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The Security Logic of Abandoned States

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Abstract

Alliances are uncertain. A state may or may not come to the aid of an ally in a military crisis. Who is a threat to who is not always clear. States without reliable allies must find new means of security against a threat. Nuclear weapons heighten these threats. Security from nuclear attack concerns the continuity of society, not just military defeat. How does a state who once had—but now lacks—a dependable nuclear-armed ally secure themselves against an adversary's nuclear threats? The most rational option is for these *abandoned states* to build nuclear weapons of their own. Proliferation models, threat response literature, theories of credibility, and the psychology of power stand at the center of abandoned state strategic rationality. I undertake a qualitative case study of French nuclear proliferation from 1954 through 1960 to uncover the exogenous, internal, and perceived factors informing abandoned state behavior.

Introduction

How do allies of great powers respond to fears of abandonment?

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union broadened nuclear protection to their respective allies. These protections deterred military aggression and diplomatic coercion. The credibility of this *extended deterrence* depended upon the clear willingness of either side to use nuclear weapons in defense of these non-nuclear allies. Some of these allies did not believe this deterrent was sufficient, however. Under assurances from the United States, South Korea stands out as a classic example of extended deterrence skepticism in scholarship. The doctrine of extended deterrence implied that the United States was willing to risk a nuclear strike on its own territory to defend the sovereignty of its allies. As Charles de Gaulle famously asked President Kennedy during the Berlin Crisis of 1961, would the United States trade New York for Paris?[1]

The policy question persists and reveals a broader theoretical concern which I address in this thesis. Today, allies of the United States in both Europe and Asia have expressed concerns

[1] Office of the Historian, ed. Charles S. Sampson and Glenn W. LaFantasie, XIV Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963 § (1993).

that the United States may not honor its extended deterrence commitments. These allies worry they may become *abandoned states.* An abandoned state has no military allies, but had one before. To be clear, I am not talking about a neutral state such as Austria or India. This thesis focuses on states once part of a robust alliance partnership. State abandonment can occur at the conventional or nuclear level. Perhaps an ally refuses to commit ground forces in invasion or hesitates to threaten retaliation in a nuclear crisis. In the latter case, either the protector explicitly cancels its guarantees or the protectee does not believe in the trustworthiness of extended deterrence. This thesis examines state abandonment at the nuclear threshold. So, if a non-nuclear ally perceives its great power protector to possess an unreliable extended deterrent capability, what steps will this ally take to safeguard itself from attack or coercion? These abandoned states tend to build their own nuclear arsenal in response.

Nuclear proliferation is a form of *internal balancing.* When a state is faced with a foreign threat, it may build up its military and economic capabilities through internal means to meet said threat. Alternatively, a threatened state may seek allies and engage in *external balancing.* Kenneth Waltz is the first to identify "external" and "internal" balancing in his seminal book *Theory of International Politics*.[2] The pre-First World War era provides two excellent examples of both behaviors. British naval buildup and the construction of the *HMS Dreadnought* in 1906 was an internal response to the growing power of the German navy. In 1894, France and Russia formalized their alliance to meet the threat of the German, Italian, and Austro-Hungarian Triple Alliance. In this thesis, I offer three original contributions to nuclear strategy literature. First, I argue that threatened abandoned states may balance internally with nuclear weapons. Second, internal balancing is a rationally better option than external balancing for abandoned states. Third, I provide the term *nuclear internal balancing* to describe this highly situational behavior.

[2] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1979), 168.

Abandonment and outside threats are not the only possible causes of state balancing. As G. John Ikenberry identifies, *domination* by a great power protector can likewise cause a weaker state to seek new security guarantees.[3] Ikenberry refers to great power guarantees of neither domination nor abandonment of these less powerful allies as "strategic restraint."[4] Strategic restraint is not limited to nuclear weapons. This could occur at the economic, conventional warfare, and nuclear levels. Strategic restraint necessitates adhering to mutually agreed-upon principles and policies.[5] Nuclear security is perhaps the most consequential form of strategic restraint, however, provided the destructive power of nuclear weapons. In the twenty-first century, balancing is most likely caused by abandonment. Ikenberry recognizes that in the absence of great power direction, smaller states tend to engage in balancing behavior.[6] Ikenberry primarily addresses domination and abandonment in the context of an immediate postwar order. A great power victor which involves itself too much or too little in the affairs of its allies agitates those states. It is difficult to find a recent historical example of balancing as a result of domination, however. Balancing most often stems from abandonment. This latter eventuality makes nuclear internal balancing a possibility for a state with no more great power allies.

For the first time in history, nuclear weapons have made internal balancing a prospect for even moderately wealthy states. Territorial integrity may be upheld without the presence of large field armies. The cost of internal balancing is greatly reduced, and states have developed strategies to pursue limited nuclear technology with relative impunity. Small states can now impose unacceptable costs on great powers for aggressive action. In this thesis, I present internal nuclear balancing as an option for an abandoned state to ensure survival.

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[3] G. John Ikenberry, "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order," *International Security* 23, no. 3 (Winter 1998): 45, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539338.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, 54.
[6] Ibid, 45.

Nuclear internal balancing is neither an aberration in the international order nor a particularly rare occurrence. Or, at least it may not be in the future. South Korea attempted to undertake independent proliferation efforts as US credibility waned in the 1970s. West Germany, Taiwan, and Japan each expressed the same tendency periodically in the decades after the Second World War. Nuclear internal balancing behavior exists. As the hegemony of the United States continues to decline in the twenty-first century, we may find more and more US allies engaging in nuclear internal balancing—and perhaps with greater success than in prior attempts.

An abandoned state has four options: 1) to appease its adversaries; 2) to seek guarantees from another power; 3) to join the adversary; or 4) to construct an independent deterrent capability. Options one and three involve widespread concessions to the power threatening an abandoned state. However, past state behavior indicates that balancing is far more likely. Options two and four represent external and internal balancing, respectively. An abandoned state may not have the luxury of external balancing. States who once had a great power ally would be unlikely to find a friend in a geopolitical enemy of that former great power ally. Say I played center for five years on the Chicago Bears. If I decided I wanted to play for the Green Bay Packers due to an awful quarterback, it is unlikely I would be received well by my longtime rival. Geopolitical antagonism does not simply evaporate. A bipolar geopolitical world, such as during the Cold War, may eliminate the possibility of external balancing entirely should a nuclear protector become unreliable or renege on its guarantees. Such was the case for one prominent ally of the United States during the Cold War.

The literature on abandoned states and threat response is incomplete. One case of abandonment and subsequent internal balancing remains largely unexamined by scholars: France. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the government of France did not perceive the United

States' nuclear 'umbrella' of extended deterrence to be credible. Lack of US support in conventional warfighting called the commitment of the United States to ensure French territorial sovereignty into question.[7] The expansionist Soviet Union, providing no trustworthy assurances of restrained action to the West, certainly gave France reason to seek its own security guarantees. The threat of US abandonment was insufficient to pacify France's search for an independent deterrent. In response, France balanced internally through acquiring nuclear weapons. Proliferation was the most cost-effective means by which France could ensure its survival in the face of Soviet attack or coercion. In the minds of French leaders, the United States did not signal that it would provide a credible deterrent against Soviet aggression. They *perceived* the existence of non-credibility, leading to the behavior of internal balancing. In this thesis, the perceived existence of non-credible US assurances serves as an independent variable. Dependent upon the lack of credibility is the behavior of internal balancing.

The following literature review broadly traces the development of thought on proliferation, threat response, credibility, and the psychology of power in international relations. With respect to internal balancing, proliferation literature remains fixed around rapid and flexible nuclear attainment. Hedging and external balancing proponents serve as a foil to my argument. Threat response literature does not address the possibility of internal balancing as I present in this thesis, and is the primary scholarship on which I build. Secondarily, theories of credibility serve to untangle the reasons for perceived US unreliability. Political psychology scholarship assists in a tertiary role to explain growing threat perception. These four literatures form the basis on which I expand on present international relations knowledge.

