanglement with the US. Doing so would have solved France’s imminent security problems, namely containing the dual continental threats of a potentially resurgent Germany and an expansionist Soviet Union. Instead, French policymakers risked the collapse of NATO, the abandonment of Europe by the US, and the threats of Soviet aggression and German assertiveness, through their choice for an autonomous posture and an expensive and independent deterrent. The risks and costs were considerable and accepting them only makes sense if French policymakers strongly lacked the faith that its Anglo-American allies would commit to France’s security, or that France would be able to shape the European balance of power without possessing nuclear weapons. These beliefs ensured that French policymakers kept NATO at arm’s length for almost two decades after the Cold War ended, and that they resisted undermining France’s autonomy. Autonomy also comes at another cost, as it had led allies to perceive France as opportunistic, which in turn undermines French influence within Europe.

Germany

Germany could have chosen a maximalist grand strategy after the Cold War ended. German policymakers did not leverage Germany’s greater power potential within Europe, nor did they contribute to the fullest extent to the multilateral frameworks upon which Germany depends. Instead, they surrendered German autonomy and accepted entanglement with Germany’s allies, while still risking abandonment from allies who perceived they were bearing the greater burden. The risks and costs were considerable, and only make sense if policymakers feared reigniting dormant security competitions within Europe that would leave Germany isolated again. These beliefs ensured that German policymakers did not make use of reunification to assert German dominance within the continent. They also ensured that Germany did not join France in its challenge to US hegemony in Europe. German behaviour instead provoked accusations of free-riding.

Contribution of the second and third set of claims

The results of the second and third sets of claims contribute in several distinct ways to show the value of an experience-driven realist approach. They integrate the war-weariness, collective memory, and historical analogies literatures by underlining that experiences teach lessons on both alliances and force posture, and relating those lessons to the domestic actors that can support or withhold support for strategic choices. Experience-driven realism hierarchises those beliefs over others, and therefore offers
dual contributions to the neoclassical realist (Snyder 1991; Rynning 2002; Dueck 2006; Layne 2006; Schweller 2004, 2006; Lobell 2009; Ripsman 2009; Taliaferro 2009; Dyson 2010; Toje 2012) and strategic culture literatures (Johnston 1996; Berger 1998; Duffield 1998; Meyer 2005; Lantis 2002, 2006; Glenn 2009, 2014). Both literatures have individually convincing arguments about the nature of domestic beliefs and distributions of power, but they do not have an argument on the origins and the conditions of change of either: why and how are certain beliefs sustained, and by whom? The second and third sets of claims of the experience-driven realist approach suggested here offer the beginning of an overarching and coherent argument on the origins of grand strategy, as well as arguments on when and why grand strategy remains consistent and when and why it changes. It specifically adds to the debate on over- and under-balancing (Schweller 2006) by specifying which types of balancing behaviour becomes more likely. It also expands upon Reiter’s (1996) original insight that past success or failure of alliance or neutrality strategies of small states in the First and Second World War strongly predicted their post-war choices. Together, strategic beliefs and Trinitarian relations shape the direction, speed, intensity, and coherence of national strategy.

The combination of multiple methods used in the various chapters reflects the complexity of the argument. It represents an attempt to achieve both breadth and depth and to do justice to the various literatures the research draws from that each use very different methodologies. This combination allows this book to contribute to two enduring debates in the literature: one on the origins of grand strategy and the other on the legacies of war. This book’s contribution, finally, is also to add a more thorough understanding of empirical cases that are important in their own right. The Second World War laid the foundations of the contemporary international system and the broader global order, and this book offers arguments on how the four major Western states each played a substantial role in creating and upholding this order, while attempting to achieve their own national objectives. The four states include both the two influential cases at the extremes of victory and defeat - the US and Germany – and two states that had more complex and ambiguous experiences - France and the UK. The variation of victory and defeat between two extreme cases and two difficult cases gives wide coverage of the most important variables. Specifically, the more difficult cases show that the argument is quite applicable to other cases, which are more likely to have experienced similarly ambiguous outcomes as the UK and France than the extreme total victory and defeat experienced, respectively, by the US and Germany. Moreover, these were four states who were all highly influential in the past and for most of the contemporary era, who all fought each other, then joined in alliance afterwards, and are likely to remain influential in the future. Certainly, the US looks to remain a disproportionally powerful superpower even if the unipolar order ends and a more multipolar order emerges. However, the four cases are limited due to their common, Western origin. The next section therefore discusses how the argument on the Second World War would apply to a series of other states.
**Reach of the argument**

The Second World War also left legacies in other states, of which I will discuss here a selection of major powers, both regional and global and rising and declining. These include the other two Axis powers – Japan and Italy - and the states that could be considered the three greatest victims of Axis aggression during the Second World War – Russia, China, and Poland. These are all important cases in their own right, although they cannot come under inspection in the same detail as the four case studies of this book.

**Russia**

In the Second World War, Russia suffered horrendous numbers of civilian and military casualties¹, was invaded, and lost control over large parts of its territory before emerging victorious. Paradoxically, Russia was left in a better strategic position after the war than when it had entered it as the German threat, its greatest continental rival, had been removed (Bellamy 2007, p. 685). Despite the improvement of its security situation, Russia’s recent history showed how insecure it was vis-à-vis the other great powers: it had been attacked by the European states in the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution, and by Nazi Germany. Russia’s long border creates a constant sense of insecurity. For present-day policymakers that sense of precariousness carries through and was reinforced over the post-war decades, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russian policymakers perceive they cannot trust agreements: starting with the interwar period when Stalin could neither rely on the Western allies to contain Germany and instead made the doomed Molotov-Ribbentrop pact with Germany (Bellamy 2007, pp. 50-51); continuing into the war itself when Russia perceived the Western allies as too slow in opening a second front; and even after the Cold War when NATO expanded eastwards against Russia’s wishes. President Putin has railed against this expansion, and compared US policies to those of the Third Reich.² Russian external balancing efforts

---

¹ See chapter three. China: military deaths: 8668000; civilian deaths: 16900000; total deaths: 25568000 (13.2% of prewar population).

² In a February 2007 speech at the Munich Security Governance, President Putin emphasized the expansion eastwards of NATO took advantage of Russia’s weakened position, as did the missile defence and the unilateral use of force by the US (Stuerner 2008, pp. 4-7, 197). Several months later, on the May 9th celebration of Victory Day in the Second World War, Putin called it a holiday of ‘huge moral importance and unifying power’ for Russia, and went on to enumerate the lessons of that conflict for the world today. ‘We do not have the right to forget the causes of any war, which must be sought in the mistakes and errors of peacetime’, Mr. Putin said. ‘Moreover, in our time, these threats are not diminishing,” he said. “They are only transforming, changing their appearance. In these new threats, as during the time of the Third Reich, are the same contempt for human life and the same claims of exceptionality and diktat in the world’. Kramer, Andrew E, 2007, ‘Putin Is Said to Compare US Policies to Third Reich’, *New York Times*, May 10.
failed during the Cold War, when Russia built no long-term allies that were useful, and
the US managed to drive a rift between USSR and the PRC. Its other allies were
subordinated buffer states that needed threat or use of force to remain aligned or allied
(Hungary 1956; Yugoslavia 1968; Afghanistan 1979; Poland 1980; Chechenia; Georgia
2008; Ukraine 2014). The Soviet Union collapsed after the end of the Cold War, and
Russia was a shell of its former self and was humiliated (Stuermer 2008, p. 23). The
experience again underlined that it cannot trust others.

The Russian experience during the Second World War underlined that only military
capabilities and the willingness to sacrifices forces had guaranteed Russian survival. It
highlighted the fact that Russian governments have managed to survive and maintain
domestic cohesion only through force, and draws on a longer history of authoritarianism
that stretches back centuries. Post-war status and security therefore depended on Soviet
internal balancing, and during the 1960s and 1970s the USSR even seemed to surpass
the US (albeit by outspending its competitor by a factor of five in relative terms).
Russian society was conditioned to accept the high costs of military commitment
through extraction and mobilisation. Contemporary Russia has every reason to hang on
to its declining great power status through its primary competitive advantage, which is
military force. The continual increases in defence spending and the modernisation of
Russian armed forces illustrate its dependency on force.

After 1945, due to its victorious status and the authoritarian nature of its system, there
was no new Soviet government, nor a new set of elites that renounced the old, nor a
forced reimagining of the past as in the other states that had suffered (Wolfe in Lebow,
Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 250). Instead, wartime suffering and eventual victory created a
powerful sense of a shared Soviet, or rather Russian, identity. The massive mobilisation
during the war integrated millions of Soviet citizens and gave the Soviet society that the
Stalin regime had constructed a much wider and deeper degree of legitimacy (Hanson
1997, p. 170; Bellamy 2007, p. 6). There is a strong sense of nationalism, and in recent
years the Putin government regime has invoked the ‘Great Patriotic War’ to underline
Russia’s greatness and its victimhood, making May 9th, Victory Day, an ideological
holiday (Wolfe in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 265; Bellamy 2007, p. 3). This is a
process that began in the mid-1960s but has created a veritable ‘war cult’ (Tumarkin
1995, p.133). Russian governments have claimed the credit for the war’s outcome,
derplaying the role of other Eastern European states, and the Western allies. There is
a powerful nostalgia for the Soviet era, even, or especially, among the younger

---

3 Russian president Putin argued, at a July 22nd 2014 meeting of his security council, that ‘Russia is
fortunately not a member of any alliance. This is also a guarantee of our sovereignty’,
"Any nation that is part of an alliance gives up part of its sovereignty’. This came as news to the
members of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).
4 President Putin has described the collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest catastrophe in his
‘Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation’, on April 25, 2005. It was an
additional humiliation after the defeat in Afghanistan (Stuermer 2008, pp. 89-90).

