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POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARY STRATEGY
Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models

By CHARLES L. GLASER*

THE American cold war debate over U.S. national security policy often turned on divergent beliefs about the consequences of competitive and cooperative military policies. This debate had two components. The first focused on military capabilities and implicitly assumed that the basic goals of the Soviet Union were fixed; its central concern was to determine what military capabilities the United States required to deter or defeat the Soviet Union. The second component focused on what I term political consequences—the effect of U.S. policy on the basic goals of the Soviet Union and on Soviet views of U.S. resolve. Sharp disagreements about political consequences played an important role in dividing the American cold war debate over military policy. For example, proponents of arms control believed that cooperation would preserve peace by reducing superpower tensions; proponents of an American buildup supported the opposite policies in the belief that only strong, competitive American policies could provide the credibility required to deter implacable Soviet leaders, even if less competitive policies would have provided adequate military capabilities. Although these beliefs were influential, rarely were arguments about political consequences thoroughly developed; instead, analysts tended to use arguments about military requirements to support policies they believed would yield desirable political consequences.

Judgments about the political consequences of military policy will be of continuing, if not even greater, importance in coming decades. With the cold war over, future U.S. and European security will depend more on the long-term evolution of Russia’s international goals than on changes in U.S. and Russian military capabilities. U.S. military policy

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should therefore be designed primarily to encourage Russia to adopt benign goals. Similarly, the success of a new security system in Europe will depend on whether it allows the major Western European powers to avoid military policies that could damage their currently good political relations.

This article addresses three questions related to the political consequences of military policy. First, which military policies yield good political results, and which yield bad ones? Second, and closely related, under what conditions do these good or bad results occur? Third, what are a country's military options for balancing political and military requirements?

In answering these questions, it is helpful to describe a country's military options along two dimensions—offense/defense and unilateral/bilateral (with bilateral referring to a reliance on arms control). Military policies that are offensive and unilateral are generally considered more competitive, while those that are defensive and bilateral are considered more cooperative. In the following discussion defender refers to the country making choices about its military policy, and adversary refers to the country against which the defender is planning to protect itself. Broadly speaking, we want to know when the defender should pursue cooperative policies to achieve good political results and when competitive policies are preferable.

A defender's military policy can generate three types of political consequences, as follows:

1. It can alter the adversary's need to pursue security by changing the threat to the adversary's military capability and/or by changing the adversary's understanding of the defender's goals. Military policies that convince the adversary that the defender is interested in expansion usually generate bad political results by decreasing the adversary's security. The adversary then often adopts dangerous foreign and military policies to restore its security.

2. It can change the adversary's interest in expansion for nonsecurity

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reasons, for example, to increase its wealth or spread its political ideology, when this expansion is unnecessary for increasing the state's security. Military policies that increase the benefits the adversary sees in non-security-driven expansion make the adversary harder to deter, a bad political result.

3. It can influence the defender's credibility by changing the adversary's assessment of its determination to protect its interests. Military policies that raise doubts about the defender's determination generate bad political results; those that communicate resolve generate good results.

Summary of the Basic Argument

The general argument made in this article is that analyses that fail to consider political consequences risk prescribing either too much or too little military capability and, often more important, the wrong kind, which can reduce states' security. The basic theoretical underpinnings of this argument derive from Robert Jervis's distinction between the spiral and deterrence models. According to Jervis, these models are distinguished primarily by the intentions of one's adversary: the deterrence model applies when the defender faces an expansionist adversary and prescribes competitive policies; the spiral model applies when the defender faces a status quo power, explains conflict as resulting fundamentally from the combination of international anarchy and the security dilemma, and prescribes cooperative policies. Both models, but especially the spiral model, incorporate the likelihood of misperceptions. The spiral model holds that cognitive biases cause the adversary to exaggerate the defender's hostility, thereby provoking an unduly hostile response to competitive policies. The deterrence model holds that cooperation encourages the adversary to underestimate unjustly the defender's resolve and therefore to dismiss threats made in earnest, which can lead to war.

These models provide a valuable starting point, but they are ultimately inadequate and confusing. I argue that we need to redefine the types of adversaries and expand our description of the ways in which political consequences are generated. My arguments are primarily deductive, and the illustrations draw heavily on U.S.-Soviet interactions during the cold war.

I begin by reformulating the types of adversaries. Jervis categorizes adversaries in terms of their intentions, specifically, their interest in non-security expansion: the deterrence model applies to expansionist states, the spiral model to status quo states. I argue that this approach, by focusing on intentions instead of motivations, overlooks that states can

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have two basically different motives for expansion—to gain the benefits of nonsecurity expansion and to increase their security. Categorizing states in terms of both types of motivations identifies types of states not captured in the standard dichotomy, including states interested in expansion for both security and nonsecurity reasons, which are best managed with a balance of prescriptions from the spiral and deterrence models. This reformulation also makes clear that the standard models are based in different theories of international relations; that is, the deterrence model rejects basic structural realist assumptions that provide the foundation for the spiral model.

I next explore the interaction of a variety of factors—including the defender’s military policy, the severity of the security dilemma, and the intensity of the adversary’s misperceptions—in producing political consequences.

Subsequent sections make the case that military policy can generate political consequences in important ways not discussed in the standard formulation. First, whereas Jervis emphasizes psychological sources of exaggerated insecurity in the spiral model, I draw on recent work on national-level sources of misperception to argue that misperceptions are likely to flow from shortcomings in the adversary’s overall evaluative capability, that is, from weaknesses in its institutions and political process. This approach suggests that misperceptions are more prevalent than if they were produced only by cognitive biases, provides different criteria for determining the severity of the adversary’s misperceptions, and can recommend different policies for dealing with them. Second, the spiral and deterrence models assert that the defender’s military policy generates political consequences by changing how individual leaders understand the defender; but they overlook a second, often more important type of interaction—a shift in the balance of domestic power within the adversary’s state while its leaders’ views are left unchanged. Considering shifts in the domestic power balance, instead of individual learning, identifies different conditions under which competitive policies and cooperative policies will generate desirable political consequences.

The next section explores the types of military policies available to a defender that needs to pursue a cooperative policy and how to choose from among them. The spiral model’s most prominent recommendation calls for the defender to initiate concessions to correct the adversary’s exaggerated sense of insecurity. In fact, however, the defender may have a variety of additional military options that would be more effective at lessening the adversary’s insecurity and that would be less risky for the defender. These include shifting unilaterally to a more defensive doc-
trine; pursuing arms control agreements that shift the balance of deployed forces toward defense; and deploying reactive offense. Which approach is preferable depends on the motivations of the adversary, the quality of its evaluative capabilities, and the magnitude of the security dilemma. In addition, the defender’s choice depends partly on its own domestic political constraints, which could preclude some otherwise desirable options.

The final section briefly considers implications for U.S. military policy in the post–cold war order.

**Types of Adversaries and the Defender’s Political Objectives**

**The Adversary’s Motives for Expansion**

The nature of the adversary, specifically, its motives for expansion, determines the political consequences the defender should pursue. In broad terms, a state’s motives for expansion can be categorized as either nonsecurity-driven or security-driven. This categorization diverges from Jervis, who categorizes an adversary according to its *intentions*—its interest in expansion. Because a state can have two fundamentally different *motives* for expansion, however, it is important to focus on motives instead of on intentions.

Nonsecurity expansion arises from the state’s desire to increase its wealth, territory, and/or prestige, to spread its ideology, and so forth, when this expansion is unnecessary for increasing the state’s security. I use the term *greedy* for a state willing to incur costs or risks for nonsecurity expansion; by contrast, a *not-greedy* state is unwilling to run risks for nonsecurity expansion.⁴

We also need terms for distinguishing states that are inclined to be interested in security-driven expansion from those that are not. In broad terms, we can speak of *potentially insecure* states and *always-secure* states.

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⁴ I use “not-greedy” to refer to states frequently termed “status quo” and “greedy” to refer to states frequently termed “expansionist” or “aggressor” states. This somewhat awkward terminology is designed to avoid the following shortcomings of the common terminology. First, a status quo state may in fact be unwilling to accept the status quo—it is satisfied with existing international borders and thus uninterested in expansion, except if necessary to protect its security in the status quo. Given this definition, status quo powers may be willing to launch wars, and a country facing a status quo state may therefore need to deter it. Furthermore, some analysts argue there are no status quo powers, since all states are willing to pay something to increase their security. This observation, however, overlooks that the standard usage of “status quo” allows for this possibility. On different uses of “status quo,” see Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), 84–86, 125. Second, states can be interested in expansion for two types of reasons, but “expansionist,” as commonly used, blurs this distinction—often but not always referring to what I have termed a “greedy state.” On related issues, see Jervis (fn. 3), 48–50.
The former are inclined to be insecure in the face of military capabilities that they believe threaten their ability to defend the status quo. Although I sometimes refer to these states as insecure states, such a state could in fact be quite secure if it possessed military capabilities that provided high confidence in its ability to deter and defeat all challengers. By contrast, always-secure states recognize that the defender is interested only in protecting the status quo and would employ its military capabilities only in response to aggression. As a result, unlike a potentially insecure state, an always-secure state is not made insecure by the deployment of capabilities that threaten its ability to protect the status quo. I sometimes refer to always-secure states simply as secure states. Although rarely explicit on this point, analysts commonly assume that the adversary is an always-secure state. For example, analyses of military requirements that hold that the adversary’s basic goals are fixed make this assumption, since otherwise deploying potentially threatening capabilities would create insecurity that could in turn change the adversary’s goals. During the cold war debate the Soviet Union was often characterized as always-secure, that is, never motivated by the need to offset Western military capabilities.\(^5\)

Assuming these motivations (greed and insecurity) arise from different sources\(^6\) and are therefore essentially independent of each other, we can define four basic types of states along these two dimensions: secure greedy, insecure greedy, insecure not-greedy and secure not-greedy.\(^8\) (See Figure 1.)

The standard models, by contrast, cover only two of the basic types of

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6 They may, however, sometimes share a single source. For example, poor evaluative capabilities might allow a state to justify its greedy actions in terms of insecurity and also to come to believe its justifications; similarly, such a state might exaggerate its insecurity because it fails to recognize that its own greedy policies provoked the alliances that formed to oppose it. On these possibilities, see Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Robert J. C. Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969).