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[7] Keith W. Baum, "Two's Company, Three's a Crowd: The Eisenhower Administration, France, and Nuclear Weapons," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1990): 315–28, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27550617; Alfred Grosser, "General de Gaulle and the Foreign Policy of the Fifth Republic," *International Affairs* 39, no. 2 (April 1963): 198–213, https://doi.org/10.2307/2611297.

Proliferation, Threats, Credibility, and Psychology

I. Proliferation

The recent literature on nuclear proliferation primarily focuses on nuclear latency, the ability of a state to flexibly respond to a variety of potential nuclear threats. Ariel Levite argues that international political circumstances restrain states seeking nuclear weapons to a rapid development and deployment capability just short of becoming a nuclear-armed state.[8] He refers to this as "nuclear hedging."[9] Vipin Narang later expanded on Levite's work to argue that nuclear hedging was a likely course of action for abandoned states—or states threatened with abandonment by an ally—to maintain swift nuclear acquisition potential without violating international nonproliferation norms.[10] This would preserve the possibility of external state balancing; a state publicly pursuing nuclear weapons opens itself up to the criticisms involved with violating expectations of nonproliferation. Iran in the present day is a good example of a nuclear hedger.

The literature does not address the possibility of explicit internal nuclear balancing as a response to abandonment. Overt nuclear pursuit is not seen to be a viable course of action provided the perceived advantages of hedging strategies. Among scholars including Victor Cha, Rasmus Pedersen, Glenn Snyder, and Vipin Narang, state abandonment is not considered to be a precondition of internal balancing, but rather a potential condition should the protective power's

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[8] Ariel E. Levite, "Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited," *International Security* 27, no. 3 (January 2003): 59–88, https://doi.org/10.1162/01622880260553633.
[9] Ibid, 59.
[10] Vipin Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation: How States Pursue the Bomb," *International Security* 41, no. 3 (January 2017): 110–50, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00268.

nonproliferation demands of the ally not be met.[11] Scholars have not examined how a state will behave after abandonment has already occurred. Hedging is useful to a state insofar as it does not require an immediate deterrent towards a coercive great power; the threat of creating a nuclear weapon—regardless of how far along in this process a state is—cannot create an immediate expectation of retaliation as the weapon does not yet exist. By definition, hedging cannot be purposeful to an already abandoned state facing an existential threat. Still, hedging scratches the surface of a major gap in present threat literature: internal balancing.

II. Threats

I expand on the threat literature of Stephen Walt. In 1987, Walt wrote *The Origins of Alliances.* He developed a theory of alliance formation called "balance of threat."[12] States do not balance against power, but against the *threat* presented by that power. A state has two options when threatened: seek allies or join the adversary's security apparatus. In other words, they may either *balance* or *bandwagon*. Balancing among superpowers is far more common than bandwagoning. Their survival is at risk if they fail to act, and joining the less powerful states greatens the threatened state's authority in the alliance.[13] Walt argues for external balancing over bandwagoning. He does not address internal balancing against threats. This is my contribution to the literature on alliance politics—that a third option of internal balancing is a plausible response to a threat.

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[11] Victor D. Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (June 2000): 261–91, https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00158; Rasmus Pedersen, "Small States Shelter Diplomacy: Balancing Costs of Entrapment and Abandonment in the Alliance Dilemma," *Cooperation and Conflict* 58, no. 4 (April 7, 2023): 441–59, https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367231164497; Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 461–95, https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183; Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation."

[12] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), viii.

[13] Ibid, 18-19, 161.

Since Walt, the literature has largely overlooked internal balancing. Glenn Snyder recognized that a greater field beyond Walt's dichotomy was possible, but stopped short of internal balancing.[14] Writing after the fall of the Soviet Union, Kenneth Waltz alluded to an internal balancing option, stating that "faced with unbalanced power, some states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance."[15] In 2005, Keir Lieber and Gerard Alexander noted that a limited form of internal balancing was occurring among extremist and rogue states in the form of potential nuclear proliferation, a direct response to the newfound threat presented by the United States.[16] Recently, Joseph Parent and Sebastian Rosato have argued that internal balancing is a more likely course of action than external balancing for great powers, employing a high-level structural analysis of power competition in the late nineteenth through early twentieth century.[17] Parent and Rosato briefly discuss nuclear weapons as a form of internal balancing, but do not explicitly state nuclear internal balancing as a direct response to state abandonment. I forcefully state the unparalleled value of nuclear weapons for internal balancing, employing a qualitative analysis of perceived credibility to demonstrate the trichotomous choice of a threatened state with no reliable allies.

III. Credibility

Lack of credibility drives a weaker ally to engage in internal balancing. In *Calculating Credibility*, Daryl Press formulated a theory of reputation and commitment estimation known as

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[14] Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances, Balance, and Stability," *International Organization* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 128, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300001417.
[15] Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (July 2000): 28, https://doi.org/10.1162/016228800560372.
[16] Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, "Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (July 2005): 133, https://doi.org/10.1162/0162288054894580.
[17] Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," *International Security* 40, no. 2 (2015): 51–86, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00216.

"Current Calculus theory."[18] Current Calculus stipulates that leaders assess credibility through the immediate balance of interests. The focus is on present action, not past action—though the history of a state's behavior may be useful to understanding the efficacy and capabilities of its institutions in a given crisis.[19] This stands in stark contrast to the "Past Actions theory" which dominated credibility assessment throughout recent history.[20] An example of Past Actions theory was the Kennedy Administration's widespread belief in the credibility of Soviet threats throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis despite little evidence to support the existence of indomitable Soviet resolve.[21] Soviet *reputation* determined its credibility. However, prior behavior is not indicative of future behavior. This was precisely the problem with French perceptions of US credibility; the Fifth Republic placed far too much emphasis on US activities in areas unrelated to French territorial sovereignty to determine the received signals.

As Jonathan Mercer points out, credibility "consists of resolve, capability, and interests."[22] Capability and interests are dependent on a given situation, and so cannot be indicative of a consistent reputation for resolve. Resolve itself, or the willingness to carry out an act, is determined by the capacity to act and the investment of a state in producing a favorable outcome. It is through resolve in a series of immediate situations with favorable conditions for capability and interest that a *reputation for resolve* is developed, the cornerstone of Past Actions theory. The logical conclusion is that credibility ought to consist of the factors informing resolve: capability and interests. This supports Press' Current Calculus theory. It is this view of credibility on which I predicate my analysis of how French abandonment was perceived.

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[18] Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32.
[19] Ibid, 21.
[20] Ibid, 18.
[21] Ibid, 117.
[22] Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 15.

IV. Power Psychology

Credibility is a problem of perception, and perception is psychological. The perception of credibility—and, in particular, the threat perceptions of leaders—can be heavily influenced by individual biases and emotions. Classical realist Hans Morgenthau, the father of realist thought in international relations, assumes the centrality of human nature to the international structure.[23] The human nature argument in realist international politics dictates that countries exist in "such a war as is of every man against every man," in the words of Thomas Hobbes.[24] Instinctual emotion is the basis on which states interact with one another. Some political psychology literature follows the same tradition. Caleb Pomeroy notes that, when a person is threatened, the "behavioral inhibition system (BIS)" is activated—promoting a heightened awareness and perception of potential threats.[25] These feelings are exacerbated with lesser power relative to the threat at hand. A 65-pound collie will not find a snarling 20-pound dachshund to be as threatening as a 110-pound growling rottweiler.