378
generations that have never experienced it directly (Munro 2006). This nostalgia often goes hand in hand with strong support for Putin’s restoration of a ‘hypersovereign’ Russia not hemmed in by the west, an emphasis on national pride, and an ambivalent attitude towards Stalin (Mendelson and Gerber 2008).

The Russian state currently enjoys legitimacy as the power that keeps the nation together, after it had been weakened with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The leadership style is ‘vertical’ from state down to society (Stuermer 2008, p. 164). Moreover, throughout Russian history, it had been accepted that Russia needed a strong central state to control its vast territory and not succumb to instability. Current Russian weaknesses are explained as internal enemies collaborating with external enemies (Stuermer 2008, p.159). The ‘colour revolutions’ in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) were treated as such, and so has the 2014 conflict in Ukraine. The Russian government skilfully used wartime memories to tar the Ukrainian protestors as fascists. Yet, without credible alternatives in terms of political organisation, the post-Cold War era reinforced the belief that strong leadership was needed to govern Russia.

There are some similarities between Russia and China, where both have suffered humiliation and invasion in their modern histories, as well as had trouble maintaining internal security. The difference is that China is a rising power that benefits from structural economic and demographic growth, while Russia is suffering decline. For Russia there are greater benefits to building military capabilities, and to threaten the use of force.

China

China suffered huge numbers of casualties during the brutal Japanese invasion during the 1930s. The casualties further mounted with the expulsion of the Japanese forces and the civil war that followed. The invasion represented the culminating point of a century of humiliation for the Chinese, during which China had been attacked and lost sovereignty to various Western imperial powers. These experiences have produced a strong sense of Chinese victimisation and righteousness in international affairs (Zhao 2013). Events from the Second World War – such as the ‘Rape of Nanking’ - therefore

---

5 Leonard, Peter, 2014 ‘Russian propaganda war in full swing over Ukraine’, Associated Press, March 15; Anishchuk, Alexei, and Richard Balmforth, 2014 ‘Ukraine Seeks to Join NATO; Defiant Putin Compares Kiev to Nazis’, Reuters, August 29; Reuters, August 29, 2014, ‘Russia’s Putin says Ukrainian operations in east reminiscent of Nazi siege’. Putin told a youth camp outside Moscow "Small villages and large cities surrounded by the Ukrainian army which is directly hitting residential areas with the aim of destroying the infrastructure... It sadly reminds me the events of the Second World War, when German fascist... occupants surrounded our cities'.

6 See chapter three. China; military deaths: 1997000; civilian deaths: 8000000; total deaths: 9997000 (1.9% of prewar population).
remain powerful symbols for policymakers to appropriate for building a national consensus and distracting attention from internal problems (He 2007). Chinese policymakers are keenly aware of the balance of power, and are aware that maximizing China’s power would provoke counterbalancing behaviour. Instead, if China simply succeeds at maintaining domestic order and stability, it will dominate the region due to its size. At its core, this is the ‘Peaceful Rise’ doctrine. Yet, there is also an awareness that imperial powers, such as the US, must be kept out of the Chinese sphere of influence, to prevent renewed incursions into China’s sovereignty (Scobell 2014). Then there are specific resentments against Japan (Whiting 1989), which are also available for instrumental use, in order to undermine the credibility of the primary US ally in the region.

Historical experiences have not given China a reason to depend on alliances, as these played no significant role during the century of humiliation, nor to the expulsion of its invaders. Alliances are not considered necessary, as they are likely to entangle China and interfere with its policies. China’s size will naturally make potential allies wary of domination, and any alliances that China would enter are likely to create adversaries. At best, neighbours would bandwagon with its power, and abandon it when needed. Multilateral diplomacy, in contrast, can assist in defusing regional fears. In terms of internal balancing, Chinese policymakers are keenly aware of the role of past neglect of military innovation which facilitated the humiliating loss of sovereignty to much smaller, outside powers (Wang 2008; Zhao 2013). Yet, while it has consistently expanded and modernised its military capabilities since the end of the Cold War, China has avoided the actual use of its force that might provoke neighbours or extra-regional powers until the middle of the first decade in the twenty-first century. Policymakers judged it better to avoid direct military competition with the US that would ultimately cause China to follow the Soviet Union’s path and exhaust itself (Zhao 2013). The shifting balance of power due to Chinese economic growth and military spending has made it more assertive, however, and allowed it to redress perceived humiliation and intrusion by outside powers and old regional adversaries (Zhao 2013; Scobell 2014)).

The other core lesson of China’s experience during the century of humiliation, was to avoid being weakened by domestic dissension and allow foreign powers to prey on it (Zhao 2013). Chinese policymakers and the public are aware of the challenges of governing a massive and complex society, and a fairly wide societal consensus keeps the state strong and centralised. Nationalism is driven both by incumbent state elites and populist forces (Zhao 2013). After the crackdown in Tiananmen Square in 1989, the Party reinforced anti-Japanese sentiments, which then became more powerful due to commercialisation of Chinese media during the 1990s (He 2007; Wang 2008; Wang and Okano-Heijmans 2011). The 1937-1945 ‘war of resistance’ figures most prominently in

---

7 The defeats against Japan were especially shocking because it was traditionally considered a tiny insignificant country.
The discussion - or lack thereof - of Japan’s imperial past in its own schoolbooks has continually provoked hostile reactions from Chinese policymakers and public. Regardless of its origins in official mythmaking in the post-Mao era, the extreme anti-Japanese nationalism in China today represents a public opinion that is distinct from state propaganda and has challenged the government’s perceived ‘soft’ policy towards Japan (He 2007; Wang and Okano-Heijmans 2011). It has led to a certain fatalism about conflict with Japan.8

Chinese nationalism is closely identified with the Communist Party, as the embodiment of the will of the power, and the Party takes the credit for ending the century of humiliation (Wang 2008; Zhao 2013). Populist nationalism is particularly suspicious of Western powers trying to stop China’s rise (Zhao 2013). The Chinese armed forces fit into the revolutionary, national narrative of liberation from foreign and domestic oppression, and consequently enjoy a great deal of legitimacy (Scobell 2014).

Poland

Poland suffered proportionally the greatest number of casualties9 during the Second World War and experienced invasion and occupation by both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The war still delineates the self-perception of the modern Polish state (Sanford 2003; Bukowska in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 177). that the Polish identity is built on the fact that the Poles had been the war’s first official victims; that they had been sacrificed by allies to be carved up by two totalitarian threats; that they were heroic, in being the only European nation that had neither collaborated with nor surrendered to Nazi Germany; and that Poland, though unable to escape Soviet occupation, had saved Europe from German fascism and contributed to peace on the continent (Sanford 2003; Bukowska in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 179). Due to its experiences with invasion and occupation, as for most of its modern history, Poland was preyed upon by its neighbours. Poland, as a state, disappeared from international maps twice in its history. Unsurprisingly, Polish policymakers emphasise the need to maintain the survival of Poland as an independent nation-state. Territorial and regional security figure prominently as primary tasks for the armed forces, rather than the maintenance of the international order (Sanford 2003). 10 German behaviour has managed to diminish – though not eliminate - Polish distrust, but an assertive Russia is still

---

9 See chapter three. Poland; military deaths: 123000; civilian deaths: 6028000; total deaths: 6151000 (17.6% of prewar population).
10 ‘The White Book on National Security of Republic of Poland’ (2013) emphasises historical experiences and geography as crucial for Polish priorities, and equally stresses maintaining independence and sovereignty as core Polish policy objectives.
perceived as a clear threat. For Polish policymakers, Poland’s position depends on not only managing specific threats, but maintaining a benign balance of power.

The Polish experience with alliances is poor. It was isolated among threats during the first half of the twentieth century, and abandoned by its Western allies in the Second World War. It was sold out by its allies in Locarno and Munich before the war and in Yalta afterwards when it was forced into an alliance with the Soviets - despite their earlier betrayal of Poland through Molotov Ribbentrop Pact and the 1940 Soviet massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn forest (Sanford 2003). These betrayals continue to haunt Polish policymakers, who wish to avoid having Poland again becoming a western rampart against Eastern aggression (Reeves 2010).

Poland’s geographic position still left policymakers with a pervasive sense of insecurity, even after the end of the Cold War. Polish governments have therefore attempted to secure alliances and membership of all important organisations, and they have specifically pursued a Euro-Atlanticist course. This includes Polish rapprochement with Germany, but also strong relations with UK, France, and Italy to balance the power of Poland’s large neighbour and former occupier and to avoid the risk of becoming overly dependent upon it (Sanford 2003). To balance against the Russian threat, Poland has pursued close relations with the US, and even joined the invasion of Iraq. Poland sought out and gained NATO membership for the same reason. But Polish policymakers remain wary of renewed abandonment by the US and Europe, especially in the face of Russian revanchism. The Obama administration’s change of position on missile defence was perceived as a poor sign. This wariness highlights the strains after the Cold War between isolationists and internationalists (Reeves 2010). Both groups agree that military capabilities are crucial to maintaining Polish independence and political influence. This has been expressed in high spending, bilateral cooperation, and deployments of troops together with allies.