7 This formulation assumes these are dichotomous variables. There is, however, a continuum for each feature, for example, between not-greedy and extremely greedy states. Where the adversary lies along these continua can be important in weighing policy options.

8 Defining countries’ insecurity with a single aggregate measure could be problematic. For example, is a country that sees a minor threat to vital interests more or less insecure than one that sees major threats to secondary interests? Even assuming they were equally insecure, might not the different nature of the insecurity demand quite different responses? To keep things reasonably simple, however, I assume that we can refer to the extent of a country’s insecurity without specifying its detailed nature. I am indebted to Chaim Kaufmann for suggesting this refinement.
states. The deterrence model describes certain secure greedy states. The spiral model describes certain not-greedy states motivated by insecurity.

A note on the terminology used here is necessary: spiral and deterrence refer to Jervis’s models. I do not use these labels in my own framework, but instead describe states in terms of their motivations and other variables that influence political consequences. Jervis’s models describe only some of the possible states in the relevant categories. Thus, for example, his spiral model describes insecure not-greedy states that suffer from cognitive misperceptions; but there can be other types of insecure not-greedy states, such as those that do not suffer from misperceptions and those that suffer from misperceptions generated by other than cognitive sources.

The following discussion briefly lays out the political consequences the...

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We should be aware that the label “deterrence model” creates confusion. The deterrence model (in Perception and Misperception, Jervis actually refers to it as deterrence theory) is often mistakenly taken for deterrence theory in general, which it is not. It draws on “second wave” deterrence theory, which developed many of the arguments that are contrasted with the spiral model, and makes a number of restrictive assumptions. In general, deterrence theory says little about (1) how expansionist the adversary is; (2) the extent of the countries’ common interests; (3) how the adversary views the defender’s motivations; (4) how concessions will be interpreted; and (5) the extent to which the defender’s credibility is connected across disparate issues. In contrast, the deterrence model takes a position on all of these issues: (1) the adversary is highly expansionist (greedy); (2) common interests are small; (3) the adversary understands that the defender is a status quo (not-greedy) power; (4) concessions are interpreted to reflect weakness and thus generate misperceptions of the defender’s resolve; and (5) credibility is tightly connected across issues. On the second wave, see Robert Jervis, “Deterrence Theory Revisited,” World Politics 31 (January 1979).

10 Although I focus on two features of the adversary, a third feature—the extent to which the defender’s credibility is connected across disparate issues—also plays a central role in Jervis’s description of these models. Each of the above cases can be further divided along this dimension. In terms of the standard models, the deterrence model holds that credibility is tightly interconnected, thereby providing an additional rationale for competition; the spiral model sees little connection between credibility on disparate issues and, consequently, little collateral risk in cooperation.
defender should pursue for each type of adversary. When facing an *always-secure greedy* adversary, the defender should pursue two types of political results. (1) It is usually most immediately important that the defender’s military policy communicate resolve to protect its interests. Military policies that raise doubts about the defender’s resolve could encourage aggression, even if they provide the defender with adequate military capabilities to defeat an invasion and/or inflict overwhelming retaliatory costs. (2) The defender should also pursue policies that might reduce the adversary’s greediness, for example, policies that shift the domestic balance in the adversary’s country by reducing the influence of groups that favor nonsecurity expansion and bolstering the influence of moderates committed to the status quo.

When facing a *potentially insecure not-greedy* adversary, all else being equal, the defender should choose policies that increase the adversary’s security over those that decrease the adversary’s security, because the latter tend to increase its incentives for war. International relations theory provides a variety of reasons for the increase in the probability of war as states become more insecure. For example, as the adversary’s insecurity increases, expansion becomes more attractive if acquiring additional territory would provide a buffer zone against invasion or additional resources for defense and/or would deny those resources to the defender. Military policies that increase the adversary’s insecurity could therefore leave the defender worse off, since the adversary’s greater willingness to fight a war could more than offset the increased deterrent value of the defender’s enhanced military capability. This tension lies at the heart of the security dilemma.

While attempting to reduce the insecurity of an insecure not-greedy adversary, the defender must also worry about deterring that adversary. Policies pursued to reduce the adversary’s insecurity could increase the

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11 This claim is potentially misleading, since it may incorrectly suggest that the defender would never want an offensive doctrine. However, as discussed below, in certain circumstances offense does not increase insecurity. Thus, although the objective of reducing the adversary’s insecurity tends to militate against offensive military doctrines, it does not necessarily preclude them. Further, although not addressed in this article, if the defender is interested in compellence (in addition to deterrence), it might want to increase the adversary’s insecurity, then promising to reduce its threat to the adversary’s security in return for satisfaction of its compellent demands.

12 Jervis (fn. 1), 168–69; on the cumulativity of resources, see Van Evera (fn. 1, 1984), chap. 5.

13 Additional reasons for the increase in the probability of war as states become more insecure include the following: (1) insecure states become less willing to compromise in political disputes; (2) they are more inclined to adopt more confrontational tactics in crises; and (3) they have increased incentives for preventive war. See Van Evera (fn. 1, 1984), pt. 1; on preventive war, see Jack S. Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” *World Politics* 40 (October 1987).
probability of war if they weaken the defender’s deterrent (its military capability or the adversary’s assessment of its resolve) more quickly than they reduce the adversary’s insecurity.

When facing an insecure greedy adversary, the challenge to the defender is still greater, since the defender’s military policy must address both types of danger simultaneously. For this type of state the total benefits of going to war equal the benefits of nonsecurity expansion plus the benefits of increased security. Because an insecure greedy power is interested in nonsecurity expansion, it is harder to deter than an equally insecure state, which increases the defender’s military requirements. The acquisition, in turn, of additional military capability by the defender often increases the adversary’s insecurity, making it even harder to deter.

Finally, for the sake of completeness, we briefly discuss the always-secure not-greedy state, which has no desire to expand and therefore does not threaten the defender’s security. The defender is likely to view this type of state as a friend or ally, not an adversary, unless it misperceives the state’s motivations. In the case of a friend or ally, the defender’s principal objective should be to preserve the good political relations that enable this state to discount the defender’s military potential, thereby insuring that the defender’s military strategy does not become a source of insecurity and tensions. As long as other (nonmilitary) factors do not strain their relationship, the defender can deploy military capabilities without risk to hedge against current or future uncertainties in the state’s intentions, since these capabilities will not decrease the adversary’s security and bring the associated dangers. If relations sour for other reasons, however, making the opposing state unwilling to discount the defender’s military capability, the defender’s military policy will influence the other state’s security and in turn the defender’s security.

IMPORTANCE OF INSECURE GREEDY STATES

An explicit recognition that the adversary can be simultaneously greedy and insecure restores a necessary balance to the prescriptions offered by the spiral and deterrence models, and more generally to prescriptions based in analysis of the adversary’s motivations. Overlooking this possibility can generate flawed policy prescriptions. For example, although


15 Although conceptually distinct, the argument that the adversary can be simultaneously greedy and insecure can lead to the same policies as the argument that the defender’s policy should be designed to account for uncertainty about whether the spiral or deterrence model applies; Jervis (fn. 3) suggests the latter (p. 111).
the deterrence model prescribes only competitive policies when confronting an expansionist (greedy) adversary, a mix of competitive and cooperative policies is appropriate if the greedy state is also insecure. Likewise, the spiral model prescribes cooperative policies when facing an insecure adversary, but, again, a mix of cooperative and competitive policies is appropriate if the adversary is also greedy.

Beyond its value for prescription, a model of insecure greedy states provides important insights into historical cases. World War I is offered as the classic case of spiral model phenomena leading to war. The alignment of France, Russia, and Britain was primarily an effort to protect the status quo, but it contributed to German insecurity by generating fears of encirclement, which increased German incentives for war. Some critics of this formulation who hold to the deterrence model argue that Germany was motivated by greed, while others argue that British cooperation encouraged the Germans to pursue risky policies in 1914. Framing this as a choice between policies designed to deal with insecure states and those designed to deal with greedy states may miss the key point, however: Germany may be more accurately described as an insecure greedy state that could not be adequately dealt with by either purely cooperative or purely competitive policies.

Misunderstood Theoretical Foundations

Disagreements about the adversary's motivations often reflect more basic disagreements about international relations theory. Models that describe potentially insecure states are entirely consistent with the basic claims of structural theories of international relations, whereas models that describe always-secure states reject these claims. Structural theories hold that states are inclined to be insecure because the international system is anarchic. Since other states may harbor malign objectives, it is imprudent to overlook the threat inherent in opposing military capabilities. Insecurity develops when states face a security dilemma—a situation in

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16 Ibid., 92–94.


We should note that arguments that the Germans were interested in expansion and intentionally provoked World War I are not inconsistent with the central claims of the spiral model. These arguments suggest that the war was not primarily inadvertent, but discrediting the spiral model requires going a step further—showing that German interest in war was not driven by insecurity.


19 On structural theories, see Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).
which the military forces required by a state to protect itself threaten the forces other states need to protect themselves; in that situation states seeking security cannot avoid threatening each other’s military capabilities. In sharp contrast, models of always-secure states posit an adversary that is confident that the defender will not start a war but instead would only employ its military forces after the adversary starts a war. Consequently, the defender’s forces do not create insecurity, even when they threaten the adversary’s ability to defend itself. In effect, models of always-secure states argue that the defender never faces a security dilemma.

Since structural theories explain states’ interest in expansion as motivated primarily by insecurity, models of greedy states must turn to other theories to explain their motivations. Such theories focus on the characteristics of individual states and/or their leaders. During the cold war, for example, some American hard-liners understood the Soviet Union to be a secure highly expansionist (greedy) state that was motivated by the specific characteristics of its communist system and Marxist-Leninist ideology.

This description of the theoretical foundations of states’ motivations for expansion highlights two common misconceptions about Jervis’s spiral and deterrence models. The first is that structural realists, working from structural balance-of-power theories, are proponents of the deterrence model and its competitive policies. As we have just seen, however, models of secure greedy states are inconsistent with these structural theories and hold instead that the adversary can ignore the pressures flowing from international anarchy. The second common misconception is that the spiral model is fundamentally a model of misperceptions and thus not a structural realist model. However, insecurity, which lies at the core of the spiral model, is predicted by structural theories that do not rely on the possibility of misperceptions. The basic dangers described by the spiral model cannot be eliminated by eliminating misperceptions. Jervis’s

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20 Confusion on this point is common, however, with analysts arguing that structural theories predict that states will try to maximize their power, not their security, which could lead to expansionist behavior by secure states. Some realists have made this argument, but Waltz does not. See Kenneth N. Waltz, “Reflections on Theory of International Relations: A Response to My Critics,” in Robert O. Keohane, ed., Neorealism and Its Critics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 334; and Barry R. Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), 68–69.