Curiously, Pomeroy finds that power gain is directly correlated with lack of emotional understanding in negotiations, increasing the possibility of misinterpreting signals.[26] The opposite holds true as well. Leaders of less powerful states are more receptive to the intended meaning of signals. As a mid-tier world power, France incurred the worst of both. Greater power relative to less capable adversaries in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria decreased French leaders' ability to understand US signaling. Defeats against smaller adversaries increased the broad

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[23] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 169-170.
[24] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Rod Hay, *McMaster University* (London, UK: Andrew Crooke, 1651), https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf, 77.
[25] Caleb Pomeroy, "The Psychology of Power: The First Image Reversed and International Security," The Mershon Center, April 1, 2021, https://mershoncenter.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-04/psych_power_new_wave_pomeroy.pdf, 2
[26] Ibid, 18-19.

perception of threat, contributing to fears of US abandonment and Soviet coercion. Nuclear internal balancing was a product of these "emotional oscillations."[27]

The immediate interests of a state and its relative power position suggest that internal balancing is possible for a state under threat. External balancing and bandwagoning are the most well-established options for a state facing an existential threat. Hedging might be considered a 'light' version of internal balancing. As noted by scholars, hedging has made a great deal of sense provided the capability and interests of many examined states.[28] In Vipin Narang's coding of state proliferation strategies, he rightly identifies France as an outlier.[29] Instead of hedging under the protection of the United States, the Fifth Republic openly pursued nuclear weapons. The irregularity of the French case is symptomatic of a greater trend in alliance and threat literature: undercounting the possibility for overt internal balancing. Nevertheless, the hesitancy of scholars to explicitly state the possibility of internal balancing has some standing. It has consistently been argued that states thinking of pursuing nuclear weapons and under the protection of a nuclear great power are restrained by fears of allied abandonment.[30] Though external balancing may be made more difficult by internal balancing, capability and interests could dictate that internal balancing is the best course of action—just as it was in the mind of the French government. I bridge this gap in the literature, demonstrating that internal balancing is a viable option in lieu of external balancing or bandwagoning.

I proceed in four sections. First, I lay out my theory of nuclear internal balancing. Second, I outline the means by which I undertake inductive content analysis. Third, I identify and analyze French responses to failed operations in Indochina, the Suez Crisis, and Algeria in

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[27] Ibid,
[28] Levite, "Never Say Never Again"; Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation."
[29] Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 135.
[30] Jacques Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 36.

the context of my theory. Fourth, I explore the policy and research implications of nuclear internal balancing. The literature I employ on proliferation, threat, credibility, and power is indeed wide-ranging. But it is necessary. Internal balancing as a response to state abandonment cannot adequately be explained through a single literature. Power psychology informs threat perception, in turn raising credibility questions which lead to a specific proliferation behavior: internal balancing. Focusing on the salient elements of a broad literature tells a far more cogent and compelling story of state abandonment than a strict emphasis on any single subfield of international relations scholarship. The following theory is the crux of my story.

A Theory of Internal Balancing in Response to Abandonment

I predicate my theory on six realist premises about the international order and the conduct of states. First, the international order is anarchic. Second, states attempt to maximize power in relation to one another. Third, states act rationally—they do not act in a deliberately self-destructive manner. Fourth, states act in accordance with their immediate interests. This fourth premise is drawn directly from the work of Daryl Press. Fifth, the ultimate goal of a state is to ensure its survival. Sixth, abandoned states act differently from neutral states with respect to internal balancing and alliance politics. These six assumptions, some well-known to realist literature and some novel, permit the exploration of nuclear internal balancing in Cold War France.

I ought to clarify the situational nature of state abandonment. I note earlier that I am not talking about internal balancing in neutral states. I exclusively focus on internal balancing among states which once had a great power ally. A state which once had allies has a vested interest in

restoring the balance of power with its adversaries as quickly as possible; allowing power to shift towards a potential enemy is antithetical to mitigating the "unwanted consequences" which underpin the self-preservative objectives of a state.[31] If a state never had allies to begin with, it cannot be abandoned. Internal balancing among non-aligned states will not occur in the same way as internal balancing in abandoned states. True, neutral states seek power maximization as any other state does. But the problem with neutral state internal balancing is causal. Balancing cannot occur in a vacuum; something must generate the desire to engage in balancing behavior. A power equilibrium between two neutral states, undisturbed by the uncertainty of alliance politics, drastically reduces the field of possible causations for internal balancing. The balance of power between neutral states remains mostly stagnant without the exogenous forces alliance interaction brings.

The strongest argument for the application of internal balancing to non-aligned states is balance of power among neutral rivals. Pakistan's nuclear weapons program was a direct response to India's first nuclear test in 1974, for instance. There is not, however, any room for a causal 'shock' to occur in the same vein as abandoned state internal balancing. The balance of power cannot change so drastically in such a short period of time that an increase of capabilities becomes an existential affair. 24 years after India's first nuclear test, Pakistan revealed its own arsenal. Granted, an attentive objector could argue that this was an issue of funding or research capability. However, the underlying difference between neutral and abandoned states remains clear: the necessity to balance is not the same.

Strategic uncertainty is not a problem for neutral states, even those with an enemy. They know their opponent and have built their military to match their adversary's capabilities. If these states were perpetually unbalanced, the stronger neutral state would have conquered the weaker

[31] Waltz, *Theory,* 118.

long ago and the conflict would not be an issue in the first place. This is precisely the problem of an abandoned state—that they are suddenly faced by such a great mismatch of power that state sovereignty is actively threatened. If I train for a 400 meter relay race with the expectation that I will face an opponent similarly prepared, a parity of capability is reached. If one of my teammates bows out and I now have to run 800 meters—a distance in which I have little experience—then defeat is all but assured. Knowing I will always run a 400 meter race against a single opponent, even should that opponent become a better runner, still provides a reasonable expectation of victory. Though neutral states with adversaries may eventually engage in internal balancing, the nuclear internal balancing I write of is distinctly expedient as determined by the necessity of the immediate, existential threat faced by an abandoned state. Later, I expand on distinctions of timeliness in the proliferation literature. Understanding this critical conceptual qualification to my argument, I present my theory of internal balancing and state abandonment.

States in crisis are faced with uncertainty. When an adversary makes a demand, the target weighs whether or not the threat is believable. These "tests of nerve," to use the words of Thomas Schelling, are risk assessments.[32] For the target (call this state 'A'), the capability of the coercer (state 'B') to execute a threat and the clear interest of state B in carrying out its threats must be weighed against state B's *willingness* to follow through. It is unclear whether state B will actually carry out its threats if state A refuses to concede. This variability of uncertain willingness is also known as credibility.

State A has two main courses of action. It may either give in to or resist the demands of B. To decrease the possibility of B carrying out a threat, A may seek to increase its capabilities. In the literature, this is known as balancing. If state A has an ally, it may seek to shift the

[32] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 94.

aggressive power's focus to that ally—also known as buck-passing.[33] If state A has no allies, defending the balance of power necessitates balancing. This can be done either externally or internally. Should A give in to coercion, it may engage in either appeasement or bandwagoning as John Mearsheimer identifies.[34] The former calls for concessions in the hopes that B will not make further threats. The latter involves joining state B's security apparatus. Submission through appeasement or bandwagoning has not been particularly effective at dealing with aggressors, though remains a theoretical possibility. As Mearsheimer writes, "[t]he actual choice in a realist world is between balancing and buck-passing."[35] These two broad responses may be expanded to four possible actions for an abandoned state: 1) appeasement; 2) external balancing; 3) bandwagoning; or 4) internal balancing.

However unlikely appeasement may be in the twenty-first century, it has recent historical precedent. It is therefore important to clarify the conditions under which states could potentially elect to concede. Some scholars have argued that domestic pressures are responsible; others claim that appeasement becomes viable when a state is faced with more than one foreign threat.[36] Peter Trubowitz and Peter Harris offer a middle-ground explanation: that appeasement is the product of both internal political and external pressures.[37] This occurs "at the microfoundational level of individual leaders, where the twin pressures of statecraft and political leadership intersect."[38] Appeasement occurs when domestic considerations of 'butter' outweigh foreign

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[33] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2014), 267.
[34] Ibid, 139.
[35] Ibid, 140.
[36] Alexander Anievas, "The International Political Economy of Appeasement: The Social Sources of British Foreign Policy during the 1930s," *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (September 7, 2010): 601–29, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210510000513; Norrin M. Ripsman and Jack S. Levy, "Wishful Thinking or Buying Time? The Logic of British Appeasement in the 1930s," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (October 2008): 148–81, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.148.
[37] Peter Trubowitz and Peter Harris, "When States Appease: British Appeasement in the 1930s," *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 2 (September 30, 2014): 289–311, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210514000278.
[38] Ibid, 290.

threats necessitating ‘guns’. Domestic requirements of economic recovery policies, standing in sharp contrast to the increased government spending required to balance internally against an external threat, could be more important provided the political aims of a given ruling party. Such was the case for Neville Chamberlain’s Conservative Party in the 1930’s—he believed economic reform to be the cornerstone of retaining Conservative power, driving a policy of appeasement at the Munich Conference in 1938.[39] Butter over guns also explains why Britain chose to balance externally with France against Germany. Relying on combined power is less costly than increasing power through internal means, permitting greater spending on domestic policies.