The war had ripped apart traditional Polish societal, political, and military elites (Bukowska in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 200). Post-war identity therefore necessitated the rebuilding of the Polish identity around a positive mythology of resistance. Poland’s historical security dilemma, trapped as it is between Germany and Russia, has produced a strong shared sense between elites and its wider population on security matters -including the need to maintain such a degree of unity that it also extends to executive autonomy over the armed forces (Sanford 2003). However, that

---

11 ‘Report: Polish minister calls US ties worthless’. Vanessa Gera And Monika Scislowska, The Associated Press. Jun. 23, 2014. Recordings of a private conversation caught Polish foreign minister Sikorski describing Poland’s strong alliance with the US was worthless and ‘even harmful because it creates a false sense of security’. Sikorski also said ‘(We are) suckers, total suckers. The problem in Poland is that we have shallow pride and low self-esteem.’ This mirrored earlier criticism from Sikorski in 2005 after his tenure as Minister of Defence (Reeves 2010).

382
tone has become increasingly nationalistic, and Polish foreign policy has turned more ‘praetorian’ for domestic consumption (Reeves 2010).

Japan

Japan’s attempt to establish itself as the hegemonic power in Asia failed bitterly, as extremely nationalistic pre-war policymakers badly misjudged the balance of power in the Pacific. The Second World War ended in a defeat on Japan’s own territory, where the destruction from the detonation of two atom bombs culminated in the catastrophic numbers of civilian casualties, even beyond those already sustained due to American strategic bombing campaigns, and forced Japanese surrender and occupation.¹²

During the Second World War Japan had challenged a superior American power, whose resources vastly outnumbered its own, and had built up no alliances that were helpful in defending against the US response in the Pacific Theatre. This represented a failure of pre-war Japanese policymakers who had entirely depended on building military capabilities. In contrast, post-war Japanese governments have used multilateral institutions to regain legitimacy, similar to Germany’s experience after the war (Samuels 2003, p. 197; Oros 2014). There were and are, however, no Asian NATOs or Unions available to Japan. Policymakers remain fearful of isolation in a hostile and resentful neighbourhood, and, though it has so far managed that relationship successfully, Japan remains dependent for its security on the US, an outside power (Berger 1998; Samuels 2007, p. 7).

The use of force remains deeply problematic for Japanese policymakers and society (Oros 2014). Despite the instability of the region, and specifically the risks associated with the Korean conflict, Japanese forces have been confined to strictly territorial defence.¹³ Only under the increasing rise of Chinese power, has a shift towards collective defence taken place in 2013-2014.

The post-war American occupation allowed many of the same structures to remain in place in Japan, to a greater degree than was the case in Germany. Most obvious is that the Japanese Emperor remained in power, though he had to renounce his divinity. Yet, even radical changes like article 9 (that prohibits the extra-territorial use of force) and democracy were packaged as being a continuation of a fictitious Japanese Meiji Constitutional tradition of non-militaristic democracy (Samuels 2003, pp. 202-203). LDP has been the same party in power for most of seven decades. Yet, within society,

¹² See chapter three. Japan; military deaths: 2566000; civilian deaths: 672000; total deaths: 3238000 (4.5% of prewar population).
¹³ Article 9 has also been used instrumentally to force pass costs for Japanese security to the US and focus on domestic investment in the economy (Samuels 2003, pp. 205-206)
there is no longer the praise of martial values. The costs of war inflicted on Japan itself led to a deep apprehension towards the use of force (Samuels 2003, p. 279; Samuels 2007, pp. 38-59). Japanese citizens now consistently score the lowest in polling on national pride, or willingness to die for the country (Wang and Okano-Heijmans 2011), and post-war national pride instead refocused on Japan’s economic development, as it did in Germany, a deliberate attempt by post-war policymakers to disengage from the past (Samuels 2003, p. 191). Prolonged stagnation has, however, undermined that self-image. Responsibility for Japan’s aggressive policies became wrapped in the ‘myth of a military clique’ that hijacked Japanese policy, but this ignores the role of wartime government officials, the emperor and his court, as well as the enthusiastic support of the Japanese public for imperialist policies. Symbols of nationalism still remain powerful to nationalist elements, and conservative politicians make attempts to whitewash Japan’s wartime history through textbooks (Barnard 2003; Samuels 2003).

Italy

The Italian experience during the Second World War was more complex than that of Germany and Japan. The fascist movement was primarily a domestically-oriented movement, and Italy’s outwards aggression was driven by an attempt at imperial rejuvenation rather than the balance of power or of threats within Europe. A strong domestic resistance to fascism (Samuels 2003, p. 212), which was absent in Germany or Japan, enabled the maintenance of the myth of a decent Italy, of Italians as brava gente (Fogu in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 147). After all, Italy managed to land on the winning side when the war ended, and suffered relatively low numbers of casualties.

Post-war Italy faced a similar external threat of Soviet Union as the other Europeans did, but the concern in the early years of the Cold War was primarily domestically-oriented, namely the fear of a Communist takeover of the state. Italy remained preoccupied with a sense of internal insecurity, partly due to the continuing internal divisions of ideology and regions, and the dual threats of revolution and authoritarianism (Samuels 2003, pp. 218-219). In the Italian experience, each attempt at an Italian colonial empire had been a spectacular failure. Italian policymakers had no reason to attempt power politics within or outside of Europe.

Italy’s experiences with alliances were inconclusive. The fascist regime opportunistically joined Nazi Germany after initial German successes, and the post-fascist government had switched to the allied side. Alliances proved to be more successful in the post-war period, when Cold War Italian governments benefitted from the availability of a

---

14 See chapter three. Italy; military deaths: 347000; civilian deaths: 93000; total deaths: 440000 (1.0% of prewar population).
multilateral NATO and ECSC that allowed Italy to attain domestic stability (Samuels 2003, pp. 186, 197). Immersion in Europe was seen as the means to keep it democratic (Samuels 2003, p.222).

The Italian experience during the Second World War was predominantly a complex domestic affair that affected post-war Italy in several ways. The memories of the fascist government, with its appropriation of militarism, soured part of the Italian political spectrum to the use of military force and to the celebration of the armed forces (as it did in Germany and Japan) (Samuels 2003, pp. 220-221). Italy had no successful experience with the use of force in its history, and consequently there is no Italian tradition that celebrates martial values. The armed forces were and are predominantly used for peacekeeping missions. The myth of being on the good side facilitated post-war reconstruction, but also impeded the complete delegitimation of the fascists, who had made ‘the trains run on time’. Those inclined to do so, remembered themselves as ‘Mussolinians’ rather than as fascists, as if the ideology was relatively apolitical. If anything, the Italians had been victims of German national-socialism, and they bore no collective responsibility for the fascist past (Von Henneberg 2004; Fogu in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, pp. 153-156; Mammone 2006). In other words, Italian society could shift responsibility to an external actor rather than to internal actors, an option not open to post-war Germans. The Second World War was represented as a virus, a ‘parenthesis’ in Italian history, a thesis explicitly stated as such by liberal philosopher Croce (1944). A very active process of forgetting has affected all areas of the regime related to aggressive foreign policy, anti-Semitism, and racism, including the brutal invasion of Ethiopia, and the wars of aggression fought by the fascist army in the Balkans. In all these cases of Italian imperialism, the violent aspects have been downplayed (Samuels 2003; Von Henneberg 2004; Rodogno 2005, Fogu in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006; Perra 2010). The resistance became an expression of the anti-fascism of all Italians, divested of its often socialist roots, and a symbol of a harmonious national identity. Yet, such attempts were only partially successful in the later post-war period, and a period of renewed politicisation began (Fogu in Lebow, Kansteiner et al. 2006, p. 165). For these and other reasons, Cold War Italy was a party-dominated system with a weak executive (Samuels 2003, p. 188).

The experiences of Germany, Japan, and Italy have resonance for other states, where the armed forces were politicised, even those that did not participate in the Second World War. States that have experienced military authoritarian rule have become sceptical of armed forces, thereby undermining use of armed forces abroad. At least, such traditions will tend to dominate among the left, examples of which include states such as Spain, Greece, and Portugal. Similar processes might apply to non-industrialised states where the armed forces were politicised and used to maintain domestic security.
Unaddressed issues and limitations

The research still leaves several issues unaddressed and has remaining limitations. First, methodological problems remain when it comes to the study of the influence of ideas on policymaking. Though this book’s comprehensive research approach was useful to gain leverage on the development of ideas, there is still a lack of methodological tools to assess nuances in ideas and decisively link them to behaviour. For example, greater recourse to privately expressed ideas would allow better distinction between the instrumental and sincere uses of historical analogies. Yet, absence of material of this kind is likely to remain a problem for between-country comparative analysis, as it has so far been. Certain motives will only be disclosed in decades from now when documents are declassified. Ironically, research is bound to study the importance that the past played in the past. It is more difficult to capture the effect of lessons of the past in the present. Similar refinement is needed when it comes to mapping the institutional influence of domestic actors in the development of national strategy.

Methodologically, it is also difficult to ‘measure’ grand strategy, and therefore the causes of change. It is extremely difficult to control for the variety of contextual developments and outcomes that are unconnected to the strategy itself. This becomes an even greater problem if dynamics between actors are taken into account. In other words, strategy is tested by contingencies, and so are the ideas and constraints that are used to analyse causal explanations. Taking stock of the last decade, it is difficult to know what US and European grand strategies would have looked like had 9/11 not taken place. Without 9/11 and then Iraq, the Western responses to Syria and the Ukraine would likely have been very different, as domestic publics would be less sceptical of policymakers. Yet, the Arab Spring and Russian behaviour might themselves have been triggered or accelerated by the unilateral and pre-emptive response of the Bush (43) administration to 9/11. In short, conceptually, it remains difficult to isolate the drivers of strategy and strategic change, whether these are the structure of the international environment, domestic politics, or national beliefs. The challenges discussed above reinforce the decision of the study to attempt to address these difficulties through a combination of case studies, document analysis, and counterfactuals. In any case, the analytical leverage remains constrained.