21 Thus, the deterrence model rejects third image explanations and is built on first and/or second image theories. On these categories of explanations, see Kenneth N. Waltz, Man, the State and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

spiral model should therefore be understood as having much of its foundation in structural theories. Of course, insecurity could also have other sources. Jervis’s description of the spiral model identifies various cognitive biases that could fuel exaggerated insecurity; as discussed below, similar misperceptions could be produced by flawed national-level evaluative capabilities.

**Factors Determining Political Consequences of Military Policy**

**Type of Military Policy**

This section explores the type of military policy the defender should pursue to generate desirable political consequences. It assumes the adversary can be viewed as a unitary actor and that its leaders are clear-sighted. Following sections consider the implications of misperceptions and of divergent views within the adversary’s ruling elite.

It is useful to divide the defender’s military options along two dimensions: an offense/defense dimension and a unilateral/bilateral dimension. The adversary may infer the defender’s motivations partly from the type of military missions—offensive or defensive—it plans to perform. Similarly, the adversary’s assessments of the defender’s motives and resolve can be influenced by whether the defender acquires its military capabilities unilaterally or partly through arms control agreements. Military policies that are offensive and unilateral are generally considered more competitive, whereas those that are defensive and rely on arms control are usually viewed as more cooperative.

Whether the defender should choose a cooperative or a competitive policy is constrained by the severity of the security dilemma. The severity of the security dilemma decreases as offense and defense become easier to distinguish, since the defender becomes better able to pursue defensive policies that do not look like offensive ones. The security dilemma also decreases as the effectiveness of offense declines relative to defense. When the offense-defense balance favors offense, the defender may be unable to afford defensive capabilities; an offensive strategy, however, threatens the adversary’s capability to protect itself and therefore risks

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23 Although Jervis’s chapter emphasizes misperceptions, it is clear on this point. See Jervis (fn. 3), 62–67.
24 I use “bilateral” to refer to policies in which the defender uses arms control to achieve the objectives of its military policy. Bilateral policies do not include alliances made by the defender to balance against the adversary; such alliances would be part of a unilateral policy.
25 These terms can be a source of confusion, however. As we will see below, a purely defensive strategy that is effected unilaterally will have most of the key features of a cooperative policy.
decreasing the adversary's security. This section sets aside the constraints imposed by the security dilemma and focuses instead on determining when cooperative policies are desirable and when competitive ones are preferable. A following section focuses on how the constraints imposed by the security dilemma should influence the defender's policy.

When facing a clear-sighted secure greedy adversary, the defender's concern for its credibility would not in general favor competitive policies over cooperative ones. In examining the defender's military policy for indications of resolve, the adversary will focus on the adequacy of the defender's military capabilities. If the defender’s capabilities are inadequate, it risks communicating that it is unwilling to invest the resources necessary to protect its interests and therefore that it may be unwilling to fight to protect those interests. Military policies that appear inadequate for deterrence/defense are thus doubly dangerous—leaving the defender vulnerable to attack and raising doubts about the defender's resolve. By contrast, adequate military capabilities avoid jeopardizing the defender's credibility, even if acquired through cooperative methods. When a defensive strategy satisfies the defender’s military requirements, it also protects its credibility. Similarly, engaging in arms control negotiations would not undermine assessments of the defender’s resolve, as long as any agreement at least preserved the defender’s ability to protect itself.

In contrast, when facing a clear-sighted potentially insecure non-greedy adversary, the defender should pursue defensive policies. Arms control is useful when it increases the prospects for shifting to more defensive policies, but it has no special political advantages over unilateral methods. The defender should avoid offensive policies, because they can increase the adversary’s insecurity in two mutually reinforcing ways: first, by threatening military capabilities that the adversary believes are necessary for deterrence and/or defense; and second, by suggesting that the defender harbors malign objectives.

Whether the defender’s offense has this second effect—communicating malign objectives—depends on how it compares with the offense reasonably required by the security dilemma. If the defender deploys only those offensive capabilities required to defend the status quo, the adversary should recognize that the defender’s forces say little about its interest in nonsecurity expansion. Necessary offense could reflect benign defensive objectives as well as malign greedy objectives.

By contrast, optional offense, that is, offense that goes beyond these reasonable military requirements, is far more likely to communicate ma-

\[26\] On these points, see Jervis (fn. 1), 187–214.
lign intent by suggesting that the defender desires unnecessary military advantages.\textsuperscript{27} This is a logical conclusion even when the offense is ineffective, that is, when it does not reduce the adversary’s ability to perform necessary military missions. Thus, although a mild or nonexistent security dilemma (especially the advantage of defense over offense) can essentially eliminate the military dangers of offensive forces, it is less effective in preventing dangerous political consequences. During the 1970s, for example, some prominent analysts argued that the Soviet nuclear buildup, especially its enhancement of offensive counterforce weapons, reflected malign intentions, since the Soviets were pursuing military capabilities that would have been necessary only if they were planning to challenge Western interests. The threat to U.S. deterrent capabilities was small, however, even though the Nitze scenario and window-of-vulnerability arguments claimed otherwise.\textsuperscript{28} Nevertheless, the buildup supported the conclusion that the Soviets had malign intentions.\textsuperscript{29}

Thus, to avoid communicating malign intentions when facing a clearsighted potentially insecure not-greedy power, the defender should forgo optional offense. In addition, even though necessary offense will not mislead the adversary into adopting a more malign image of the defender, the defender should opt for a defensive military strategy simply to reduce the threat to the adversary’s military capabilities and, thereby, to its security. Further, because the line between necessary and optional offensive is often unclear, the defender should emphasize defensive capabilities in order to avoid ambiguities that could provide its adversary with grounds for inferring malign objectives.

There is a partial exception to these arguments against offense. If the defender can deploy offense in ways that are clearly a response to the adversary’s own offensive deployments, the adversary should not infer that the defender has malign objectives. Such a policy of active offense should communicate that the defender is not seeking military advantages

\textsuperscript{27} However, even optional offense might not lead the adversary to impute malign intentions to the defender, since there are other possible explanations for it, including defensive motivations, for example, deploying offense as an arms control bargaining chip. Optional offense could also be the product of the defender’s domestic politics. Since this analysis requires going beyond basic assessments of necessary capabilities, however, even an adversary with highly effective evaluative capabilities is more likely to impute malign objectives to optional offense than to necessary offense.


\textsuperscript{29} This example is more complicated than my discussion here suggests, since U.S. views on Soviet counterforce were divided. I return to this example with an alternative interpretation based on domestic political dynamics and biased national evaluative capabilities.
and is interested only in maintaining its security. Nevertheless, because it threatens the adversary's deterrent forces, even an effective policy of reactive offense will generate some insecurity.

Finally, when facing a clear-sighted insecure greedy state, the defender should choose defensive policies. This follows from the need to satisfy the requirements for clear-sighted insecure states and for clear-sighted greedy states simultaneously: potentially insecure states are usually best managed with defensive strategies, while greedy states are managed as well by defensive strategies as they are by offensive ones.

Misperceptions

Implications of Misperceptions

The political consequences of the defender's military policy are likely to be quite different from those discussed above if the adversary fails to evaluate the defender's military policy effectively. The adversary's misperceptions can intensify undesirable political consequences and narrow, or even eliminate, the defender's options for avoiding them.

In contrast to a clear-sighted adversary, a myopic secure greedy adversary can require the defender to pursue a more competitive policy. For example, an adversary expecting to find weak resolve is more likely to infer incorrectly that the defender's unilateral restraint or willingness to make concessions in arms control negotiations indicates reluctance to devote necessary resources to its defense and therefore a lack of determination to protect its interests. Similarly, an adversary bent on non-security expansion and therefore driven to believe incorrectly that "the necessary is possible" is more likely to conclude that the defender's military preparations are inadequate, reflecting a lack of resolve as well as capability, even when they are in fact adequate. To counter these misperceptions, the defender should overinvest in military capabilities, deploying forces beyond those reasonably required by strictly military assessments. Diverting scarce resources from alternative uses might help demonstrate the defender's determination to protect its interests. In ad-

30 On related points, see Van Evera (fn. 1, 1987), 12–13.
31 The discussion in the text focuses on misperceptions that increase the difficulties facing the defender, but not all misperceptions lead to worse outcomes. For example, a potentially insecure adversary that incorrectly views the defender's offense as defense will be less insecure than if it were clear-sighted. On related points, see Arthur A. Stein, "When Misperception Matters," World Politics 34 (July 1982).
dition, the defender should favor unilateral policies—that is, avoid arms control—since the adversary is inclined to misinterpret concessions.

Although overinvesting in military capabilities and avoiding arms control does not generally favor offensive strategies over defensive ones—since the effectiveness of alternative strategies depends on the offense-defense balance—it would often support an offensive strategy. For example, when defense has the advantage, an effective offensive doctrine is harder to achieve and requires larger investments; and adding offensive options to defensive capabilities provides diversified military capabilities that would be necessary only if the defender were determined to insure against even unlikely scenarios. Thus, pursuing offensive capabilities might help the defender communicate its resolve and thereby overcome the adversary’s misperceptions. Moreover, the political purposes of an offensive strategy (unlike the military purposes) might be achieved even when the defender has little prospect of acquiring an effective offensive capability, since even failed efforts to acquire offensive capabilities could communicate resolve.

Misperceptions can be just as troublesome when the defender faces a myopic insecure not-greedy adversary, but this case tends to favor cooperative policies while making competitive policies riskier. Drawing on a variety of psychological explanations, spiral theorists argue that decision makers tend to overlook the existence of a security dilemma. As I discuss below, poor national-level evaluative capabilities can generate similar results. Whatever the source of the misperception, the result is that the adversary is likely to infer that threats to its capabilities reflect the defender’s malign intentions rather than the defender’s lack of acceptable, less threatening options. Thus, with this myopic adversary (unlike the case of a clear-sighted adversary) even necessary offense is likely to

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35 Jervis (fn. 3), 67–76, 349–53; and Larson (fn. 32), 37–42.
communicate malign intentions and therefore reinforce the insecurity generated by the defender's offense.