In the atomic age, appeasement has become increasingly unlikely. Even without a large military, weaker states can resist much more powerful states. In material costs, nuclear weapons are relatively cheap to produce. In 2022, India spent 2.7 billion USD on nuclear weapons; Israel 1.2 billion; Pakistan 1 billion; and North Korea 589 million.[40] Each of these countries possesses a credible enough deterrent to make great powers think twice before attempting coercion. The prospect of a large-scale territorial invasion of any of these countries is unviable as a result. Since 1945, states seeking the ultimate security are no longer required to choose between butter and guns. They may have their cake and eat it too. The greatest hurdle to proliferation is not cost, but norms. This has made internal balancing a possibility for more states than ever before. Provided the unviability of appeasement in the case of France, I examine only external balancing, bandwagoning, and internal balancing in this thesis.

It has been established that states typically balance against threats. I argue that internal balancing is a more stable option than external balancing. Mearsheimer discerns that when a

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[39] Ibid, 299.
[40] Magritte Gordaneer, Alicia Sanders-Zakre, and Susi Snyder, rep., *Wasted: 2022 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending* (Geneva, SWI: ICAN, 2023), 5.

threatened state has allies, buck-passing to those allies is likely.[41] Threat avoidance is less costly than threat confrontation. Alliance politics complicates balancing. For the same reason, states cannot be sure that an ally will come to its aid in a time of crisis. Britain and France's reluctance to go to war with Germany over Czechoslovakia is one such example.

Say a hungry grizzly bear charged at yourself and a friend while on a hike. Pushing your friend in the path of the bear while you ran away would guarantee your safety. You may not be such a good friend, but you have ensured your own survival. Your friend could have pushed you towards the bear, too. All bets are off when your life is in danger. With allies in an external balancing scheme, there is a greater field of possibilities for these allies to avoid war at the expense of the target state; allies can be unreliable, whereas an individual state facing an existential threat cannot. If you are alone with the bear, you have no choice but to fight for your life. If you took a gun on the hike in the event of the bear attack, you would have a much better chance of survival than if you fought the bear with your fists. Even if your friend is similarly armed, shooting at the bear does not guarantee you will stop its charge. The possibility of being pushed by your friend towards the bear to guarantee his survival remains. Avoidance is always a logically better self-preservation option than confrontation.

Arming yourself is the equivalent of internal balancing in the bear analogy. Avoidance considerations make internal balancing the more stable choice over external balancing; you cannot be pushed towards the bear so your friend survives.[42] Your only option is to fight. Waltz's argument for the stability of bipolar over multipolar power structures—that "who is a danger to whom is never in doubt"—follows the same logic.[43] The main benefit of external balancing is a

[41] Mearsheimer, *Tragedy,* 139.
[42] Parent and Rosato make a similar observation: that states will not always honor commitments to allies. See: Parent and Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," 57.
[43] Waltz, *Theory,* 170-171.

reduced cost of standing up to a threatening power on the basis of shared burden. However, given the potential for burden deflection, the only manner by which to completely overcome the unreliability problem of external balancing is to arm oneself by internal means.

Alliance uncertainty is a strong outside factor which drives internal balancing. Domestic political considerations also play a factor, too. It is possible that internal balancing could be less costly than external balancing for domestic pressures.[44] Often, prior state experiences influence states' perceptions of alliance politics. In the words of Jihwan Hwang, "historical legacy will affect balancing behaviors" for countries with negative allied encounters in the past.[45] An example of high-cost external balancing is South Korea and Japan, allied through mutual geopolitical interests but separated by storied antagonism. Part of Seoul's historical attraction to development of an independent nuclear deterrent might be attributed to this fragile relationship. Underlying these fears is a belief that, should push come to shove, historical tensions would compel Japan not to come to South Korea's aid. These historical issues stand side-by-side with assessments of capability and interest for national leaders when gauging allied credibility. In the case of France, recent experiences with US criticism of French operations in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria made leaders doubt whether Washington would sacrifice New York for Paris in a crisis with the Soviets.

The hurdles to external balancing are potentially immense and insurmountable. Three factors may detract from the possibility of external balancing: 1) when guns trump butter; 2) the uncertainty of alliance politics; and 3) historical grievances. If you have enough money to buy a gun, realize the threat of bear attack is not necessarily shared, and have not forgotten your friend bullying you in middle school, you would be less inclined to take them on a hike in bear country.

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[44] Jihwan Hwang, "Rethinking the East Asian Balance of Power: Historical Antagonism, Internal Balancing, and the Korean-Japanese Security Relationship," *World Affairs* 166, no. 2 (2003): 97, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20672682.
[45] Ibid.

Three items increase the likelihood of internal balancing: 1) nuclear affordability; 2) hawkish foreign policy; and 3) expectation of threat. If the gun store is having a blowout sale, you are eager to encounter a bear, and expect to find bears along your hiking path, you would be more inclined to hike in bear country. A state eager to stand up to its adversaries, understanding the potential for allied buck-passing, is most likely to internally balance as a surefire means of establishing credibility in its deterrent of that adversary. Joined at the hip to a high resolve is a hawkish government. A hawkish government has a demonstrated interest in resolve against foreign threats, and the uncertainty of external balancing is antithetical to high resolve.

An Inductive Content Analysis

The condition of state abandonment is not binary and is not instantaneous. There are three steps to state abandonment: *suspected abandonment*, *perceived abandonment*, and *internalized abandonment*. Suspected abandonment entertains the possibility of allied non-credibility. Perceived abandonment indicates widespread fear in the government of neglected allied conventional commitments. Internalized abandonment manifests itself through concerns over extended nuclear deterrence credibility. The creation of an independent deterrent signals the full abandonment of a state.

I employ content analysis as a qualitative research method. In the words of Robert Weber, content analysis is a "process by which the many words of texts are classified into much fewer content categories."[46] I examine United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting records and document collections from the French Foreign Ministry. Within each document and meeting record, I identify whether the *behavior* of external balancing, bandwagoning, or internal

[46] Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 15.

balancing is considered by French leaders as a response to foreign threats. I likewise code each document based on its *demonstrated* level of abandonment, using suspected abandonment, perceived abandonment, and internalized abandonment as categories.

The first database I draw from is the United Nations Digital Library of the Security Council. Using materials from 1954 to 1960, I examine all UNSC meeting records containing the keywords "France" and "United States." Within these sources, I search for a third term: "Indochina," "Algeria," "Suez," and "Nuclear." For inclusion, each document must contain at least one mention of each of the three search terms within the full text. I have omitted any documents in which the French delegation did not speak from my data. A single document may be coded under more than one category. Multiple mentions of a certain behavior or demonstrated abandonment within a single document are counted as individual instances. For example, one document with three occurrences of "internal balancing" behavior is coded as a single case of "internal balancing."