Second, and more crucially, it remains difficult to assess the applicability of the findings of the effects of the Second World War on other past or future wars, or to understand the effects on beliefs when multiple experiences with recent wars intersect and conflict with each other. The Second World War could be seen as a sui generis case, where the specificities of the experience cannot easily be transferred to other cases. Yet, certain elements that at first seem unique, such as the Holocaust, are less so upon closer examination. The war is not the only one where genocide was perpetrated, nor was the Holocaust the preeminent symbol of the war until two decades afterwards. More
importantly, as it pertains to core beliefs of policymakers on balance of power or threats (alliances and force postures), the Holocaust does not play a decisive role. The systemic nature of the Second World War is rarer still, but it is not decisive for the effects of victories and defeats on core beliefs and the distribution of legitimacy and influence within nation-states on how best to survive and thrive in a complex international environment. The total nature of the war is more likely to be repeated in the future, although limited to regional or dyadic conflicts.

The more appropriate question is therefore, how applicable the results are to future conflicts if Western states, in particular, are now less likely to be involved in total wars due to the professionalization of the armed forces and the increased dependence on technology. Consequently, the lessons of most decisive future wars are more likely to be at civilian and military elite level. Western societies are likely to be less interested as it is mobilised to a lesser degree and less resources are extracted from it. Yet, while society is less politically participative, the likelihood to achieve strategic cohesion is also undermined, as societal support is more likely to be uneven.

To better understand the explanatory power of the experience-driven realist theory, it seems more productive to test it with major wars of the past. This is more difficult than it might seem. The closest previous candidate, the First World War, is problematic, because the Second World War followed it so closely that it seems – and for many contemporaries was - one long thirty-year war over the distribution of power in Europe that involved nearly all the same participants. Likewise, there were no conflicts of an equivalent size after the Second World War for the major states, which makes it difficult to assess how several large scale wars reinforce or undermine one another. Furthermore, the effect of the Second World War is likely to be mediated through the condition of the Cold War and the introduction of nuclear weapons. The Cold War created a unique geopolitical situation that constrained nearly all states to avoid conventional warfare with peer competitors. However, what are often assumed to be exclusively structural features of the Cold War, are themselves part of dynamic where policymakers believed and acted upon these beliefs on the nature of the Soviet threat. As I have shown in chapters four and five, the behaviour of American, British, French, and German policymakers cannot be understood without taking the experiences with appeasement, the collapse of France in 1940, or the failure of alliances to contain Germany in the 1930s. Chapter six demonstrates that if policymakers had followed the constraints of the environment, their choices are likely to have been different - the Soviet Union was a problem, but what type of problem was unclear. Also, the behaviour of the Soviet leadership was itself shaped by a desire to create buffer zones to protect against Western invasion, after several such experiences in a century and a half, of which the Second World War had been the most damaging.

Moving to cases of total wars further in the past is therefore a more productive option to explore. A structured analysis of the legacies of the French Revolutionary / Napoleonic
Wars, the Seven Years’ War, and the Thirty Years’ War could offer serious traction on the main arguments, though data is more limited than this book’s cases. Specifically, the French Revolutionary / Napoleonic Wars cast a long shadow over the nineteenth century and changed how states considered military mobilisation and domestic stability. Regardless, an expansion of cases is recommended.

**Likelihood of change and consequences for the emerging order**

How likely is it that the historical legacies will continue to exert their pull on the decisions of policymakers and the expectations of the public? And if so, what are the consequences for the emerging global order of the 21st century?

In the near future, the US will no longer be the most powerful state by as wide a margin as it has been, given its declining relative position vis-à-vis China, though how to interpret Chinese intentions and select the appropriate US response is far from obvious (Schweller and Pu 2010; Glaser 2011; Kupchan 2011; Layne 2011; Legro 2011; Wohlforth 2012; Posen 2014). Given its more restrained resources, and the emergence of multiple challenges to its power, the US will not automatically be equally willing or able to fully secure Europe as it has done or promised to do in the past, though it might be less likely to abandon it. It will not relinquish its global role (nor should it, probably). Based on its economic and demographic size, Germany is likely to become the centre of gravity for Europe, and, though it seems unwilling, it must adapt to that new position. The UK and France must understand the new demands for European strategic coherence that derive from both internal and external threats.

Yet, there are several reasons to assume that the US is not going to deviate from its strategic behaviour. The necessity of American leadership and credibility are still powerful arguments in debates on foreign policy, whether sincere or used as an instrument to attack opponents in a polarised domestic debate, as was shown in chapter eight. The sense of insecurity and vulnerability is still present across the political spectrum. In a more dynamic world, where multiple centres of power compete with one another in different regions, that sense of threat could only be greater. The armed forces are legitimate and autonomous, and remain relatively unaffected by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Civilian policy makers, both political and bureaucratic, have been delegitimised to a large extent. There is also no broad consensus, and no legitimacy of the legislature itself. However, in many ways this makes it more attractive to resort to the established myths of strength and leadership. American presidents are especially prone to get trapped by raising expectations to overcome a divided and often partisan political environment. The 2003 Iraq invasion illustrates the predisposition to overreact to vulnerability, to consider threats that are far from the US itself as a matter of the credibility of US leadership. Policymakers were also predisposed to prefer what was
assumed to be a short-term conventional military solution with low societal costs. The potential that the US will overbalance, rather than appropriately balance, an assertive and increasingly self-confident China before it expands its influence in East Asia, is large and ripe with risks of escalation.

Germany will be the most interesting case to watch in the coming decade. The German executive remains highly constrained in setting strategy, specifically when it pertains to the use of force. Policymakers and public still heavily undervalue military force, and members of the armed forces or security professionals have little access to policymaking, if they even disagree. Strong domestic impediments remain in place on strategic adaptation to changes in the environment. However, recent developments in Eastern Europe should put strong structural pressures on German policymakers to give force a more prominent place in its strategy, as chapter eight has shown, and to play a generally more assertive role. The hesitating German response to a revanchist Russia makes it more difficult to maintain alliance solidarity and contain Russian attempts at divide and conquer politics among the Europeans. Should the next decade or so fail to see a German strategic readjustment that accords a greater role for force, then the combination of beliefs and domestic relations in Germany is powerful indeed.

The UK’s narrative of exceptionalism towards the continent has not changed, as it edges ever further away from the EU. Yet, the current discussion of an exit from the EU negates the British ability to play a bridging role across the Atlantic. It leaves Britain unprepared for a probable diminished future role of the US in Europe, which will already undermine the effectiveness of the ‘special relationship’. The closely related narrative of a special British moral responsibility has not disappeared, as could be seen in chapter eight. Though in many ways this seems a return to a pre-war strategic outlook: considering the investments in naval capability and the diplomatic overtures towards the Gulf States, the return of an East of Suez strategy seems to be on the horizon. The desire to play a role in Asia is apparent, even though events in Eastern Europe might dampen those plans. Likewise, rhetoric still references Munich and shows of strength. Policymakers have had the space to manoeuvre to use force in assertive ways, yet public support for military action is dependent on ideological and almost populist leadership, and failures count hard. The failures of Iraq and Afghanistan have constrained the autonomy of the Prime Minister, and led to wider distrust in the government. The executive might have lost legitimacy, but it is questionable how long-term the memory of the British public is. British policymakers have consistently allowed entanglement in American strategic preferences, but have distrusted Europe.

French policymakers have worked to avoid strategic dependence on allies through building up autonomous capabilities as far as their resources allowed, and have been more attuned to the implications of excessive transatlantic imbalances of power. Yet, the French attempts at constructing a European alternative to US hegemony are doomed to fail, as the proclivity at balance of power politics of French governments are transparent
and do not inspire trust among European counterparts. The 2008 reintegration of French forces into NATO is evidence of French awareness of this, but also of the ease at which the state can adapt strategically. France, in turn, continues to have a strongly autonomous executive, whose domestic woes – economic, cultural, etc. – have not translated into attacks on his reserved domain – at least not yet. This has remained out of public debate. French strategy still emphasises the need to maintain policy autonomy in a balance of power world, as chapter eight shows. As multiple centres of power emerge, the world will increasingly approximate the French worldview. Consequently, there is little incentive driving change.

There are some other long-term trends and developments that will interact with the maintenance of these strategic beliefs and Trinitarian relations. For most of modern history conscription and nationalism tied the people to the state, and integrated armed forces in society. These mutual dependencies forced democratisation and accountability in governments. The post-Cold War developments and the presence of nuclear weapons have made total war more difficult to imagine, and therefore removed the pressing need for mass armies. The current professionalisation and shrinking sizes of the armed forces, however, has led to the detachment by civilian policymakers from strategic discussions and a diminishing quality of public debate. States have become more inward-looking and insular, as there is less political advantage for representatives or elected officials to make foreign policy one of their specialisations. The Cold War forced higher participation from policymakers and the public, and arguably the quality of public debate was higher then, even when wrongheaded. In the absence of a clear Cold War threat, such societal participation and civil-military integration is unlikely to take place. On the other hand, while much has changed, much has not, or change has been exaggerated and premature. Despite the often-assumed decline in importance of the nation-state and the end of great power conflict, the second decade of the twenty-first century has shown the return of overt power politics and nationalist politics, the latter in the guise of new kinds of populism and resentment.