The defender's hostility is likely to be exaggerated further if the adversary underestimates the threat it poses to the defender: the adversary might mistakenly believe that the defender recognizes that it wants only to protect the status quo and, therefore, that its capabilities do not reduce the defender's security, even though they threaten the defender's military capability;36 or the adversary's poor evaluation of its own military policy could lead it to believe that it does not threaten the defender's capabilities. If, for whatever the reason, the adversary underestimates the defender's security requirements, it will exaggerate the defender's hostility.

When facing an insecure not-greedy adversary, these misperceptions of the defender's objectives increase the importance of pursuing defensive (that is, less threatening) policies. They may also create additional reasons for arms control, beyond facilitating a shift toward defensive force postures. The defender might use arms control to reduce misperceptions by providing a forum for directly communicating beliefs about military doctrine and force requirements, the threatening nature of the adversary's forces, and its own willingness to make compromises and exercise restraint. These misperceptions, however, would make reactive offense more likely to fail, since the adversary will overlook the reactive nature of the defender's policy.

A myopic insecure not-greedy state may be harder to manage than this description suggests, however, if it becomes convinced that expansion is necessary to increase its security. Such a state might then be inclined to suffer the misperceptions that accompany greed, including underestimating the defender's resolve and capability. Moreover, even defensive policies may appear threatening, since they block expansion that the adversary believes is necessary to increase its security. This type of insecure not-greedy state resembles the myopic insecure greedy state.

The defender confronts an especially difficult problem in the myopic insecure greedy state. It might at first appear impossible to meet the prescriptions for dealing with myopic greedy states and myopic insecure states simultaneously, since in broad terms a myopic greedy adversary calls for competitive policies whereas a myopic insecure adversary requires cooperative approaches. In certain cases, however, this apparent incompatibility might be overcome by a highly effective unilateral defensive strategy. Much like overinvesting in offense, overinvesting in de-

36 Jervis (fn. 3), 354–55.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always-Secure Greedy</th>
<th>Clear-Sighted</th>
<th>Myopic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No general preference for cooperation over competition</td>
<td>Overinvest in military capabilities — often favors offense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Insecure Not-Greedy</td>
<td>Prefer defense — “necessary offense” reduces security but does not communicate malign intent — “optional offense” communicates malign intent — reactive offense is a partial exception Arms control useful primarily for shifting to defense</td>
<td>Strongly prefer defense — even “necessary offense” communicates malign intent — reactive offense unlikely to succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Insecure Greedy</td>
<td>Prefer defense; it lies in the intersection of policies for secure greedy and insecure not-greedy states</td>
<td>Overinvest in defense Engage in arms control only with great caution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2**

**Basic Policies for Managing Different Types of Adversaries**

Defense should help the defender communicate its resolve, while at the same time avoiding threats to the adversary’s military capabilities that would increase its insecurity. This approach is feasible only if the defender can deploy effective defensive forces and only if the adversary is able to distinguish defensive policies from offensive ones. In general, how to strike a balance between cooperative and competitive policies depends on the severity of the security dilemma and on the adversary’s interest in security versus nonsecurity expansion. (Figure 2 summarizes the arguments of the preceding sections, on the type of military policy the defender should pursue to achieve desirable political consequences.) A final section of this article explores in more detail the defender’s options for balancing these demands.

**Sources of Misperception: National-Level Versus Individual Cognitive Failures**

Broadly speaking there are two sources of misperception: individual psychological biases and failures of overall national evaluative capabilities.\(^{37}\)

\(^{37}\) The international relations literature has focused on psychological limitations: see Jervis
Jervis's description of the spiral model focuses on psychological sources. National-level failures of evaluation provide an alternative, more political explanation for misperceptions. It is important to differentiate between different sources of misperception, because they can call for different policies on the part of the defender.

Included in a country's national-level evaluative capability are organizations dedicated to analyzing military and foreign policy—analytic units within the government, think tanks, and universities. Of course, the overall quality of a country's evaluation depends on the quality of the analysis produced by these organizations, but it also depends on the quality of debate both within the government and in the public arena. If certain organizations are able to gain undue influence because of their power, prestige, bargaining skill, and/or public relations skill, the country's evaluation of opposing states will tend to be biased.

One should expect states to be much better than individuals at evaluating the motives of potential adversaries. For one thing, they have tremendous resources, which allows for a division of labor and the training of specialists. Therefore, for example, although the judgment of individual decision makers may be impaired by a propensity to make statistical errors, the state should be able to overcome this shortcoming by training and employing teams of analysts who possess statistical skills. Similarly, while cognitive limitations may mislead individual leaders into assuming that the adversary appreciates their benign intentions, the state can task area specialists with examining this question. Although committing these resources does not guarantee a perfect analysis, it should greatly reduce the problems introduced by the cognitive limitations of individuals. The state's resources should be especially valuable for peacetime evaluation and planning, since there is then time to take full advantage of its analytic resources. National misperceptions, therefore, seem more likely to reflect the failure of national-level evaluative capabilities than individual cognitive limitations.

Recent studies of national misperceptions have employed theories of organizational behavior and domestic political dynamics to explain why states often exaggerate an adversary's hostility and overlook the threat—

ening nature of their own policies. 38 Militaries are inclined (1) to exaggerate the offensive potential of opposing forces, 39 which creates an "evaluative security dilemma" that fuels insecurity, 40 and (2) to impute malign intentions to the opponent, even when the purpose of the defender's forces is ambiguous. 41 Interest groups that would benefit from large investments in military capabilities and/or expansion are often in control of their state's policy; they then advance self-serving strategic arguments that exaggerate the state's insecurity and the benefits of expansion. 42 Acting like large organizations, states are inclined to create myths about the unthreatening nature of their own behavior, 43 which makes adversaries appear more dangerous yet.

Misperceptions that arose from flawed evaluative capabilities have been studied extensively for the period leading up to the First World War. Germany's exaggeration of the offensive capabilities of France and especially of Russia fueled its fear of encirclement and bred insecurity, which led to calls for expansion. The German military's belief in the advantages of offense reflected its organizational interests and defined Germany's understanding of its threat environment, in part because Germany lacked civilian institutions that could provide alternative analyses. Germany further exaggerated the hostility of its neighbors by failing to recognize that its own aggressive foreign policy and naval buildup had provoked opposing military buildups and alliances. Myths about the superior and peaceful nature of the German state supported this shortsightedness. 44


39 On these conditions, see Van Evera (fn. 1, 1984), 272–73.

40 This is a specific type of what Snyder has termed a "perceptual security dilemma," in Jack L. Snyder, "Perceptions of the Security Dilemma in 1914," in Jervis, Lebow, and Stein (fn. 37).

41 Snyder (fn. 33), 28; Van Evera (fn. 1, 1984), 254–73.

42 Snyder (fn. 6).


Although less severe, organizational interests and weak and/or biased evaluation also played a role in aggravating tensions between the United States and Soviet Union during the cold war. Both countries downplayed how threatening their own forces might appear and/or exaggerated the threat posed by the other's forces. When the United States led in the development of MBV capabilities and ICBMs, key players in the Nixon administration argued that MBVing would not appear threatening to the Soviet Union, since the United States had shown restraint in enhancing its first strike capability; at the same time, however, they voiced concern about Soviet testing of multiple warhead missiles because the Soviets would eventually be able to improve their accuracy. Although this double standard might reflect cognitive biases rather than poor evaluation, a national-level debate that required a more evenhanded analysis would have discredited this type of argument.

By confusing offense with defense, the Soviets for their part underestimated how threatening they might appear. The prevailing Soviet view into the mid-1960s was that ballistic missile defenses (BMD) were essentially defensive—enhancing deterrence and not increasing crisis instability. At the same time American analysts, working with arguments that correctly saw areawide BMD supporting an offensive strategy, worried that Soviet BMD would threaten essential U.S. nuclear capabilities. The Reagan administration made a similar error. By suggesting that Soviet efforts to increase the survivability of their forces (defensive) had implications similar to improvements in the Soviet ability to destroy American missile silos (offensive), it blurred the distinction between


45 See, e.g., Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard in Arms Control Implications of Current Defense Budget, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Law and Organization, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 92d Cong., 1st sess., July 13, 1971, pp. 171–77; and Dr. John Foster, Diplomatic and Strategic Impact of Multiple Warhead Missiles, Hearings before the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 91st Cong., 1st sess., July 1969, pp. 244–45, 258–63. Raymond L. Garthoff, Detente and Confrontation (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985), 135, reports that, to support their case, proponents of MBV also exaggerated Soviet progress in developing MBV capabilities. In fact, the Soviets did see U.S. MBV posing an increased threat; see fn. 80 below.


forces required to support defensive and those required to support offensive doctrines and therefore exaggerated the threat posed by Soviet military policy.

During much of the 1970s and into the early 1980s the American debate tended to paint an overly hostile picture of the Soviet Union by mischaracterizing American nuclear doctrine. An influential argument, which held the Soviet Union had unleashed an unrelenting buildup, focused on the growing Soviet counterforce arsenal; by contrast, it was argued, the United States had deployed forces that were much less threatening. On the basis of this comparison, some analysts suggested that Soviet strategic nuclear deployments reflected malign intentions. Although, in reality, U.S. forces were not as different and its counterforce deployments not nearly as constrained as these arguments maintained, this more hostile image of the Soviet Union prevailed and was a factor in America's shift to a more competitive military policy.

The United States also exaggerated its own insecurity by inflating Soviet military capabilities. Instead of evaluating the U.S. ability to perform military missions, which is the correct way to assess military capability, the United States often simply compared the size of U.S. and Soviet forces. When defense has an advantage over offense, this shorthand approach leads directly to threat inflation. Official government publications and other pessimistic assessments used a variety of misleading comparisons to question the adequacy of American nuclear capabilities. Similarly, the prevailing view of the conventional balance in Europe—that NATO suffered severe inferiority—was not supported by thorough analysis and was contradicted by the most detailed studies.