The second set of data I employ are documents from the French Foreign Ministry. First published in 1987, the Foreign Ministry released multiple volumes of telegrams, conversations, letters, and memorandums they believed of particular importance to the diplomatic history of France. Like the UNSC meetings, I draw on document complications from 1954 to 1960, each year existing in one, two, or three volumes of approximately one thousand pages each. Within each volume, I examine every mention of the words "États-Unis" (United States), "nucléaire" (nuclear), and "menace" (threat). As the subject matter of these Foreign Ministry volumes overwhelmingly concerns the foreign policy issues of Indochina, Suez, and Algeria, replicating the same keyword filters as the UNSC documents does not produce fruitful results. I employ a search function to direct my attention to pertinent sources in an otherwise unwieldy set of

documents. Should a document contain one of these keywords, I code the source according to the level of expressed abandonment and the recommended behavior in response, using the same rules as that of the UNSC debates. Documents which contain one of these keywords but provide no substantive information are omitted from my data. Lastly, I record each mention of the Soviet Union as a direct military threat in the Foreign Ministry documents, a finding exclusive to these correspondences provided their internal (and more forthright) nature.

United Nations Security Council meeting records give us an excellent window into how French leaders wanted their actions to be viewed on the international stage and in the immediate term. We gain a sense of how French leaders wanted their perceptions to be perceived. In other words, we observe outward expressions of the French executive's innermost feelings. These public opinions, influenced heavily by alliance politics and the ever-present shadow of the Cold War, permit a high-level analysis of how France signaled its abandonment concerns as the events themselves unfolded.

The Foreign Ministry documents tell us even more. These correspondences, memorandums, and conversations—many of which were previously classified documents—allow scholars to delve deep into the real-time concerns of French leaders as state abandonment progressed. Most importantly, these are documents which the French Foreign Ministry specifically wanted scholars to use in future studies of French diplomatic history. Each volume was released more than 30 years after the events which these compilations cover, and the contents of each volume were carefully selected by a committee from the Foreign Ministry. These sources represent how the French government wanted itself to be perceived, even today. This thesis focuses on perception from the view of the abandoned state (state 'C') and is not an objective assessment of the United States' credibility. Here, bias is to my advantage. In a

selectively molded portrayal of events, the reader may learn far more about the narrator and their self-perception than they would from any objective facts or insights into the broader world beyond the author themselves. In a thesis on perception, these sources are a goldmine.

Coding Criteria and Hypotheses

Statement Category: Behavior	*Rules*
"External balancing"	Do French leaders seek to form a new alliance?
"Bandwagoning"	Do French leaders entertain joining the Soviet Union's security apparatus?
"Internal balancing"	Do French leaders seek to increase nuclear capabilities through internal means?

Statement Category: Demonstrated Abandonment	*Rules*	*Textual Example*
"Stay the course"	Do French leaders indicate support for the United States and its status quo foreign policy?	"As the United States representative said a moment ago, the [Soviet] plan [for the Suez Canal], if adopted, would have unthinkable consequences…"[47]
"Suspected abandonment"	Is there general concern over the present and/or future direction of US foreign policy?	"[I]t is not uncommon to note in the private conversations of competent officials the assertion that the United States government is wrong to continue to seek to attain the friendship of a government [Egypt] that

[47] United Nations Digital Library, Security Council Official Records § (1956), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/633334?ln=en&v=pdf.

		ostensibly does not want it."[48]
"Perceived abandonment"	Is conventional US military support questioned or criticized?	"For some time, however, a new American attitude seems to be emerging in Morocco. The intention to dissociate itself from us has become clear in the case of Franco-American bases."[49]
"Internalized abandonment"	Are US nuclear assurances questioned or criticized?	"It is not acceptable that the decision on this subject [of nuclear deployment] can belong to the United States government alone…"[50]

Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory is the primary literature with which I engage in this thesis. He hypothesized that "the greater the threat, the greater the probability that the vulnerable state will seek an alliance."[51] I amend his theory to allow for internal balancing. I present the following hypothesis:

H1a: As the perception of abandonment increases, so does the perceived threat of the coercing state.

Secondarily, I apply Daryl Press' Current Calculus Theory and Jonathan Mercer's theory of credibility to understand the reasoning of French leaders in real-time. There is a push-pull relationship between the credibility of an ally and the threat presented by an aggressive adversary. A decreasing perception of credibility is synonymous with an increasing perception of

[48] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1956 § (1989), 72.
[49] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1959 § (1994), 465.
[50] Ibid, 66.
[51] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* 26.

abandonment. As Walt argues, increased threat corresponds to an increased tendency to balance. I again amend his argument with the following hypothesis:

H1b: As the perception of abandonment increases, so does support for internal balancing.

The perception of abandonment actively changed the balance of power between France and the Soviet Union. Internal balancing was intended to remedy the balance of power. There was a direct relationship between waning US support for conventional operations in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria and the need for an independent French nuclear deterrent. While the *actual* material cost of proliferation did not change, the *believed* cost relative to the Soviet threat—facilitated by the hawkishness and high resolve associated with balancing tendencies—lessened. As the threat increased, the cost of meeting the threat decreased.

Case Study

The Fourth Republic was a new beginning for France. With the Third Reich destroyed and peace in Europe secured, the task of rebuilding France fell upon a multitude of successive Prime Ministers in an increasingly volatile political environment. The left was gaining power in French politics. The threat of the Nazis remained, too—and French politicians continued to view West Germany as a potential adversary well into the 1950s. France also struggled to hold onto its colonial empire. The rise of the Viet Minh insurgency in Japanese-occupied Indochina continued after the return of French troops to the territory, and the First Indochina War lasted from 1946 to 1954. In 1956, the President of Egypt nationalized the Franco-British Suez Canal Company,

prompting a disastrous military intervention by France and the UK during the Suez Crisis. And, from 1954 to 1962, France fought the Algerian War of Independence. In 1958, the French Fifth Republic was established as a response to these growing international and domestic problems. The Fifth Republic would conduct its first nuclear test in February of 1960, with France becoming the world's fourth nuclear power.

The United States was not happy about French nuclear proliferation. The rise of the left in French politics was particularly worrying to American leaders. As Secretary of State John Foster Dulles remarked of France: "the fact that the French government allows at this time such things makes the world doubtful of her."[52] French leaders were aware of the United States' mistrust on the basis of political volatility. Concurrently, Washington's objections to French nuclear proliferation led to increased skepticism of US support for France. In Indochina, the United States did not provide the air support requested by French forces at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in "Operation Vulture." During the Suez Crisis, the Eisenhower Administration sided with the Soviets in condemning French military action. US criticism of French conduct in the Algerian War likewise irked French leaders. In response, France built nuclear weapons. The French position is best described by French President Charles de Gaulle in a declassified conversation with Vice President-elect Lyndon Johnson in 1960:

"France attaches the greatest importance to everything the United States does and is ready to cooperate with them in defense of the free world. But she does not think that the United States can be enough for the task, regardless of its power. The free world must stand up in its entirety to defend itself. This means that Europe too, and in particular France, must organize itself for their defense and for that of the free world."[53]

[52] Baum, "The Eisenhower Administration, France, and Nuclear Weapons," 316. Quotation reproduced from article.
[53] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1960 § (1996), 620.

French opinion was clear: either the United States was unwilling to secure French interests in Europe and abroad or it was incapable of doing so. Washington had slowly become an unreliable ally since the end of the Second World War. The path to state abandonment and internal balancing coincided with increasing American non-credibility, and was a direct result of a lack of US support. The following case study traces the development of France's abandonment and internal balancing.

I examined 94 UN Security Council meeting records between 1 January 1954 and 31 December 1960 pursuant to the methods outlined in the research design prior. Of these 94 meetings, the French representative expressed support for the United States' foreign policy in 50. "Suspected abandonment" was found in nine instances; "perceived abandonment" expressed three times; and statements consistent with "internalized abandonment" once. The behavior of internal balancing was recognized only once in a meeting from 1960.

Next, I turned my attention to private expressions of French policy. I explored fourteen volumes of documents from the French Foreign Ministry between 1 January 1954 and 31 December 1960. In total, I found sixteen expressions of support for the United States' foreign policy. Approval for policies constituting "external balancing" were recorded once; "bandwagoning" once; and "internal balancing" sixteen times. "Suspected abandonment" and "perceived abandonment" were each recorded in eleven instances; "internalized abandonment" was found twelve times. Finally, due to its pervasiveness, I tracked the number of instances in which the Soviet Union is mentioned as a direct threat to France. I found eighteen expressions of "threat" within these fourteen volumes.