Despite contemporary developments, the legacies of the Second World War continue to exhibit their pull precisely because the current generations have grown up with this version of history. The simpler version of the twentieth century, cleaned of complexity, is a dangerously seductive narrative to hold onto, with its straightforward, starkly black-and-white morality. Yet, its collection of villains, victims, and heroes is unlikely to be

---

15 This trend towards insularity is certainly the case in the US, according to F.J. During his time on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, F.J. saw a decline in prestige and in seniority and experience among the members of committees. Unlike the Cold War, foreign affairs are not a politically valuable asset to have on a representative’s portfolio (F.J. 2013, interview with author, June 26). Gen. P.S.B. argued that there is very little experience among members of Congress, some of whom could not tell you what NATO is. Unavoidable problem when their opinions are shaped by 25-year-old staffers. Consequently, there is very little depth of strategic thinking (Gen. P.S.B, 2013, interview with author, June 24).
repeated. The beliefs it inspired seem especially distorting to US and German strategic outlooks, where both overreaction and underreaction are dangerous tendencies. Neither ‘always Munich’, nor ‘never again’ are good models of foreign policy. Neither force nor the non-use of force is a better option. In fact, both are dangerous when they become ‘fixed’ positions, removed from incisive appraisals of the environment.

Part of the discussion should be on the domestic distribution of power, where power should be concentrated sufficiently to allow for decisiveness, but not be so exclusive as to remove checks and balances. This could be considered a second level of the realist agenda, somewhat in line with Rathbun’s (2008) argument on the need for a research agenda to understand when states respond inappropriately to the environment. Ideally, an appropriate domestic distribution of power should leave the state with enough autonomy to independently assess threats, and enough legitimacy to decisively execute its policies. Society should be sufficiently informed, so the processes of transparency and accountability are meaningful and not simply tools of political attack. Finally, the armed forces should have enough autonomy to apply their specialised knowledge and assess the changing nature of warfare and adapt their doctrine, and enough legitimacy to have their voice heard in larger strategic debates. Yet, state and society should be well-informed and alert to ensure the integration of the force posture into the political and alliance strategies of the state. Such clearheaded and precise policy responses are highly unlikely though, and perhaps the best to hope for is the absence of dangerous myths that push nation-states towards over- or underreacting to developments in the regional or global order.

The discussion should illustrate the added value of experience-driven realism. The consequences of experiences with war for national propensities for over- and underbalancing are likely to be greater in the contemporary era than in the Cold War, as great powers rise or former superpowers attempt to reassert themselves. Specifically, experiences with victory and defeat are likely to make policymakers, and the national security institutions in which they act, less adaptive in a dynamic strategic environment, where threats and the distribution of power are rapidly changing.

Given that the international system rarely offers unambiguous signals to begin strategic adaption, and policymakers are likely to resist change or be unable to execute it, these states are prone to remain fixed in their respective strategies. For Europe and the Atlantic, the enduring and distinct national strategic perspectives of the three major European powers mean that neither cohesion within Europe is assured, nor protection from outside threats such as Russia and an unstable MENA, nor the prevention of excessive dependence on an outside power, such as the US, for internal and external European security. For the US, conversely, the ambitious commitment to a global liberal democratic order, maintained by forces prepared to act in multiple regions, would leave it rapidly stressed in a dynamic and fluid international environment that is likely to
produce multiple, concurrent challenges to US pre-eminence. If war is needed to trigger adaptation, this is bad news indeed.

The coming decades will certainly be different for the US, the UK, France, and Germany - and more different than any era since 1945. There is the danger of applying lessons from European and Western history too broadly, and of failing to understand that the world is different or not to accept the manner in which it is different. This in turn increases the chances of either doing too much or too little. The roads not already taken will be overlooked, and the future might repeat the past for both tragic and avoidable reasons.
Policy documents used in chapters seven and eight


Datasets and sources used in chapter three


Academic and historical references


405


407


The central argument of this dissertation is that victory and defeat in war shape the post-war grand strategies of states, and specifically their willingness to use of force and diplomacy. The book examines this argument through the central case of the Second World War and the experiences and the post-war strategic behaviour of its belligerents. It focuses on four cases in particular: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

War is often assumed to have a strong effect on post-war beliefs and behaviour, for both intuitive reasons as well as arguments found in existing scholarly research, yet understanding exactly how and why is difficult. The existing research includes the literatures on collective memory, on the use of analogies during decision-making, and on war-weariness and contagion. These point out that wars are invoked as lessons to highlight and dissect normative questions, to understand new crises and challenges, and they are used to attack political opponents. We are reminded that displaying weakness to authoritarian opponents is as morally wrong and ineffective as when Britain and France appeased Hitler in Munich. The Holocaust is the standard that to judge the evil of racism, and the National Socialism offers a warning of the dangers of where too great a belief in leaders will lead us to. Images of the trenches of the First World War connote the senselessness of war and how wrong-headed policymakers sacrifice soldiers for poorly thought-out plans, as do invocations of Vietnamese jungles. Similarly, to the anti-war movements, the more recent invasion of Iraq underlines that we should distrust policymakers. Past wars therefore become powerful symbols that echo in the present. They are considered to impact the national psyche and to transform collective understanding of the nation. They are reflected in and passed on through high and low culture. Wars become common reference points to demark eras into a before and after, where the lessons of the old era become the basis for the new era. They can either underline what we already believe about ourselves or cause us to question these beliefs. Victory in war shows that good can be accomplished through the use of force. In contrast, death and destruction are sobering, both for policymakers and societies. The costs of war will therefore make states more cautious. However, while such arguments about war make strong intuitive sense it is inherently difficult to study them due to the intangibility of ideas and their causal role in the calculations of policymakers. How can we show this role vis-à-vis multiple rival explanations? The book attempts to address these problems.

The Second World War offers an exemplary case to explore these ideas. The brutality of the war cast a long shadow over all belligerent states in Europe, America, and Asia. Yet, wartime experiences still strongly varied between states. Some states not only lost
massive numbers of citizens, but also experienced the humiliation and shame of military defeat, surrender, occupation, collaboration, or even the responsibility for genocide. Other states, in contrast, neither experienced invasion or occupation, and their casualties, however terrible, were mostly military in nature. Moreover, the costs of war were more than morally justified by the need to defeat two powerful and genocidal regimes. For other states, most of them, the experiences were more mixed and ambiguous. They fought and came out on the winning side, but at significant costs, often suffering huge numbers of civilian and military casualties, occupation, and the moral ambiguity of collaboration.

This dissertation argues that the range of experiences explains a range of policy outcomes and it focuses in particular on the four major western states: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Since the end of the war all four states have been liberal democracies with considerable political, military, and economic capabilities, yet they have had strikingly different experiences with war in the first half of the twentieth century. The United States and the United Kingdom were the victors of the Second World War. Yet, Britain suffered high societal costs and the post-war collapse of its empire, while victory was nearly cost-free for the US and allowed it to become a superpower. Nominally one of the victorious states, France suffered a sudden military defeat in the opening stages of the war, and was forced to depend on others for the restoration of national sovereignty. Germany in turn was completely defeated militarily and discredited morally as the horrors of the Holocaust became known; it remained occupied after the war; and (West) Germany was rebuilt as a democracy by the occupying powers. Or, put in another way, the case studies allow variation through two extreme cases – the US and Germany – and two more difficult and ambiguous cases – the UK and France.

These cases are important in their own right: the policies of the four major Western states laid the foundations for the global multilateral order as we now know it. Yet, each of the four seems to have specific national patterns of behaviour that are widely divergent when it comes to matters of using military force and sovereignty in international diplomacy.

The book explores and tests the argument that victory and defeat shape post-war behaviour through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. This includes regression analysis using different measures of wartime defeat and loss together with various measures of the post-war use of force and diplomacy for all the participants of the Second World War. However, the greatest part of the research focuses on the four case studies – the US, UK, France, and Germany – through historical analysis, counterfactual thought experiments, content analysis of documents, and a series of fifty interviews with American, British, French, and German policymakers. From this variety of methods, the research produces the following findings.
The first of the book’s findings is that experiences with war shape the propensity of victorious and defeated states to use force and diplomacy in their grand strategy, and that this effect takes place regardless of their relative material capabilities, alignments, and regime types. The results of the regression analysis for the experiences in the Second World War and post-war behaviour are clear. States that had experienced occupation and surrender, had aggressed, fought on the losing side, and had suffered high numbers of casualties, were significantly less likely to use force or threaten the use of force, and more likely to be a member of international organisations or use diplomatic representation than states that had been victorious and suffered few civilian and military casualties. In contrast, the states that had been victorious in war become more willing to again use force after the war, and less likely to use diplomacy. Moreover, a convincing victory in a total war is more important than a smaller defeat in a limited war. Victories and defeat also lead to different combinations of diplomacy and force, suggesting that to some extent policymakers see diplomacy and force as exchangeable alternatives. The case studies further support this first finding, and show that the beliefs of American, British, French, and German policymakers on force and diplomacy - and the relations between state, society, and the armed forces - reinforce each other in their effect on their respective behaviour.