**IMPLICATIONS OF NATIONAL-LEVEL FAILURES**

A recognition of the role of biased national-level evaluation in generating misperceptions has a variety of policy implications. First, the defender

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48 For example, Committee on the Present Danger, "Has America Become Number 2?" (June 29, 1982), reprinted in Charles Tyrold II, ed., Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 208.


should expect misperceptions to be far more common than if they derived solely from cognitive failures. Consequently, the defender should in general be more skeptical of policies that will succeed only if its adversary is clear-sighted.

Second, the defender should search for additional indicators of misperception, for example, the quality of the adversary’s public debate and the vitality and diversity of its analytic units. These indicators are likely to be more apparent than are indicators of individual misperceptions, which are often hidden from public view, and to provide a better picture of the quality of evaluation guiding the adversary’s policy.

Third, the defender should try to develop policies that would improve the adversary’s national-level evaluative capabilities. These opportunities may be rare, since the defender’s military policy will usually be unable to influence the organizational structure and political traditions of the adversary’s state. Nevertheless, opportunities may present themselves. For example, when the adversary’s military dominates the formulation of its military strategy, arms control negotiations might widen the circle of players involved in the development of the adversary’s military policy, thereby increasing the diversity of views and contributing to the development of civilian expertise. In addition, the defender might be able to introduce cooperative concepts into the adversary’s analysis of military policy by developing and maintaining less formal contacts between the countries’ foreign and security policy experts. In such cases, cooperative—bilateral—policies have advantages over unilateral policies.

Mode of Interaction: Learning versus Shifts in Domestic Power

The above sections assume that the adversary’s leaders strive to take full advantage of information provided by the defender’s military policy, even though their efforts may be impaired by cognitive and national-level evaluative failures. However, a very different interaction can occur when the adversary’s leaders are engaged in a competition for domestic power and disagree about the nature of the defender and/or the objec-

52 Along these lines, Jack Snyder suggested that conventional arms control negotiations could contribute to the growing role of civilians in Soviet defense policy. See Snyder, “International Leverage on Soviet Domestic Change,” World Politics 42 (October 1989), 26–27. I do not mean to imply by making this recommendation that militaries always advocate dangerous policies and civilians always champion safe ones. However, militaries do appear, in general, to favor offensive policies; when these are unduly offensive, civilian involvement might offer a valuable counterbalance.

tives their own country should pursue. Under these conditions, the adversary’s leaders may instead use the information provided by the defender’s military policy to gain support for policies they already favor and to discredit positions held by their domestic opponents. In extreme cases, elites simply gain or lose domestic influence but learn nothing. Their use of information stands in sharp contrast to learning models.

In its most dramatic form shifts in the relative influence of competing factions determine the type of regime governing the adversary’s country. In less extreme cases the current domestic order remains in place, but the faction(s) that control policy change; or the controlling faction(s) remain in power but become more or less able to ignore the objections posed by domestic opponents.

In addition to providing a different explanation of how political consequences are generated, a focus on shifts in the balance of domestic power can recommend different policies than would be recommended by a focus on learning by individuals. For example, a cooperative policy, say, arms control, might be desirable even if the adversary’s current leaders are likely to learn the wrong lesson: “hard-liners” might infer weakness in the defender’s resolve, but arms control could increase the defender’s security by increasing the influence of “moderates.”

Shifts in the balance of domestic power between the adversary’s moderates and hard-liners can alter both the prevailing view of the defender and the adversary’s policies. Moderates and hard-liners can differ along two dimensions. Moderates tend to be less interested in nonsecurity expansion and to see smaller threats to their own country’s security. Divergent assessments of their country’s security often reflect different beliefs about the defender’s policies, with moderates believing the defender is partly motivated by insecurity and hard-liners focusing exclusively on greed. Divergent assessments of their country’s security can also reflect different judgments of the offense-defense balance, with moderates seeing a larger advantage for the defense. These disagreements lead to divergent policy preferences, with moderates tending to prefer defensive


strategies and seeing greater room for unilateral restraint, arms control, and diplomacy in managing international relations. By contrast, hard-liners place greater reliance on competitive military policies. Given these differences, reducing the influence of the adversary's hard-liners can make the adversary less greedy and more secure.

The question, then, is under what conditions offensive, competitive policies are likely to shift the adversary's balance of domestic power favorably, and when defensive, cooperative policies are more likely to succeed. A variety of factors matter, including who is in power, the arguments competing elites use to support their policy prescriptions, the strength of the political opposition, and the quality of the adversary's evaluative capabilities.

WHO IS IN POWER AND WHAT THEY ARGUE

The defender's competitive policies tend to undercut adversary hard-liners when they are in power, if the hard-liners' competitive policies are held responsible for provoking the defender's policies. Under these conditions, the adversary's moderates gain influence by arguing that the defender would have pursued less threatening policies if the adversary had been more cooperative. Conversely, the defender's competitive policies strengthen the position of hard-liners if they can argue persuasively that the defender had planned a provocative buildup anyway—that is, it was not reacting to the hard-liners' competitive policies—and that it therefore reflects malign intentions.

Competitive policies tend to undercut moderates when they are in power, since their image of the defender suggests the defender will reciprocate their more cooperative policies. The U.S.-Soviet nuclear competition provides examples. The policies of the Kennedy administration—including the U.S. nuclear buildup, its emphasis on nuclear damage limitation, and its shift to a flexible response strategy—increased opposition to Khrushchev's minimum deterrent doctrine and to his calls for reducing conventional forces. Indeed, they contributed to his eventual downfall. More-competitive Soviet policies then cycled back into

57 On some of these basic points, with examples from a range of great power cases, see Snyder (fn. 52), who considers additional factors, including whether the regime is weakly or strongly institutionalized; see also James G. Richter, "Action and Reaction in Khrushchev's Foreign Policy: How Leadership Politics Affect Soviet Responses to the International Environment" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989).

58 The exception occurs if adversary moderates successfully argue that the defender's competitive policies are a reaction to more competitive policies pursued by the adversary in the past. However, moderates will likely be unable to sustain this interpretation unless the defender reciprocates in the near future.

59 See Alexander Yanov, "In the Grip of the Adversarial Paradigm," in Robert O. Crum-
the American debate, providing support for competitive American policies. In the mid-1970s the Soviet nuclear buildup significantly influenced the American debate over nuclear strategy, although it did not dramatically shift the prevailing American image of the Soviet Union. The U.S. government justified its pursuit of improved strategic counterforce capabilities largely as a reaction to Soviet counterforce.60 Although Soviet counterforce was certainly not the single source of U.S. counterforce doctrine,61 American critics of U.S. doctrine would nevertheless have had better prospects for winning the counterforce debate if the Soviet Union had adopted a countervalue nuclear strategy.62

By the late 1970s the Soviet offensive nuclear buildup, in combination with Soviet foreign policy, did play an important role in enabling American hard-liners to discredit the more benign image of the Soviet Union that underpinned the policy of the Carter administration. Reflecting this shift, the Reagan administration rejected arms control and emphasized offensive military policies—including ships and the Navy’s maritime strategy.

Cooperative policies work according to the reverse logic. Less threatening, more cooperative policies, if correctly understood to reflect the defender’s benign motivations, support the adversary’s moderates when in power. The exception occurs if the adversary’s hard-liners argue successfully that the defender’s cooperation reflects a lack of resolve. However, as in the case of a greedy adversary suffering from misperceptions, the defender can reduce the probability of this interpretation by overin-

mey, ed., Reform in Russia and the U.S.S.R. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); George F. Minde II and Michael Henessey, “Reform of the Soviet Military under Khrushchev and the Role of America’s Strategic Modernization,” in Crumley; William Taubman (“Khrushchev and Detente,” in Crumley), who argues that the United States pursued the correct policy, given Khrushchev’s belligerent policies; and Richter (fn. 57), chaps. 6, 7.

60 Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, U.S.-U.S.S.R. Strategic Forces, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Law and Organization, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 93d Cong., 2d sess., March 1974, p. 18; and Briefing on Counterforce Attacks, before the same subcommittee, September 11, 1974, p. 9.


62 Critics included Barry E. Carter, “Nuclear Strategy and Nuclear Weapons,” Scientific American 230 (May 1974); G. W. Rathjens, “Flexible Response Options,” Orbis 18 (Fall 1974); and Jervis (fn. 28). Along similar lines, Snyder (fn. 44) finds that although the offensive strategies of the European powers before World War I were primarily domestic in origin, they were also partly imported; he also notes the export of Soviet counterforce doctrine in the 1970s (p. 146).
vesting in a defensive strategy and driving tough bargains in arms control negotiations.

Cooperating when hard-liners are in power could support their claim that competitive policies yield concessions, but it could also support the claims of adversary moderates. For example, cooperating in response to the adversary's buildup could enable moderates to argue successfully that the defender will accept conditions consistent with the adversary's security requirements, while discrediting hard-liners who argue that the defender will always pursue superiority and reject unilateral restraint and arms control. During the second half of the 1980s Gorbachev's conciliatory policies worked according to this dynamic, increasing the influence of American moderates who favored more cooperative policies, while making it more difficult for American hard-liners to argue for unlimited competition and against arms control. By contrast, if the Soviets had continued their competitive policies, American hard-liners could have argued their case more persuasively, much as they had since the mid-1970s.63

In sum, the defender should usually pursue cooperative policies when moderates are in power. The choice is less clear-cut when hard-liners are in power: the key issue is which interpretation of the defender's motivations will prevail in the adversary's debate. Is the defender reacting to the hard-liner's provocation or simply pursuing threatening policies that reflect malign intentions?

FACTORS INFLUENCING WHICH INTERPRETATION PREVAILS

A variety of factors influence the outcome of the debate over the defender's motivations. Most obvious are the power and skill of competing factions. The stronger the current leadership, the better its prospects for imposing its interpretation, whether the defender's policy is cooperative or competitive.