The First Indochina War

The French government publicly supported the United States' policy towards Indochina. Eleven of the 94 UN Security Council meetings directly dealt with the French administration of Indochina. In eight of these meetings, the French representative expressed support for the United States; in the remaining three, Indochina was discussed but the French ambassador did not speak. As to be expected, Indochina was most heavily discussed from 1954 to 1955. The end of the First Indochina War in May of 1954 is the most significant geopolitical event for the Fourth Republic until the Suez Crisis of 1956. The only notable discussion concerning Indochina after 1954 are the debates involving the admission of Vietnam to the United Nations in 1957, on which both France and the United States agreed. France did not signal feelings of abandonment in Indochina at the UNSC.

French Foreign Ministry documents paint a more complete picture. In the three volumes of documents encompassing 1954 and 1955, "internal balancing" is mentioned three times, "suspected abandonment" three times, and "perceived abandonment" twice. I did not observe "internalized abandonment." Statements of support towards the United States are found in seven instances. The range of responses suggests that French feelings towards the United States were initially favorable despite singular policy disagreements such as US support during Dien Bien Phu. Nevertheless, the existence of internal balancing and some limited perceptions of abandonment indicates that moving away from a US-dominated security apparatus was an early feature of the Fourth Republic's defense policy. While plausible that calls for internal balancing and conceptions of state abandonment were direct responses to the failure of the First Indochina War, it is not possible to rule out the existence of these sentiments prior to the French defeat. The first document compilation from the Foreign Ministry is 1954, eliminating the possibility of a

comparative analysis with, say, 1953 or 1952. Still, we can be sure that internal balancing as a response to a potentially unreliable United States was a real and present concept as early as 1954.

Most importantly, internal balancing is seen as the primary means through which to deal with an unreliable ally. Internal balancing was an option for France from the very beginning. According to Stephen Walt, the opinion of French leaders should have skewed towards either external balancing or bandwagoning.[54] For Walt, smaller powers such as France were not aligned with either the US or the Soviet Union on the basis of strength, but which superpower was more willing to assist French objectives.[55] The evidence demonstrates a third option: that neither the US nor the USSR advanced French interests, necessitating internal balancing measures. Here, the uncertainty of alliance politics takes center stage. The fundamental problem of external balancing is reliance on outside forces for state security. Parent and Rosato emphasize the self-help logic of states in a neorealist world.[56] Assuming a neorealist position, the cancellation of the United States' "Operation Vulture" to save French forces at Dien Bien Phu was sufficient enough reason to question the United States' commitment to French security in the future. Within the field of possible US actions, inaction became an established option. From the French perspective, feelings of abandonment and subsequent support for internal balancing serve as a means of limiting this field of possibilities; an ally cannot be unreliable if it is not counted on for security in the first place. We may infer from the evidence and literature that French abandonment and the potential for creating an independent nuclear deterrent began with the First Indochina War's end. Privately-held feelings of abandonment coincided with the first steps in the French nuclear program. In December of 1954, Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France instituted

[54] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* 161.
[55] Ibid, 162.
[56] Parent and Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," 54.

an atomic weapons development program, an implicit confirmation of non-credible US nuclear assurances.

Immediate interests drove French leaders to begin questioning the United States' credibility. Recall Jonathan Mercer's argument that credibility comprises "resolve, capability, and interests."[57] Resolve consists of capability and interests, and a reputation for resolve is developed through consistently demonstrating the capacity to act and a clear investment in doing so. With regards to Indochina, the United States did not demonstrate resolve and its credibility was undermined. Washington indeed had the capability to act and perhaps save the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu. Instead, President Eisenhower backed down in the absence of British support for Operation Vulture. However, the United States did not have the interest to demonstrate resolve. If Eisenhower had deemed a French victory in Indochina to be a priority for the United States, he could have acted unilaterally. So, lack of US support in Indochina undermined Washington's resolve, leading French leaders to believe the United States was a non-credible ally.

Alone, the UN Security Council meetings on the First Indochina War appear unremarkable. In tandem with the Foreign Ministry documents, we see a different story. The support shown for the United States at the Security Council is a far cry from the private criticisms levied against Washington by French leaders. It seems likely that a united diplomatic front against the Soviet Union was more advantageous to France and the West than open criticism of US policy. Public cracks in NATO were more damaging than its private chasms; alliance division breeds adversary expansion. Aside from hedging, Vipin Narang identifies two more strategies of proliferation for internal balancers: "hiding" and "sprinting."[58] Hiding

[57] Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics,* 15.
[58] Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 126.

involves pursuing nuclear weapons with an emphasis on secrecy; sprinting calls for speed over clandestine development. A comparison between the UNSC meetings and Foreign Ministry documents places France somewhere between these two options in Indochina. France gave no indication of abandonment feelings or independent proliferation at the Security Council, demonstrating hiding. But French nuclear development was no secret to its allies; the Central Intelligence Agency was well-aware of French proliferation efforts as early as 1954.[59] Prior to the Suez Crisis of 1956, France took both "hiding" and "sprinting" positions. As French nuclear development progressed and military losses mounted, sprinting would become the dominant mode of proliferation.

The Suez Crisis

During the Suez Crisis of 1956, France became more vocal about its dissatisfaction with the United States. President Eisenhower openly condemned the Franco-British invasion of Suez, as did US Ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.[60] From 1956 to 1957, the UN Security Council held 26 meetings on the Suez Crisis. Five of these meetings contained statements amounting to "suspected abandonment" and three instances of "perceived abandonment" were recorded. Neither "internalized abandonment," "external balancing," "internal balancing," nor "bandwagoning" was mentioned. I found 15 statements of support for the United States' status quo foreign policy from the French representative. Internally, condemnation of the United States increased, too. In five volumes of Foreign Ministry documents encompassing 1956 and 1957, I recorded "suspected abandonment" twice; "perceived abandonment" six times; and "internalized

[59] Central Intelligence Agency, The French Nuclear Weapon Program § (2008), https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001465904.pdf.
[60] United Nations Digital Library, Security Council Official Records § (1956), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/633313?ln=en&v=pdf.

abandonment" in three instances. "Internal balancing" policies were found in nine separate instances, with no support for either "external balancing" or "bandwagoning."

Problems with the United States' monopoly on NATO's nuclear capability became evident during the Suez Crisis. Writing to French Foreign Minister Pineau, Ambassador to West Germany Maurice de Murville sums up French concerns: that sole US possession of nuclear weapons "is not only a short-sighted policy, but also the indication of the real danger that threatens us."[61] This "real danger" was not just the Soviet Union, but the United States, too. Murville's underlying trepidation is that provided the US and USSR's statuses as nuclear superpowers, French interests would be left unprotected.[62] Issues important to France were not important to the United States, as evidenced by Suez. Among the requirements of capability and interest which constitute resolve, US interest in French geopolitical problems floundered.

In the Suez Crisis, we see a push-pull relationship between abandonment and threat. If a state relies on an ally for security, the absence of security leads that state to seek new guarantees.[63] Security must be challenged before it is built up. A state not facing immediate or future danger has no reason to seek increased capabilities or new alliances. The United States posed a different threat than the USSR to France. Regardless of circumstance, an American attack on France was highly unlikely—but the probability of Soviet attack remained. By condemning France in the Suez Crisis, the United States contributed to the threat posed by the Soviets. If myself and my friend are attacked by a bear and my friend runs away and watches from a distance, the threat of the bear is doubled. The threat itself does not change, but the circumstances *mitigating* the threat do.

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[61] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1956 § (1989), 553.
[62] Ibid, 554.
[63] Ikenberry, "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order," 45.