The second finding is that the experiences with victory and defeat have distinct implications for the perspectives, legitimacy, and institutional influence of the actors involved in the development and implementation of national strategy. The actors within the nation-state involved in the making of grand strategy are grouped as follows: its civilian policymakers; its military policymakers; and its civilians. The relations between this ‘trinity’ of state, society, and armed forces define whose strategic beliefs can more heavily shape policy. This explains why beliefs are maintained over multiple decades, and why not every victory and defeat matter equally – blame and credit be accorded differently and some ideas therefore barely change. The combinations of beliefs and relations lead to nationally distinct patterns of strategic behaviour that endure long after the initial experiences, despite changes in the international environment and turnover in domestic governments.

As the two extreme cases, the US and Germany best illustrate how changes in strategic beliefs and domestic distribution of influence and legitimacy reinforce each other. The US victory in the Second World War strengthened the position of civilian and military policymakers. As it also came at relatively low costs - the US did not suffer civilian casualties or even, relatively speaking, large numbers of military casualties – American policymakers did not need to make a great effort at domestic mobilisation for the war effort. So, while American grand strategy had become ambitious after the war and made the use of force more likely by itself, American civilian and military policymakers also had greater autonomy to actually use force. Moreover, they used references to the past, such as Munich, to defend forceful policies in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, and other cases. Vietnam temporarily undermined the legitimacy of the state in the use of
force, but post-Vietnam victim narrative surrounding the armed forces de facto strengthened the US military’s autonomy, as did the victory in the Gulf War.

In contrast, not only had German total defeat in the Second World War already led to a drastic change in the post-war core beliefs of German policymakers and of the public at large, but the defeat also delegitimised the pre-war, traditional dominance of the German military and the executive. In post-war Germany, both the executive and the armed forces are therefore highly constrained within the national security institutions and this further limits the ability to decisively use force.

The two more ambiguous cases show more particular effects of experiences with war. The British victory in the Second World War, in contrast to that of the US, came at great social cost. The Conservatives were associated both with appeasement as well as with the successful leadership of Churchill, while Labour was credited with running the war at home, personified in the popular myth of the ‘people’s war’. The executive was therefore differently empowered, creating a populist myth with a central role for strong leadership. The victory in the Falklands ensured the continuation of Churchillian myth after the Suez fiasco, sustained an exceptionalist attitude towards the European continent, and reinvigorated the sense of a particular British moral responsibility in international affairs.

An even more complex experience was that of France. The humiliating French defeat in the Second World War was blamed on pre-war divisions between the political Left and Right that had impeded effective military innovation and integration with French alliance strategy. It was only the founding of the Fifth Republic and the return to power of De Gaulle that largely resolved the political tensions of twentieth century France. The post-war consensus that took hold after the exit from Algeria established the French President as the legitimate sole custodian of his ‘reserved domain’ of foreign and defence policy. That executive autonomy has allowed the French state to use force and diplomacy decisively and coherently in pursuit of French autonomy and security.

The third and final finding is that experiences with war shape not just the willingness to use force and diplomacy in general, but also what policymakers believe should be the specific composition of military and diplomatic means. These core beliefs have to do with whether policymakers believe they live in a balance of threat or a balance of power world, and how states rely on military capabilities (internal balancing) and alliances (external balancing). In this manner, they together shape the quality, direction, and cohesion of the nation-state’s strategy, as the four cases show.

American policymakers suffered from a sense of vulnerability after the sudden collapse of Europe in 1940 and the surprise attack of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Maintaining the balance of power was insufficient as Europeans were unable to resist authoritarian states, or were prone to be seduced by extremist ideology. This created a state of
permanent insecurity that led American policymakers to avoid a return to so-called isolationism at all costs. Instead they pursued US leadership and accepted entangling alliances. American policymakers established a permanent military presence in Europe and Asia, and maintained it after the Cold War. These beliefs guided decisions on not passing of the costs for European security to the Europeans and led to American involvement in peripheral conflicts such as Vietnam. As illustrated through counterfactual thought experiments, these choices were remarkable as this represented arguably a more costly and risky strategy for the US should the Cold War have escalated, but also once the Cold War ended, when the US was clearly no longer facing an existential threat.

The traditional British tendency to rely on off-shore balancing to maintain a continental balance of power, no longer sufficed after British policymakers failed to prevent the fall of Europe to Germany in 1940. During the Cold War, the UK committed itself to the continent through the NATO alliance and by placing permanently prepositioned forces in Europe, rather than relying on a national nuclear weapon. British policymakers still considered the UK as exceptional to the continent due to its unconquered status, though dependent on its ‘special relationship’ with the US, and especially after Suez. As a result, the UK overextended its forces beyond its financial resources and risked entanglement in American policies, despite the availability of less risky and costly alternative strategies.

The sudden and catastrophic defeat in June 1940 transformed French strategic thinking on diplomacy and force. Wartime experiences had cast doubts on the reliability of France’s Anglo-American allies. French policymakers had not adapted to the changes in military technology and prepared for armoured warfare. After the war, France therefore sought to avoid dependence on others at all costs, and specifically on the US. General De Gaulle specifically perceived the NATO alliance as merely entangling France without actually securing it, as the American nuclear deterrent could not offer credible protection. French policymakers therefore pursued an autonomous national deterrent at great cost. The resulting French grand strategy risked alienating the US and undermining the protection that the US-led Atlantic alliance provided for France, precisely when France needed the US the most.

Germany offers the greatest contrast between its pre- and post-war strategies. In both the First and the Second World War, German policymakers had avoided alliances and relied on an extremely offensive force posture to ensure German survival against encirclement by perceived threats to its East and its West. Germany’s total defeat during the Second World War reversed those beliefs. To avoid renewed isolation, German policymakers embedded Germany as deeply as possible in NATO and the European institutions, and adopted a highly defensive force posture. Even after the end of the Cold War, German policymakers did not pursue an alternative strategy in which they attempted again to become the preeminent power in Europe. Germany’s experiences
with Ostpolitik, European unification, and the French-German bilateral relationship confirmed German faith in multilateral solutions.

In all four cases, these beliefs and others based on the national experience with the Second World War were and are reiterated in policy documents, speeches, and in interviews with policymakers.

Through its comprehensive methodological approach, the book can make two important contributions. The first contribution is to the literature on the legacies of wars, where wars are often assumed to have an impact – though collective memory, the use of analogy, or war-weariness and contagion – but the exact impact on policymakers long-term choices remains unclear. The book’s argument shows how and why such experiences shape the beliefs, and of which actors, as well as the manner in which they are reinforced or undermined by later conflicts.

The second contribution is to the literature on the origins of grand strategy and the role of beliefs in relation to domestic institutions, international structures, and material power. That argument constitutes an elaborated theory of neoclassical realism: experience-driven realism. Experience-driven realism theorises how the outcomes of wars shape both national strategic beliefs and relations between state, society, and the armed forces. The combinations of beliefs and domestic relations in turn shape the strategic behaviour of states within the structural features of the international environment. It offers an argument on when and why grand strategy remains consistent and when and why it changes.

The story of this book is therefore also more than a tale about how analogical thinking might matter for political life. It points to larger differences in beliefs on both sides of the Atlantic that derive from experiences with wars and that continue to persist.

The argument made in this book is important for anyone who cares about the perceived lessons of national experience and the implications for contemporary policy. While we are not bound to the past, how we understand it strongly defines our approach to the future. There is a real danger if policy is calibrated on some mythical sense of the past. Strategy involves matching ends and means; by definition there are no benign biases in strategic thinking, specifically if one is unaware of them. An unconsidered reticence or principled opposition to the use of force may be as troubling as an unconsidered enthusiasm towards war. Both ‘always Munich’ and ‘never again war’ are bad models of foreign policy. Overresponding to Iraq in 2003 was as poor an idea as not responding strongly in the Ukraine Crisis in 2014, or to the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq in 2014.

In terms of international threats and challenges, the coming decades are certain to be more different for the US, the UK, France, and Germany than any era since 1945,
whether due to a more and more unstable Middle East, a resurgent Russia, or a rising China. There is the danger of applying lessons from the West’s past too broadly, and of failing to understand that the world is different or not to accept the manner in which it is different. The roads not already taken will be overlooked, and the future might repeat the past for reasons both tragic and avoidable.
Het centrale betoog van dit proefschrift is dat overwinning en nederlaag in oorlog het naoorlogse denken van staten vormt met betrekking tot het gebruik van militaire en diplomatieke middelen, en daarmee een sterke invloed uitoefent op hun grand strategies. Het boek onderzoekt dit betoog door te kijken naar de staten die deelnamen aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog, naar hun ervaringen en naar hun naoorlogs strategisch gedrag. Het boek richt zich in het bijzonder op vier casestudies: de Verenigde Staten, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, Frankrijk, en Duitsland.