When hard-liners are in power but do not entirely dominate the debate, the range of plausible interpretations of the defender's policy becomes important. If this range spans the arguments presented by hard-liners and moderates, then neither faction is favored. But if the range of plausible interpretations is narrower and coincides with one side of the debate, the defender's policy will support this faction. This consideration favors cooperative, defensive policies, because they are open to a nar-

63 An alternative explanation argues that the Reagan and Bush administrations learned that cooperation was preferable. In varying degrees this seems likely. But the more important point here is that even if they continued to prefer intense competition, shifts in American public opinion would have undermined the appeal of their arguments for competing, while supporting moderate elites who offered more cooperative policies.
rower range of interpretations that lies closer to positions presented by moderates. When defense and offense are readily distinguished, defensive policies do not support the hard-line image of a malign defender pursuing military superiority, since these policies do not increase the defender's ability to pursue expansionist policies. At the same time, relatively unambiguous defensive policies support the moderate's image of a defender willing to respect the adversary's security requirements. Militarily effective defensive responses further help defeat hard-liners by countering the adversary's military forces, thereby making it more difficult for hard-liners to make the case that the defender lacks resolve. By contrast, offensive policies can more easily be interpreted to support the hard-liners' image of a hostile defender, even when the defender's offensive policy is designed and promoted as a reaction to threatening policies.

The quality of the adversary's evaluative capabilities also influences which interpretation prevails. It is especially important for determining whether competitive, offensive responses will undermine hard-liners, since this requires that the adversary recognize that the defender is reacting to its competitive policies. If both hard-liners and moderates believe incorrectly that their country has pursued unthreatening policies, the defender's competitive policy is unlikely to be interpreted as a reaction, and hard-liners gain. When, by contrast, the adversary's moderates argue persuasively that their country's policy has threatened the defender's security, the reactive nature of the defender's policy will support their interpretation. Also important is the adversary's ability to evaluate the defender's military policy. The defender's competitive policy cannot succeed if the adversary is insensitive to changes in the defender's military strategy and force deployments. Furthermore, the adversary must be able to evaluate the motives that underlie offensive and defensive strategies; otherwise the range of plausible interpretations is unlimited, leaving the national debate to be determined entirely by political power.

A final factor influencing the adversary's interpretations is the quality of coordination of the defender's policy. The defender's competitive policy must be sufficiently different from its earlier policy for the adversary to observe a deliberate modification. The timing of this shift must be well matched to the adversary's competitive behavior, since otherwise the adversary cannot discern the correlation between the events. The scope of the defender's competitive response must be commensurate with defensive objectives; otherwise hard-liners are more likely to convince others that the defender's reaction is excessive and thereby defeat moderates who argue the defender's competitive policies are an appropriate reaction.
In short, when hard-liners are in power, defensive policies provide a more robust approach for supporting moderates and defeating hard-liners—the adversary’s interpretation of defensive policies will be relatively insensitive to the quality of its evaluative capabilities and the success of defensive policies does not depend on the defender’s ability to implement a measured reactive policy. Offensive policies will be successful under a much narrower set of conditions, including high-quality evaluative capabilities and effective coordination of the defender’s reactive policy.

If these conditions are met, however, competitive, offensive policies may be preferable to defensive ones when hard-liners are in power. Successful reactive offensive policies will do more damage to hard-liners than will cooperative policies.Provoking an offensive response reduces the adversary’s security, whereas provoking a defensive response simply wastes the adversary’s resources, since the defender’s reaction ensures that the adversary’s military capabilities do not increase, but does not reduce its security. Thus, when hard-liners are in power and certain necessary conditions are met—for example, the adversary has effective evaluative capabilities and the defender can implement a well-coordinated reactive policy—the defender faces a difficult choice. Defensive policies are more likely to succeed, but they will be less effective than offensive ones. The details of the particular case will determine how to make this trade-off.

**Approaches for Dealing with Insecure Adversaries, Including Greedy Ones**

**Summary of Analytic Findings**

Taken as a whole, the preceding arguments delineate the conditions under which various types of military policy generate desirable political results. The findings of the analysis can be summarized as follows. First, the broad guidance that political relations with insecure states are best managed with cooperative policies usually holds. In fact, cooperative, defensive policies are probably more widely applicable than is suggested by Jervis’s spiral model. The defender may require defensive policies to avoid bad political consequences even when its adversary does not suffer from misperceptions; and cooperative policies are required more frequently because exaggerated insecurity can have two sources—biased national-level evaluative capabilities as well as biased cognition—which makes exaggerated insecurity more common, which increases the need for cooperative military policies. The clearest exception to this broad
guidance is that under certain narrow conditions the application of competitive policies to an insecure adversary can produce desirable political results by displacing hard-liners.

Second, defenders need to resort to competitive, offensive policies less often than Jervis’s deterrence model suggests, since not all greedy states must be managed with competitive policies. If a greedy state does not suffer from misperceptions, militarily effective defensive policies are adequate to avoid bad political consequences. Even if a greedy state does suffer from misperceptions—specifically, if it is inclined to underestimate the defender’s resolve—overinvesting in defensive capabilities instead of offensive capabilities should have good prospects, although possibly not the best prospects, for offsetting these underestimates. Further, although competitive policies are sometimes advisable when hard-liners are running the adversary’s country, under a wide range of conditions defensive policies are more likely to succeed in reducing the hard-liners’ influence. In short, then, although competitive, offensive policies are sometimes best for managing political relations with a greedy adversary, they are often unnecessary, and defensive policies are sometimes preferable.

Third, because states can be motivated simultaneously by both greed and insecurity, it is important to recognize that cooperative, defensive policies can often be effective in managing political relations with greedy states, as well as with insecure states. If competitive policies were required when facing a greedy state, the defender would always confront a difficult trade-off when its adversary was an insecure greedy state. The wider applicability of cooperative policies means that the defender can sometimes avoid this trade-off. A related result is that defensive policies provide a reasonably robust approach when the defender is uncertain of the adversary’s motivations and the quality of its evaluative capabilities.

**The Defender’s Basic Options for Dealing with Insecure States**

The defender’s military options for implementing less threatening, more cooperative policies are rarely explored in any detail. To define the spectrum of possibilities, I divide the basic cooperative approaches into defense emphasis, arms control, unilateral restraint, and the somewhat more competitive approach of reactive offense.

Much of the preceding analysis set aside the constraints imposed by the security dilemma; it assumed instead the availability of cooperative

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64 On the need for cooperative policies, which are sometimes described as reassurance or a mix of deterrence and reassurance, see, e.g., Richard Ned Lebow, “The Deterrence Deadlock: Is There a Way Out?” in Jervis, Lebow, and Stein (fn. 37); and Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, who review a variety of approaches from cooperation theory in Lebow and Stein, “Beyond Deterrence,” *Journal of Social Issues* 43, no. 4 (1987).
policies and explored the conditions under which the defender should choose them over competitive policies. This section assumes the defender is in a situation where cooperative policies are desirable\(^{65}\) and focuses on how the nature and severity of the security dilemma should influence the defender's choice between these approaches. It also considers how the defender's choice should be influenced by other factors discussed above, including the extent of the adversary's insecurity and greed and the quality of its evaluative capabilities.

**Defense Emphasis**

In a policy of defense emphasis the defender gives priority to satisfying its military requirements with a defensive strategy, even if it costs more than an offensive one. The defender does not reduce the effectiveness of its military capabilities; it merely shifts them toward more defensive capabilities.

Defense emphasis is possible if the forces required to support a defensive strategy can be distinguished from those required by a more offensive one, in which case, there is an opportunity to eliminate the security dilemma. In its less ambitious form, which applies when offense does not have an advantage over defense, defense emphasis simply requires the defender to be sensitive to the negative political consequences of an offensive strategy. The defender can easily avoid offense and invest whatever resources are saved in defensive capabilities. In its more ambitious form, which applies when offense does have an advantage over defense, unilateral defense emphasis requires the defender to pay extra to moderate the effects of the security dilemma. This may be possible since the offense-defense balance does not by itself determine the defender's policy. Although offense advantage makes a defensive strategy more expensive than an offensive one,\(^{66}\) outspending its adversary—spending more on defense than its adversary spends on offense—might enable the defender to implement an effective defensive strategy.

The following examples illustrate how the defense-emphasis approach would guide the defender's policy.\(^{67}\) American proponents of an offen-

\(^{65}\) When I say that cooperative policies are desirable, I am referring narrowly to the political consequences they are likely to generate. In certain of these cases, the defender should nevertheless pursue competitive policies because the military benefits of competition exceed the political benefits of cooperation. For example, in extreme cases the adversary's misperceptions may be so severe that war is unavoidable and the defender should give priority to preparing to fight it.

\(^{66}\) The offense-defense balance reflects the relative cost of equal protection provided by offensive and defensive strategies. Jervis (fn. 1), 187–88.

\(^{67}\) For additional possibilities, see Van Evera (fn. 1, 1987), who considers factors that influence whether defense can meet extended deterrence commitments, for example, by stationing denial forces on allies' territory (pp. 8–12).
sive nuclear strategy argued that the United States required counterforce to redress the ratio of surviving nuclear forces following a Soviet counterforce attack. In place of this offensive policy, defense emphasis would have attempted to meet U.S. nuclear requirements without forces that threatened Soviet nuclear deterrent capabilities: increasing the survivability of U.S. forces would have eliminated the Soviet ability to shift the ratio of forces, thereby making counterforce unnecessary. Another example concerns the German war plan in the decades preceding the First World War. Had it opted for a policy of defense emphasis, Germany would have replaced the Schlieffen Plan, which required a major offensive attack against France, with plans for remaining on the defense on both fronts. The feasibility of this approach depended on two issues: first, could a defensive policy succeed, which it probably could have;\footnote{Of course, this possibility assumes Germany wanted only to protect its borders and was otherwise willing to forgo expansion. On the feasibility of a defensive option, see Snyder (fn. 33), who argues that the best option might have included a limited offensive in the East (pp. 116–22).} second, could Germany have convinced France that it was not planning an offensive, which is less clear because many of the forces required for defense resembled those required for offense.

The feasibility of this approach decreases with the advantage of offense over defense; it could be infeasible if offense has an overwhelming advantage, because the defender can outspend its adversary by only so much. If the adversary is insecure but not greedy, however, defense emphasis could eventually reduce the defender’s costs by encouraging the adversary to shift to a defensive strategy. The defender’s defense emphasis encourages such a shift if it (1) corrects the adversary’s leaders’ misperceptions of the defender’s hostility; and/or (2) reduces the political power of hard-liners within the adversary’s government. The adversary’s shift to defense in turn makes it less costly for the defender to maintain its defensive capabilities. By contrast, although offense is less expensive for the defender in the short run, it increases the likelihood and intensity of continued arms competition that is more expensive for both countries in the long run.