French perception of the United States' response to Suez was heavily informed by its power position. Recall Caleb Pomeroy's critical finding that more powerful states are less receptive to true signaling intent and vice versa.[64] In 1956, France was neither a superpower nor a regional power. With a large overseas empire still intact, France existed somewhere between the statuses of, for instance, the Soviet Union and India. Owing to its 'middle' power position, France did not fit in either the 'greater' or 'lesser' categories Pomeroy lays out; Paris had a disastrous relationship with most of its former colonies and a sharp mistrust of the United States. Here, Jihan Hwang's emphasis on the effects of "historical legacy" in balancing is most prominent.[65] Until the Second World War, France was a great power. Despite economic woes and ever-growing military defeats, France continued to act as a great power after the Second World War. Some scholars argue that much of Charles de Gaulle's motivation in developing a French nuclear weapons program was to restore national glory after the humiliation of the Battle of France in 1940.[66] However much a pipe dream returning France to great power status appeared, France acted accordingly. French leaders believed they were leaders of a world power and so mistook US signals just as a world power might—as an insult to their authority. Internal balancing was not only a means of securing France against the Soviet threat, but also a means of reclaiming French international gravitas lost to the United States after the Second World War.

While power psychology may assist scholars in deciphering increased feelings of hostility towards the United States and its signals, the literature does not explain the relative parity of private abandonment responses to Indochina and the Suez Crisis. In the Foreign Ministry documents, observed abandonment options did not change significantly between these events. "Suspected abandonment" decreased while "perceived abandonment" tripled and

[64] Pomeroy, "The Psychology of Power," 18-19.
[65] Hwang, "Rethinking the East Asian Balance of Power," 97.
[66] Baum, "The Eisenhower Administration, France, and Nuclear Weapons," 322.

"internalized abandonment" climbed from zero to three mentions. Alone, we might expect these feelings of abandonment to be far greater—France just suffered a devastating blow to its relationship with the United States. Indeed, if we faithfully apply Daryl Press' Current Calculus to French abandonment after Suez, outrage over lack of US support should have been more damaging to Franco-American relations.[67] Here, private expressions of balancing behavior provide some insight. The most significant comparison between the 1954/55 and 1956/57 Foreign Ministry documents is explicit support for internal balancing; this tripled from three to nine from Dien Bien Phu to Suez. These findings lend evidence to my hypothesis that as fears of abandonment grow, calls for internal balancing increase correspondingly.

Faced with security uncertainty, French leaders chose action over emotion. The immediate response to abandonment was to expand French military capabilities, not just express displeasure towards US non-credibility. We may draw two conclusions from France's balancing behavior. First, states act to secure themselves when threatened. This is well-established in the literature by realists such as Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer, and Stephen Walt.[68] Second, we begin to understand the circumstances restraining balancing options. I did not observe either "external balancing" or "bandwagoning" in the Foreign Ministry documents or UNSC meeting records from 1956 to 1957. France did not have the choice to balance externally or bandwagon with the Soviet Union. Bandwagoning was out of the question; if France aligned with the Soviets, it would have alienated itself from its closest military, economic, and political partners in Europe and around the world—despite however much US support remained uncertain. Strategic bipolarity makes external balancing with non-aligned powers a moot point, particularly

[67] Press, *Calculating Credibility,* 32.
[68] Waltz, "Structural Realism," 28; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy,* 267; Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* 26.

if the threat faced is nuclear. An alliance with a multitude of 'third world' nations, provided their strictly conventional capabilities, is insufficient to deter a threat at the nuclear threshold.

Recall my theory of the factors limiting external balancing and encouraging internal balancing. During and after the Suez Crisis, guns took precedence over butter; the reliability of France's allies was uncertain; and the legacy of France's defeat in 1940 and Cold War military blunders weighed heavily in restoring glory to the Fourth and Fifth Republics. Likewise, the Suez Crisis demonstrated the circumstances encouraging internal balancing. First, French leaders believed nuclear internal balancing to be affordable. Though yet to be instituted until January 1958, the French government endorsed the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1956. The French saw Euratom as not only an industrial development project, but as a means of acquiring nuclear weapons more easily. French leaders were privy to the concerns of the United States, namely that Euratom could facilitate French nuclear proliferation. To quote one declassified Foreign Ministry memorandum from November 1956:

> "The French [nuclear] program therefore sins, in the eyes of the Americans, by two flaws: it is too important; it is independent. To these two congenital defects can soon be added a new and more serious vice: the manufacture of atomic weapons… But the bad mood that the possible realization of this project will cause in the United States is not likely to modify our plans."[69]

Nuclear affordability was a contributing factor for the internal balancing tendencies expressed during and after the Suez Crisis, and one which the French knew would exacerbate American concerns. The 'nuclear opportunism' of the Suez Crisis, in tandem with conventional French military operations in Europe, indicated an overwhelmingly hawkish foreign policy, too.

[69] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 3 Documents diplomatiques français, 1956 § (1990), 334.

Second, the interventionist mindset of the French government decreased the understood costs of nuclear weapons acquisition. France planned to actively use nuclear weapons, both through deterrence and potential strategic or tactical deployment. Necessity makes cost less severe. Critically, the threefold increase in internal balancing behavior of 1956/57 occurred *prior* to the institution of Euratom in 1958. The actual cost of nuclear weapons development did not substantially change since 1954/55. Provided the absence of lowered material cost in 1956/57, the question remains as to why French leaders were so keen to pursue nuclear weapons in the *immediate* term before Euratom took effect. Lack of US credibility and the correspondingly heightened threats facing France decreased the price of proliferation. Nuclear weapons cost less because French leaders believed so. The perception of cost in nuclear internal balancing is just as important as the actual, material cost. Cost is relative to the severity of the problem at hand. The French hawkishness in the Suez Crisis and subsequent calls for internal balancing is also the first instance in which we can label French proliferation as a true "sprinting" strategy in-line with the traditional depictions of internal balancing in the literature.[70]

Third, French leaders expected a Soviet threat after the Suez Crisis. Among three volumes of Foreign Ministry documents in 1956, the first direct mention of the USSR as a direct threat to France occurs only *after* the beginning of the Suez Crisis.[71] Among the two volumes encompassing 1957, two direct references to the military threat posed by the Soviets are made. Similarly, the first volume of diplomatic correspondences from 1955 (1 January to 30 June) makes three explicit comments on the Soviet threat.[72] Expectation of threat in 1956 and 1957 was a response to the Suez Crisis; increased perception of threat in early 1955 likewise coincided with the beginning of the French nuclear program and the aftermath of Dien Bien Phu. From

[70] Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 126; Parent and Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," 53.
[71] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 3 Documents diplomatiques français, 1956 § (1990).
[72] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 1 Documents diplomatiques français, 1955 § (1987).

these findings, we may deduce that the expectation of threat corresponds to not only military defeat, but the lack of assistance provided by the United States in both Suez and Indochina. Curiously, the relationship between threat and abandonment is weak in the Foreign Ministry documents. However, UNSC meeting records tell a different story. Of the 1956 Security Council meetings pertaining to the Suez Crisis, only one reference to abandonment was made prior to the start of the Crisis on 29 October. French leaders felt threatened in private and signaled their displeasure with US foreign policy in public, a sharp departure from the typically far more critical Foreign Ministry letters, telegrams, memorandums, and conversation minutes. Only when comparing the UNSC meetings with the Foreign Ministry documents do we see a relationship between abandonment and threat, lending evidence to my hypothesis "H1a." Perhaps French leaders sought to signal displeasure with the United States in order to change Washington's policy towards Egypt, Suez, and its diplomatic agreement with the Soviet Union. The evidence does not provide a clear answer here. Nevertheless, the sharp uptick of threat and abandonment language of late 1956 into 1957 among both the UNSC and Foreign Ministry sources indicates some relationship between how reliable an ally is and the primary threat posed by a given state.

The Algerian War of Independence

From 1 November 1954 to 19 March 1962, France fought the Algerian War of Independence. With international communist support, the National Liberation Front (FLN) of Algeria engaged in large-scale guerilla activities against French regulars with great effectiveness. French losses in Algeria brought about the crisis of May 1958, whereby the French military seized power and demanded the installation of former General Charles de Gaulle as Prime Minister of France. The military's ultimatum was accepted, and de Gaulle won the French

Presidency in February 1959. Simultaneously, reports of French troops brutalizing Algerian fighters and citizens led many of France's allies to withdraw support for Paris' counterinsurgency operations, most notably the United States.[73] I analyze this most volatile window of 1958-1959 in the Algerian War to understand French abandonment and nuclear internal balancing behavior.