Er wordt vaak vanuit gegaan dat oorlogen een sterk effect hebben op naoorlogse opvattingen en gedrag, om redenen die zowel intuïtief zijn als gefundeerd in bestaand academisch onderzoek, maar het is moeilijk om duidelijk te maken hoe en waarom zij dit doen. Het bestaande onderzoek bevat de literatuur over collectief geheugen, die over het gebruik van analogieën bij beslissingen, en die over oorlogsom deheden. Dit werk wijst ons erop dat oorlogen uit het verleden worden gebruikt om lessen aan te ontlenen over normatieve vraagstukken, om nieuwe crises en uitdagingen te begrijpen, en om politieke tegenstanders aan te vallen. We worden eraan herinnerd dat zwakte tonen aan de bestaande autoritaire leiders even morel fout en ineffectief is als toen Groot-Brittannië en Frankrijk Hitler in ‘Munich’ tegemoet probeerden te komen. De Holocaust is de standaard die het kwaad van racisme definieert en een blijvende waarschuwing is voor het gevaar waar een overmatig geloof in leiders ons heen kan leiden. Beelden van loopgraven uit de Eerste Wereldoorlog roepen de zinloosheid van oorlog op, net zoals die uit de jungle van Vietnam. Op een vergelijkbare wijze onderstreep de invasie van Irak in 2003 voor anti-oorlogsbewegingen dat we beleidsmakers zouden moeten wantrouwen. Oorlogen uit het verleden worden daarom krachtige symbolen die doorklinken in het heden, die doorlopend opduiken in zowel hoge als lage cultuur. Oorlogen worden algemene referentiepunten om tijdperken af te bakenen in een voor en een na, en waar de lessen van het vorige tijdperk de basis vormen voor het nieuwe tijdperk. Overwinningen kunnen onderstrepen wat wij toch al geloven over onszelf of de wereld, terwijl nederlagen ons daaraan kunnen laten twijfelen. Overwinningen laten zien dat goede doelen bereikt kunnen worden met militaire middelen. Tegenovergesteld werken dood en vernietiging ontuchtender, zowel voor beleidsmakers als voor de samenleving. De kosten van oorlog zullen daarom staten voorzichtig maken. Hoewel zulke betogen over oorlog intuïtief zeer aansprekend zijn, is het inherent moeilijk deze betogen gestructureerd te bestuderen door de ontastbare aard van ideeën en hun causale rol in de afwegingen van beleidsmakers. Hoe kunnen we deze rol laten zien ten opzichte van meerdere tegenstrijdige verklaringen? Dit boek probeert hier een antwoord op te geven.
De Tweede Wereldoorlog is een uitstekende casestudy om deze ideeën te verkennen. De brutaliteit van de oorlog wierp een lange schaduw over alle deelnemende staten in Europe, Amerika, en Azië. De oorlogservaringen varieerden echter sterk tussen staten. Sommige staten verloren niet alleen grote aantallen burgers, maar ervoeren ook de vernedering en schaamte van een militaire nederlaag, van overgave, van bezetting, van collaboratie, of van de verantwoordelijkheid voor genocide. Andere staten waren echter niet bezet en hun doden bestonden vooral uit militairen. Deze kosten waren alsnog tragisch, maar werden voor de overwinnaars van de oorlog meer gerechtvaardigd door de noodzaak van een overwinning op twee machtige en genocidale regimes, Duitsland en Japan. Voor andere staten, de meerderheid, waren de oorlogservaringen meer gemengd en ambigu. Zij vochten aan de winnende kant, maar met aanzienlijke kosten. Deze staten leden vaak hoge aantallen burger- en militaire slachtoffers, hadden ervaring met oorlog op hun grondgebied en bezetting, en met de morele ambiguïteit van collaboratie. Dit proefschrift betoogt dat het scala van ervaringen de variëteit in beleidsuitkomsten in grote mate kan verklaren en het richt zich in het bijzonder op de vier grote westerse staten: de Verenigde Staten, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, Frankrijk, en Duitsland. Sinds het einde van de oorlog zijn alle vier de staten liberale democratieën geweest met aanzienlijke politieke, militaire, en economische capaciteiten, maar met opmerkelijk andere ervaringen met oorlog in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw. De VS en het VK waren de overwinnaars van de Tweede Wereldoorlog, hoewel Groot-Brittannië een hoge aanslag op de samenleving moest incasseren met daarbij het ineenstorten van het Britse koloniale rijk, terwijl de overwinning voor de VS relatief kostenvrij was en het daardoor een supermacht werd. Frankrijk, nominaal een van de overwinnende staten, leed een plotselinge militaire nederlaag in het begin van de oorlog, verloor controle over haar grondgebied en werd afhankelijk van andere staten om de nationale soevereiniteit te herstellen. Duitsland, tenslotte, was militair volledig verslagen en moreel gediskwalificeerd toen de gruwelen van de Holocaust bekend werden; het werd bezet en bleef dat na de oorlog, terwijl West-Duitsland gedwongen herbouwd werd als democratie. Met andere woorden de casestudies laten een duidelijke variatie toe op de onafhankelijke variabele – overwinning en nederlaag – door twee extreme cases – de VS en Duitsland – en twee moeilijke cases – het VK en Frankrijk – te behandelen.

Deze vier cases zijn ook om belangrijk om een andere reden: het beleid van de vier grote westerse staten heeft de fundamenteen gelegd voor de mondiale multilaterale orde zoals wij die nu kennen. Tegelijk heeft elk van de vier specifieke nationale gedragspatronen die wij uiteen lijken te lopen als het aankomt op de inzet van militaire middelen of de houding ten opzichte van soevereiniteit.

Het boek onderzoekt en test dit betoog door een combinatie van kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve methoden. Dit omvat regressieanalyse met verschillende metingen van nederlaag en verlies samen met metingen van naoorlogs gebruik van militaire en diplomatieke middelen van alle deelnemers aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Het grootste
deel van het onderzoek richtte zich op de vier casestudies – de VS, het VK, Frankrijk, en Duitsland – door middel van historische analyse, counterfactual gedachtenexperimenten, inhoudsanalyse van documenten, en vijftig interviews met Amerikaanse, Britse, Franse, en Duitse beleidsmakers. Uit deze variëteit van methoden kwamen de volgende bevindingen naar voren.

De eerste van de bevindingen van het boek is dat ervaringen met oorlog de neiging beïnvloeden van overwinnaars en verliezers om meer of minder te vertrouwen op militaire dan wel diplomatieke middelen in hun grand strategy, en dat dit effect plaatsvindt ongeacht hun relatieve materiele capaciteiten, alignment, en regimetypen. De regressieanalyse levert duidelijke resultaten op wanneer het gaat om de ervaringen van de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Staten die bezetting hadden ervaren, zich hadden overgegeven, aan de verliezende kant hadden gevochten, of hoge aantallen burger- en militaire slachtoffers hadden geleden, waren significent minder geneigd om militaire middelen te gebruiken na de oorlog of daarmee te dreigen, en meer geneigd om lid te zijn van internationale organisaties of diplomatieke vertegenwoordiging te gebruiken. De overwinnaars waren daarentegen meer geneigd om militaire middelen in te zetten na de oorlog, en minder geneigd diplomatieke middelen te gebruiken. Overwinning en nederlaag leiden ook tot andere combinaties, wat suggereert dat beleidsmakers diplomatie en militaire middelen zien als alternatieven van elkaar. Bovendien is een onbetwistbare overwinning in een totale oorlog belangrijker dan een kleine nederlaag in een beperkte oorlog. De casestudies ondersteunen deze eerste bevinding en laten zien dat Amerikaanse, Britse, Franse, en Duitse opvattingen over militaire en diplomatieke middelen, en de betrekkingen tussen staat, krijgsmacht, en samenleving, elkaar versterken in het effect op hun gedrag.

De tweede bevinding is dat de ervaringen met overwinning en nederlaag duidelijke gevolgen hebben voor de inzichten, legitimiteit, en institutionele invloed van de actoren die betrokken zijn in de ontwikkeling en implementatie van nationale strategie. De actoren die betrokken zijn bij het maken van grand strategy binnen de natiestaat zijn gegroepeerd als volgt: civiele beleidsmakers, militaire beleidsmakers, en burgers. De betrekkingen tussen deze ‘drie-eenheid’ van staat, samenleving, en krijgsmacht bepalen wiens strategische opvattingen een grotere invloed kunnen uitoefenen op beleid. Dit verklaart waarom opvattingen in stand gehouden worden over meerdere decennia, en waarom niet alle overwinningen en nederlagen even zwaar wegen. Schuld en krediet worden anders verdeeld bij overwinning en nederlaag, en sommige ideeën veranderen daardoor nauwelijks. De combinaties van opvattingen en betrekkingen leiden tot nationale specifieke patronen van strategisch gedrag die voortduren lang na de oorspronkelijke ervaringen, ondanks veranderingen in het internationale systeem en tussen verschillende regeringen.

De VS en Duitsland, als de twee extreme cases, illustreren het beste hoe veranderingen in strategische opvattingen en de binnenlandse verdeling van invloed en legitimiteit

Duitsland biedt een sterk contrast met de VS. De opvattingen van zowel Duitse beleidsmakers als de samenleving waren al drastisch veranderd door de oorlog, waardoor Duitsland na de oorlog overschakelde naar een hoogst defensieve en beperkte militaire doctrine. Deze pacifistische houding werd verder versterkt, omdat de totale Duitse nederlaag in de Tweede Wereldoorlog de vooroorlogse, traditionele dominantie van de Duitse krijgsmacht en de uitvoerende macht delegitimeerde. In naoorlogs Duitsland, waren zowel de uitvoerende macht als de krijgsmacht sterk institutioneel ingeperkt, wat het vermogen om besluitvaardig militaire middelen in te zetten verder verminderde.

De twee meer ambigue cases illustreren de specifieke effecten van ervaringen met oorlog. De Britse overwinning in de Tweede Wereldoorlog ging, in tegenstelling tot die van de VS, gepaard met grote sociale kosten. De Conservatieven werden geassocieerd met zowel het falen van de vooroorlogse periode en appeasement, als met het succesvolle leiderschap van Churchill. Labour kreeg daarentegen het krediet voor de wijze waarop het Britse thuisfront werd gemobiliseerd voor de oorlog, waardoor de populaire mythe van de ‘people’s war’ vorm kreeg. De overwinning in de Falklandoorlog verzekerde de voortzetting van de Churchillianse mythe na het fiasco in het Suezkanaal, onderhield daarmee het Britse gevoel van exceptionalisme ten opzichte van het Europese continent, en van een specifiek soort populistisch leiderschap in buitenlands beleid.