**ARMS CONTROL**

When offense and defense are distinguishable, arms control provides a bilateral option for achieving the same results as a policy of unilateral defense emphasis.\footnote{Arms control might also be valuable when offense and defense are indistinguishable. When combined with adequate verification provisions, it could increase both countries’ security by increasing their confidence that the other was not going to launch an arms buildup} Arms control agreements that limit offensive deploy-
ments enable the defender to shift to a less offensive military strategy without compromising the military capability necessary for deterrence and/or defeating the adversary if deterrence fails.\textsuperscript{70} Relative to defense emphasis, arms control becomes more attractive as the advantage of offense grows, since defeating the adversary's offense with defense becomes more expensive and at some point exceeds the defender's means.\textsuperscript{71} Related to this, agreements will provide large political benefits when offense has a large advantage over defense, since this is when the defender's offense poses the greatest threat to the adversary.\textsuperscript{72}

When defense has the advantage, the defender's choice between arms control and unilateral defense emphasis should depend partly on its own domestic political debate. In this case, arms control is unnecessary to achieve its central purpose—to avoid threatening the adversary's deterrent capabilities—since the defender can afford a policy of defense emphasis. If the adversary insists on deploying offense, however, the defender may face domestic political barriers that make defense emphasis infeasible. Proponents can offer a variety of arguments for matching the adversary's offense. They may say, for example, that perceptions are important—not matching the adversary's offense raises doubts about the defender's resolve—and that the adversary's offense reflects malign intentions, which should be answered with competitive policies. If these arguments are influential, arms control agreements that constrain the offense of both countries might be politically feasible when a policy of defense emphasis is not.

The \textit{ABM} Treaty is a good example of this type of agreement. Although retaliatory capabilities (defense) clearly dominated damage-limitation capabilities (offense) in the 1960s, both superpowers showed significant, if wavering, interest in extensive deployments of antiballistic missile (\textit{ABM}) systems.\textsuperscript{73} Had the Soviet Union deployed an extensive \textit{ABM} system, the United States could have met its deterrent requirements by improving its retaliatory capabilities, that is, without deploying an \textit{ABM}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Jervis (fn. 1), 201.
\item Unfortunately, barriers to agreements grow with the advantage of offense, since the defender's security becomes more sensitive to cheating. However, this risk can be reduced by allowing the deployment of additional defensive systems.
\item In addition, when offense has an advantage over defense, these agreements enhance the defender's military capability for defense and/or deterrence. Although not formulated explicitly in terms of offense-defense, classical arms control theory focuses on this objective. See, e.g., Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, \textit{Strategy and Arms Control} (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961).
\item For an overview of this period and citations to more extensive discussions, see David N. Schwartz, "Past and Present: The Historical Legacy," in Carter and Schwartz (fn. 46).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
of its own. In the face of Soviet deployments, however, proponents of
this unilateral defense emphasis would have had difficulty prevailing in
the U.S. debate.

Arms control has another potential advantage over unilateral defense
emphasis. As noted in the section on evaluation, it may contribute to
improvements in the adversary’s national-level evaluative capabilities by
broadening the circle of experts involved in making defense policy.

Compared with unilateral defense emphasis, though, arms control can
have two shortcomings. First, in the case of a defender facing a greedy
insecure state that suffers from misperceptions, there is a risk that arms
control will lead the adversary to underestimate the defender’s resolve.
To demonstrate its resolve, the defender must therefore be a tough ne-
gotiator, being particularly careful to avoid uncompensated concessions.
With unilateral defense emphasis, by contrast, the defender avoids the
risks of negotiations while achieving a comparable shift in the offense-
defense balance of deployed forces. Second, pursuit of arms control could
first require the defender to pursue a more offensive policy to provide
offensive systems to trade for the adversary’s offense and/or to convince
the adversary that an arms race will reduce its security. If arms control
fails under these circumstances, the defender winds up posing a larger
threat to the adversary’s security. Therefore, in choosing between these
cooperative approaches, the defender must assess the probability of
reaching agreement, including whether using offense as a bargaining
chip will undermine moderates in the adversary’s country and support
factions in its own country that oppose trading away that offense. The
case for unilateral defense emphasis grows as the probability of successful
arms control decreases.

UNILATERAL RESTRAINT

In a policy of unilateral restraint, the defender reduces its ability to im-
plement its military strategy to increase its adversary’s security. By re-
ducing its ability to defend itself, the defender also reduces the threat it
poses to its adversary. Unlike defense emphasis and to a lesser extent
arms control, a policy of unilateral restraint is feasible when offense and
defense are indistinguishable. Although unilateral restraint is also feasi-
ble when offense and defense are distinguishable, defense emphasis or
arms control is usually preferable in that situation. The latter approaches
are less risky because they enable the defender to increase the adversary’s
security without reducing its ability to protect itself.

One use of unilateral restraint is primarily tactical—to set in motion a
more cooperative relationship in which the countries can pursue recip-
routed restraint, either tacitly or through a formal arms control process. To implement this approach—which in its general form is referred to as GRT (graduated reciprocation in tension reduction)—the defender forgoes capabilities it believes have military value to improve the adversary's image of the defender. If the adversary can be persuaded that the defender is less malign, through learning and/or shifts in the balance of domestic power, the prospects for achieving coordinated reductions in threatening forces are increased. GRT may be especially appropriate when the adversary suffers from misperceptions about the defender, considering it a greedy state. In these circumstances the adversary is likely to shun arms control and other cooperative policies because making concessions to a greedy state can be particularly dangerous. The defender may be able to reduce these misperceptions by demonstrating its willingness to run some risks to increase the adversary's security.

A second use of unilateral restraint, though less discussed, is at least as important: the defender forgoes certain offensive missions but, unlike with GRT, does not make continued restraint contingent upon reciprocation. The basic objective is not to initiate a continuing, interactive process but instead simply to increase the adversary's security by reducing threats to its capabilities and improving its image of the defender. This approach recognizes that the security dilemma presents a true dilemma, and the defender chooses less military capability and reduced adversary insecurity over the opposite.

The following example illustrates the general point. During the 1980s some analysts wanted to bolster NATO's conventional deterrent by adding a counteroffensive option to its more defensive doctrine of forward defense. They argued that a purely defensive doctrine unduly minimized the risks to the Soviet Union if it attacked NATO. However, NATO's prospects for success with its defensive strategy were already quite good; that is, it could probably have stopped a Soviet blitzkrieg, which would have been sufficient to deter most if not all adversaries. Under these conditions, adding a counteroffensive option could have been self-defeating: although it would have brought increased risk to the Soviet Union if it

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75 Huntington (fn. 34), 32–56.

76 On the requirements of conventional deterrence, see John J. Mearsheimer, Conventional Deterrence (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); on the conventional balance, see the policy focus section in International Security 12 (Spring 1988).
attacked NATO, the concomitant increase in Soviet incentives to attack could have been even greater.

The risk of unilateral restraint grows with the adversary’s greediness, since the defender must increasingly protect its credibility, which calls for giving priority to policies that assure its military capabilities. If the defender’s unilateral restraint can play a role in the adversary’s domestic debate and reduce the influence of hard-liners, then its risks are somewhat reduced. It is difficult to determine whether unilateral restraint is advisable, however; the judgment requires comparing the risks of reduced military capabilities with the benefits of the adversary’s increased security. The other cooperative approaches, by contrast, avoid raising this trade-off in such stark form, because they do not require the defender to reduce its military capabilities.

**REACTIVE OFFENSE**

In addition to these cooperative approaches, there is also the option of a somewhat more competitive approach, which I have termed reactive offense. The defender initially pursues defensive measures to offset whatever offense the adversary has deployed; if the adversary continues to deploy offense, the defender shifts to offense. The purpose of reactive offense is to make it clear that the defender is exercising restraint by following a conditional offensive policy that will continue only as long as the adversary pursues offensive advantages. At the same time, such a policy enables the defender to maintain military capabilities that are essential for its security. A minimally successful policy of reactive offense teaches the adversary the futility of pursuing offense; in more successful cases, the adversary’s leaders infer that the defender lacks malign intentions, and/or the defender’s reactive policy defeats adversary hard-liners.

In comparison with cooperative options, reactive offense becomes more attractive as the advantage of offense over defense increases: it is then more economically feasible than defense emphasis and less risky than unilateral restraint. A policy of reactive offense can support arms control by providing bargaining chips to trade for the adversary’s offense, but the defender can find itself at a negotiating disadvantage if its offense lags too far behind the adversary’s.

Reactive offense is more likely to succeed when the adversary has especially good evaluative capabilities, because they are necessary to identify and explain the reactive nature of the defender’s policy. If instead the adversary ignores or distorts the reactive nature of the defender’s offense, then this more competitive policy is less likely to succeed than

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77 We can imagine this as a situation in which the adversary has prisoner’s dilemma payoffs, and sequential moves enable the defender’s Tit-for-Tat policy to end the arms race.
are cooperative ones. In addition, success is more likely when hard-liners are in power and face serious opposition. Otherwise, the defender's offense is likely to increase both the hard-liners' political influence and their individual insecurity.

Furthermore, the defender may face problems in implementing a policy of reactive offense. In order to react in a timely fashion, the defender must do its research and development in advance, but this runs the risk of convincing the adversary that the defender is preparing to move first in the next round of the competition. This problem grows with the advantage of offense, since the defender will see larger risks in falling behind. Moreover, the defender may be unable to turn its offense on and off in a way that clearly matches the adversary's moves. The defender's flexibility will be reduced as planned weapons systems become incorporated into its military strategy and develop powerful constituencies. In addition, the defender will need highly effective evaluative capabilities of its own to determine whether the adversary is showing restraint. Without these capabilities, the defender is likely to misinterpret ambiguities in both countries' military policies and to conclude incorrectly that the adversary has launched the next round of offensive competition, even as the adversary believes it is still catching up.

Implications for U.S. Military Policy

The end of the cold war has dramatic implications for U.S. military policy, most obviously for military requirements. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union greatly reduce the military threat facing the West; it is moreover widely believed that Russia is uninterested in attacking the West. These changes allow the United States and its NATO allies to make substantial reductions in the military forces dedicated to deterring Russian attack.