Een nog complexere ervaring is die van Frankrijk. De schuld van de vernederende Franse nederlaag in de Tweede Wereldoorlog lag in de vooroorlogse verdeeldheid tussen politiek links en rechts dat effectieve militaire innovatie had ondermijnd, evenals een goede integratie van Franse militaire doctrine en bondgenootschappen. Pas met de oprichting van de Vijfde Republiek en de terugkeer naar de macht van De Gaulle werden de politieke spanningen van het twintigste-eeuws Frankrijk definitief verminderd. De algemeen geaccepteerde naoorlogse consensus gaf de Franse president als enige de
legitimiteit om binnen het ‘gereserveerde domein’ van buitenlands- en defensiebeleid te opereren. Deze uitvoerende autonomie maakte en maakt het mogelijk voor de Franse staat om besluitvaardig en coherent diplomatieke en militaire middelen in te zetten voor Franse veiligheid en internationale autonomie.

De derde en laatste bevinding is dat ervaringen met oorlog niet alleen de bereidheid bepalen van beleidsmakers om militaire dan wel diplomatieke middelen te gebruiken, maar dat ze ook bepalen welke combinaties daarvan beleidsmakers denken dat het meest effectief zijn. Overwinning en nederlaag zijn namelijk ook doorslaggevend voor de centrale opvattingen van beleidsmakers. Deze opvattingen hebben te maken met of beleidsmakers geloven dat ze in een machtsbalans- of in een dreigingsbalanswereld leven, en hoe staten vertrouwen op militaire capaciteiten (intern balanceren) en bondgenootschappen (extern balanceren). Samen bepalen zij de kwaliteit, richting, en cohesie van nationale strategie, zoals naar voren komt uit de vier cases.

Amerikaanse beleidsmakers beschouwden de VS als onzeker en onveilig na het plotseling instorten van Europa in 1940 en de verrassingsaanval in Pearl Harbor in 1941. De machtsbalans in stand houden was niet langer voldoende, aangezien Europeanen niet in staat leken om weerstand te bieden aan autoritaire staten en gemakkelijk te verleiden waren door extremistische ideologie. Amerikaanse beleidsmakers probeerden tegen elke prijs een terugkeer naar het zogenaamde Amerikaanse isolationisme te vermijden. In plaats daarvan joegen zij Amerikaans leiderschap na en accepteerden zij verstrikkende bondgenootschappen. Amerikaanse beleidsmakers kozen voor een permanente militaire aanwezigheid in Europa en Azië, en hielden die ook na de Koude Oorlog in stand. Deze opvattingen speelden een belangrijke rol bij de beslissingen om de kosten voor Europese veiligheid niet door te spelen naar de Europeanen, maar leidden ook tot Amerikaanse inmenging in conflicten zoals Vietnam. Zoals de counterfactual gedachtenexperimenten illustreerden, waren deze keuzes opmerkelijk aangezien zij een meer kostbare en risicovolle strategie vertegenwoordigden voor de VS, niet alleen als de Koude Oorlog daadwerkelijk was geëscaleerd, maar ook in de periode daarna, toen de VS duidelijk niet meer tegenover een existentiële dreiging stond.

De traditionele Britse strategie waarin vertrouwd werd op off-shore balanceren om een continentale machtsbalans in stand te houden, voldeed niet langer nadat Britse beleidsmakers faalden om de val van Europa en de Duitse overwinning in 1940 te voorkomen. Tijdens de Koude Oorlog verbond het VK zichzelf met het continent via het NAVO bondgenootschap en door de permanente plaatsing van troepen in Europa. Dit was een opvallende beslissingen aangezien het hadden ook had kunnen vertrouwen op een nationaal kernwapen. Britse beleidsmakers beschouwden het VK nog steeds als exceptioneel ten opzichte van het continent, ook al was het tegelijktijd afhankelijk van de ‘speciale relatie’ met de VS, zeker na de Suezcrisis. Als een gevolg daarvan zijn Britse troepen constant overbelast en risicende het VK verstrikking in Amerikaans beleid,
hoewel minder risicovolle en kostbare alternatieve strategieën beschikbaar waren en zijn.

De plotselinge en catastrofale nederlaag in juni 1940 transformeerde Frans strategisch denken over diplomatieke en militaire middelen. Ervaringen tijdens de oorlog lieten beleidsmakers twijfelen aan de betrouwbaarheid van Frankrijk’s Brits-Amerikaanse bondgenoten. Haar militaire strategie had gefaald, aangezien vooroorlogse Franse beleidsmakers die niet hadden aangepast aan veranderingen in militaire technologie. Franse beleidsmakers probeerden daarom tegen elke prijs afhankelijkheid van anderen te vermijden. Vooral Generaal De Gaulle geloofde dat het NAVO bondgenootschap Frankrijk slechts verstrikte zonder het daadwerkelijk te beschermen, aangezien het Amerikaanse kernwapen Europa geen geloofwaardige bescherming kon bieden. Franse beleidsmakers kozen daarom voor een autonoom nationaal kernwapen en de grote kosten die daarbij hoorden. De Franse grand strategy die het resultaat was van deze beslissingen riskeerde dat de VS zich zou vervreemden van Frankrijk en Europa zou verlaten, precies toen Frankrijk een Amerikaanse aanwezigheid het meest nodig had.


In alle vier de cases werden en worden deze en andere opvattingen die gebaseerd waren op de nationale ervaring herhaald in beleidsdocumenten, in speeches, en in interviews met beleidsmakers.

Door deze veelzijdige methodologische aanpak kan het boek twee belangrijke bijdragen leveren aan bestaand academisch werk. De eerste bijdrage is aan het werk over de erfenissen van oorlog: de literatuur over collectieve geheugen, die over het gebruik van analogieën door beleidsmakers, en die over oorlogsnoemheid. Dit bestaande werk laat zien dat oorlog grote sociale gevolgen heeft en belangrijk is op crisismomenten, maar maakt vaak niet duidelijk wat het exacte effect is van overwinning en nederlaag op de lange termijn beslissingen van beleidsmakers. Dit boek gaat in op hoe zulke ervaringen blijvende lessen opleveren en hoe die belangrijke strategische keuzes beïnvloeden. Het biedt een systematisch betoog over de oorsprong van zulke lessen en waarom ze in stand gehouden blijven, ondanks latere conflicten.
De tweede bijdrage is aan de literatuur over de oorsprong van grand strategy en de rol van opvattingen met betrekking tot binnenlandse instituties, internationale structuren, en materiële macht. Het betoog vormt zo een uitgewerkte versie van neoklassiek realisme die ik ervaring gedreven realisme noem. Ervaring gedreven realisme theoreetiseert hoe zowel nationale strategische opvattingen als de verhoudingen tussen de staat, samenleving, en de krijgsmacht bepaald worden door de uitkomsten van oorlogen, en op hun beurt het strategische gedrag van staten bepalen binnen de structurele beperkingen van de internationale omgeving. Het biedt een betoog over de oorsprongen van opvattingen over strategie, wanneer en waarom die constant blijven, en wanneer en waarom ze veranderen.

Het verhaal van dit boek is daarom meer dan een verhaal over hoe analogieën gebruikt en misbruikt worden. Het maakt duidelijk dat er grote verschillen bestaan in zienswijzen aan beide kanten van de Atlantische Oceaan en dat die hun oorsprong vinden in ervaringen met oorlog. Het is ook niet te verwachten dat die zienswijzen snel zullen veranderen.

Het betoog van dit boek is belangrijk voor iedereen die geeft om vermeende lessen uit de nationale geschiedenis en de implicaties voor huidig beleid. Terwijl wij niet gebonden zijn aan het verleden, oefent het een bepalende invloed uit op ons denken over de toekomst. Er is een duidelijk gevaar dat beleid gebaseerd zal zijn op een mythisch begrip van het verleden. Strategie bestaat uit het afstemmen van doelen en middelen; per definitie zijn er geen ongevaarlijke vooroordelen in strategisch denken, vooral als die vooroordelen onbewust zijn. Een niet of nauwelijks overwogen terughoudendheid of principiële oppositie tegen het gebruik van militaire middelen is even verontrustend als een niet of nauwelijks overwogen enthousiasme ten opzichte van oorlog. Zowel ‘altijd Munich’ als ‘nooit meer oorlog’ zijn slechte modellen om buitenlands beleid op te baseren. Overreageren in Irak in 2003 is een even gevaarlijk idee als het niet coherent reageren in de Oekraïne Crisis, of de opkomst van de zogenaamde Islamitische Staat in Syrië en Irak in 2014.

In termen van internationale dreigingen en uitdagingen, zullen de komende decennia beduidend anders zijn voor de VS, het VK, Frankrijk, en Duitsland -dan de hele periode sinds 1945, hetzij door een steeds instabiel Midden Oosten, een revanchistisch Rusland, of een opkomend China. Er schuilt groot gevaar in het te breed toepassen van lessen uit het verleden van het Westen, en in het falen om te begrijpen dat de wereld anders is of niet te accepteren op welke wijze het anders is. De paden die onbegaan zijn, zullen over het hoofd gezien worden, en de toekomst zou het verleden kunnen herhalen om redenen die zowel tragisch als vermijdbaar zijn.