More important, the end of the cold war bears on issues related to the political consequences of U.S. military policy. First, U.S. security now depends more heavily on the evolution of Russia's international goals than on changes in Russian military capabilities. Consequently, the United States should emphasize policies that encourage the evolution and stabilization of Russian goals that improve the long-term prospects

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78 On the sensitivity of Tit-for-Tat to misinterpretation, see George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Randolph M. Swerson, "Arms Races and Cooperation," in Oye (fn. 18), 137–43.

79 Russia is used here to refer to whatever major power emerges from the former Soviet Union; it could therefore include other former Soviet republics in addition to Russia, if the recently formed Commonwealth of Independent States or some successor develops an integrated military and foreign policy.
for peace. In the near term Western economic and diplomatic policies are likely to be most important. Over time, however, as Russia’s political and economic revolutions stabilize, Russia will become more outward looking and other countries’ military policies are likely to play a larger role in shaping its objectives. Second, the end of the cold war essentially eliminates a military requirement for the United States to deploy forces in Europe; it creates instead a political role for American military forces in a new European security structure.

Third, the end of the cold war essentially brings to an end the longstanding debate over how the United States should manage its political relationship with the Soviet Union—whether with competitive policies or with cooperative ones. The key arguments for competition are simply no longer sustainable. The most important argument held that the Soviet Union was a myopic greedy state—inclined to underestimate U.S. resolve and determined to achieve its greedy goals through expansion. Taken together, the collapse of communism, the Soviet Union’s geopolitical retrenchment, and Russia’s movement toward democracy have generated a consensus that Russia is not a greedy state.

Another key argument for competitive policies maintained that Soviet leaders were always secure because they recognized that U.S. military policy was a reaction to their own provocative policies and that the United States would attack only in response to Soviet aggression. Some analysts now express a similar view, arguing that with U.S.-Russian relations transformed, Russia will entirely discount American military capabilities and therefore the United States need not worry about Russian insecurity. However, there is really little justification for confidence that Russia will remain indefinitely immune to the pressures created by international anarchy. Its relations with the United States could be strained by a variety of events, for example, a hard-line coup in Moscow and Western reactions to it, or Western provision of security guarantees to Central Europe. Russia would then likely worry about the West’s intentions and fear Western military capabilities, much as it did in the past. These fears could be heightened by Russia’s weaker position, since it now faces the West without Central European allies and possibly without the republics of the former Soviet Union.

A final argument in the cold war debate over competition versus co-

80 This possibility is supported by the fact that U.S. military policies did fuel Soviet insecurity during the cold war. On Soviet concerns during the cold war, see Garthoff (fn. 45); specifically on views of U.S. nuclear policy, see Garthoff, pp. 417–18, 768–70, 796–800; Samuel B. Payne, “The Soviet Debate on Strategic Arms Limitation, 1968–1972,” Soviet Studies 27 (January 1975); and Parrott (fn. 46), 9–21.
operation held that competitive American policies would bring about more moderate Soviet behavior by discrediting the hard-liners who were running Soviet policy. For now, with moderates in power in Russia, the West should pursue cooperative policies to support them. In short, the end of the cold war has created a situation in which a number of reinforcing considerations provide the United States with a straightforward case for pursuing cooperative military policies.

The United States has already begun adjusting its military strategy, but concern for political consequences recommends additional cooperative moves. Current U.S. nuclear strategy, which is oriented toward targeting Russian nuclear capabilities, is more offensive than is necessary. An effective defensive strategic nuclear strategy is easy to design because nuclear weapons essentially eliminate the U.S. security dilemma. Nuclear weapons have created a world of mutual assured destruction (MAD) capabilities in which defense (retaliatory capability) dominates offense (damage-limitation capability)—including counterforce and areawide strategic defenses—and in which offense and defense are distinguishable. Although some analysts believe the United States requires limited counterforce capabilities in MAD, the case against counterforce, already strong during the cold war, is even stronger today. Thus, the United States can meet its requirements for nuclear deterrence with a purely defensive policy.

Because offense can communicate malign intentions even when defense dominates, the United States should avoid nuclear offense. Although not explained in these terms, recent U.S. initiatives will move the U.S. force posture in the right direction: its arms control proposals are designed to reduce the ballistic missiles that are most effective in threatening opposing forces; and its unilateral decisions to stop procurement of the B-2 bomber (which was initially intended to provide some capability against Russian mobile nuclear targets) and of the Seawolf sub-

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81 On the effect of U.S. policy on Soviet domestic politics, see Snyder (fn. 52); Richter (fn. 57); and Matthew Evangelista, "Missed Opportunities and Closed Archives: Did the Eisenhower Administration Defeat Khrushchev's Disarmament Initiatives?" (Paper presented at a conference on Eisenhower's World Legacy, Moscow, November 1990).

82 Whether the United States should shift to competitive policies if hard-liners regain power is a more difficult question. If Russian national-level evaluative capabilities are weak, then this approach is likely to backfire. On the weaknesses of civilian institutions that provided military advice in the former Soviet Union, see Snyder (fn. 52), 25–28; Condoleezza Rice, "The Party, the Military, and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union," World Politics 40 (October 1987); and Stephen M. Meyer, "Civilian and Military Influence in Managing the Arms Race," in Robert J. Art, Vincent Davis, and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., Reorganizing America's Defense (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985).

marine (which was designed to enhance U.S. strategic antisubmarine warfare [ASW] capabilities, which threaten an important component of Russia’s nuclear retaliatory capability) will reduce the counterforce potential of the American arsenal. 84

To reinforce these changes, the United States should pursue policies that will further curtail the offensive potential of its nuclear forces. Following a policy of unilateral restraint, the United States should entirely forgo strategic ASW. This will require a related change in American conventional naval strategy for protecting its sea-lines of communication (SLOCs) to Europe, because the United States has relied on forward strategic ASW to keep the Soviet navy far away from the Atlantic sea-lanes. 85 Instead, following a policy of defense emphasis, the United States should shift to a more defensive approach to SLOC protection that emphasizes direct protection of convoys and rejects forward operations against Russian strategic submarines. 86 In addition, the United States should continue relying on arms control to minimize the offensive potential of ballistic missile defenses (BMD). The United States is, however, considering deploying limited BMD—a system capable of protecting the United States from accidental and nth country missile attacks—that would require amending the ABM Treaty. Deploying such a system could generate Russian insecurity, since Russian leaders are likely to worry that it could be expanded to threaten their retaliatory capabilities. Even if we exclude the risk of provoking Russian insecurity, the case for limited BMD is weak. 87 Thus, policies that can assure Russia that U.S. objectives are limited should be a prerequisite for proceeding with limited BMD. 88

Consideration of the political consequences of military policy also provides useful insights into the design of a new security structure for Europe and for America’s role in this structure. I briefly address three questions. First, should NATO extend security guarantees to the East European states that were formerly members of the Warsaw Pact? 89 Whether

88 This policy is outlined in Glaser (fn. 83).
Western interests warrant extending some type of security guarantee to these countries is beyond the scope of this article. But whatever benefits these security guarantees might provide must be weighed against the risk of increasing Russian insecurity.\(^{90}\) If expanding NATO into Eastern Europe increases Russian insecurity, Western security might also be reduced, for example, by increasing Russia's incentives to exert control over former Soviet republics or former members of the Warsaw Pact. The West should therefore take care to minimize any increase in its ability to attack Russia. Thus, if security guarantees are warranted, NATO should limit its security involvement to commitments to come to the defense of these states if they are attacked. It should not deploy forces in Eastern Europe, nor should it integrate these countries into its military structure.

A second question asks whether Europe should move to a collective security system to preserve peace among its major powers, including Russia and the United States. Collective security is a leading possibility because, unlike traditional alliances, its logic applies to situations in which member states do not face a clear enemy.\(^{91}\) Western European powers see each other as essentially "ideal states"—states that do not need to deter each other, because they are secure and not-greedy. They are secure because after forty-odd years of cold war cooperation they are confident that their neighbors are uninterested in attacking them; as a result the security dilemma no longer operates. Western European relations with Russia are certainly not yet comparable to relations within Western Europe, but the hope is that relations will continue to move in that direction.

Collective security may not, however, be well suited to what should be its most basic task—maintaining and improving the currently good political relations between Europe's major powers. Collective security requires that all states join forces against any aggressor and therefore that all states are capable of sending forces into the attacked country or into the aggressor's country. However, these offensive capabilities could provoke the very political tensions they are supposed to prevent. As long as relations remain very good in Western Europe, these countries will not be troubled by the offensive potential of their neighbors. But the same is not true for Russia: nonadversarial relations between Russia and the West are not so well established that we can be confident that Western


capabilities for launching an offensive into Russia will not become a source of Russian insecurity. And viewed from the vantage of Western Europe, large Russian offensive capabilities—which it would require, for example, to meet a commitment to protect France against attack by Germany—could be a source of insecurity.

Although the growth of similar fears within Western Europe is less likely, the possibility should not be ignored. Precisely because relations are now so good, these countries are likely to avoid creating dangerous misperceptions and insecurity. Nevertheless, the European security structure should be designed to work in the event relations begin to be strained, in which case, the security dilemma might begin to operate again and thereby increase tensions instead of damping them. A security structure in which all the major powers emphasize defensive capabilities has better prospects for preserving good relations.

Finally, a third question asks whether a U.S. military presence in Europe is still valuable now that Western European resources are more than adequate to provide defense against a weaker and geographically distant Russia. The answer is yes—for political purposes. Even a small U.S. military presence can provide a visible symbol of America's continuing commitment to Western European security, which will enable the major Western European powers to adopt military and foreign policies that pose smaller threats to Russia and possibly to one another and will reduce any fears that might be generated by the offensive potential that remains. At the same time, although U.S. military potential will remain large, its distance from the Continent and its history of intervening in Europe only to oppose countries that are pursuing hegemony make it unlikely that American military potential will become a source of insecurity.

In closing, with political relations between the major powers in transition, the political consequences of military policy warrant special attention. Fortunately, the United States has the opportunity to pursue policies that promise to reduce future Russian insecurity without jeopardizing the deterrent capabilities the United States should maintain to hedge against future uncertainties. At the same time, a continuing American commitment to peace in Europe can provide security that will facilitate the development of a security structure for meeting the challenges of the post-cold war era.