In 1958, the ongoing French military operation in Algeria was the main topic of seven UN Security Council meetings. No meetings concerning French Algeria were held in 1959. In four of these meetings, the French representative expressed support for the United States' status quo foreign policy. However, the US ambassador spoke only in one meeting of these seven, and provided no substantive information in his remarks. No balancing behaviors were expressed in any of these seven conferences, and only one instance of abandonment ("suspected abandonment") was found. The critical message of Franco-American relations at the UNSC was not anything said, but rather that which was unsaid. The only visible position of the United States was an abstention on a vote to condemn Tunisian intervention in Algeria during June 1958. Washington remained silent as Paris fought an increasingly desperate and unpopular war. In the four volumes of Foreign Ministry documents encompassing 1958 and 1959, "suspected abandonment" is found twice; "perceived abandonment" twice; and "internalized abandonment" six times. "External balancing" was not recorded, and policies constituting "bandwagoning" were observed in one instance. I found "internal balancing" behaviors in three places. Finally, I discovered five statements of support for the United States' foreign policy by French leaders, each occurring in the year 1959.

As the French nuclear weapons program entered its final stages of pre-test development, French leaders began to seriously doubt US nuclear support. The May 1958 crisis continued to

[73] Mathilde von Bülow, *West Germany, Cold War Europe and the Algerian War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 170.

worry the Americans, and France took note of the United States' ill-faith.[74] The Eisenhower administration was concerned that France might use nuclear weapons carelessly in its struggle to maintain its colonial empire. General de Gaulle and other French leaders were none too happy with the United States. De Gaulle, undeterred by ongoing talks of a nuclear weapons testing ban in Geneva, was intent on developing France as an "independent nuclear power" from either Britain or the United States.[75] General de Gaulle's insistence on nuclear internal balancing is not surprising. I found eight direct mentions of the threat posed by the USSR in the Foreign Ministry documents from 1958-1959. These findings corroborate my hypothesis that increased threat perception corresponds to greater feelings of abandonment. Among the Foreign Ministry documents, "internalized abandonment" climbed from zero mentions in 1954/55, to three instances in 1956/57, and finally to six occasions in 1958/59. As threat increases with abandonment, so do calls for internal balancing—my second hypothesis. It was at this most hawkish, visible point of French nuclear weapons development that the gap between US support and the Soviet menace was at its greatest distance.

The Algerian case is an excellent example of the seesaw relationship between abandonment and threat. The military capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Union did not change substantially from the Suez Crisis, but the perception of French leaders did. Walt's original thesis on balance of threat misses that threat perception and abandonment is explicitly a zero-sum game.[76] While the abstract existence of threat is hardly a zero-sum game in material resources, its reality existed in the minds of French leaders. Any action which reduces security increases the danger felt by a state. Security is binary; a state is either safe or in danger, and uncertainty in security moves a state to the latter condition. The zero-sum game mindset of the

[74] Baum, "The Eisenhower Administration, France, and Nuclear Weapons," 322.
[75] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1959 § (1995), 631.
[76] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, viii.

French executive was, to use the term of Mearsheimer and Rosato, their "strategic rationality."[77] Underlying this give-and-take rationality for internal balancing is reputation. Jonathan Mercer observes that it is rare for an adversary to lack a reputation for resolve.[78] Adversaries are seen as opportunistic, and so a decrease in either material or perceived allied power may provide an adversary an equivalent advantage in a crisis. Balance of threat is a zero-sum game so long as national leaders see it as such.

There is some overlap between traditional balance of power theory and Walt's balance of threat. If the United States withdrew all its forces from Europe sometime in the 1950s, the "unbalanced power" of Europe would understandably have caused some balancing behavior.[79] No such dramatic change occurred, however. Though some minor troop cuts were indeed made to US forces in Europe during the 1950s, consistent statements of support between France and the United States at the public and private levels indicates that the material balance of power did not change substantially during the early Cold War. We must again turn to the political psychology literature for answers.

The UNSC meetings and Foreign Ministry documents from 1958 and 1959 demonstrate the worst manifestations of the psychology of threat. It has been established that France consistently misinterpreted the United States' signals as a consequence of its middle-ground power position.[80] I argue that, by 1959, French leaders perceived France's power position to have *increased* as a consequence of its nuclear weapons development. The utter lack of support for the United States in the Foreign Ministry documents as of 1958 corresponds to abstentions of support by the United States at the Security Council. A year later, French Foreign Minister

[77] John J. Mearsheimer and Sebastian Rosato, *How States Think* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023), 37.
[78] Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics,* 47.
[79] Waltz, "Structural Realism," 28.
[80] Pomeroy, "The Psychology of Power," 18-19.

Maurice de Murville criticized NATO's deterrence strategy as "in fact only available to the United States" and derided Washington's lack of transparency in nuclear planning as entirely unacceptable.[81] In the same year, de Gaulle informed Eisenhower of France's open "sprinting" strategy of proliferation, departing from France's prior policy of limited "hiding" efforts in nuclear internal balancing.[82]

French internal balancing was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Non-credible US assurances increased the understood threat that the Soviets posed pursuant to the realist strategic rationality of French leaders. As France neared its first nuclear test, the French government began to see themselves as a world power once again; this was the glory General de Gaulle was so intent on reclaiming.[83] In turn, the ability of French leaders to correctly interpret US signaling deteriorated further, contributing to the perceived menace of the Soviet Union all the more—seven mentions of the threat Moscow posed are found in the Foreign Ministry documents from 1958 to 1959, the same number of threat instances recorded in all volumes from 1954 through 1957.

La Gerboise Bleue

On 13 February 1960, France conducted its first nuclear test in the Algerian Sahara. Codenamed *Gerboise Bleue*, the 70-kiloton bomb was the final step in France's plan to internally balance. This was the final recognition of France's abandonment by the United States. Uncoincidentally, France became publicly vocal about its abandonment concerns at the Security Council. With rhetoric unseen since the Suez Crisis, I recorded two cases of "suspected abandonment" as expressed by the French ambassador. And, for the first time at the UNSC, the

[81] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 1 Documents diplomatiques français, 1959 § (1994), 65.
[82] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1959 § (1995); Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 126.
[83] Baum, "The Eisenhower Administration, France, and Nuclear Weapons," 322.

French conveyed "internalized abandonment" and energetically railed against British-American efforts to ban the testing of nuclear weapons.[84] French internal nuclear balancing was also first discussed by the French representative at the UNSC in 1960. France lent support to the United States' foreign policy in seven UNSC meetings, but remained forceful in its language on internal balancing efforts.

The Foreign Ministry documents remain consistent with the narrative established since 1954. In 1960 alone, "suspected abandonment" was found five times; "internalized abandonment" twice; and both "perceived abandonment" and "internal balancing" in single instances. Of note, only one statement of support for the United States' foreign policy was found—part of a backhanded compliment given by de Gaulle to Lyndon Johnson which simultaneously criticized Washington as an unreliable ally.[85] Private criticisms remained largely the same while public accusations took center stage at the UNSC.

Statements of support at the UNSC, while not mere posturing for international perception of Franco-American relations, ought to be treated with healthy skepticism. The French executive did not express much goodwill towards the United States in private. As France reached full abandonment from the United States' extended deterrent, the temperature of French rhetoric climbed. However, comments alluding to the threat of the Soviet Union did not change appreciably—three occasions of this language occurred in both 1959 and 1960, respectively. As France became the world's fourth nuclear power, the threat the Soviets posed decreased. With nuclear weapons, France regained its security against the existential challenge of potential Soviet coercion in the face of American non-credibility. The Soviet peril remained, but France took a breath of fresh air. As Charles de Gaulle proclaimed on the morning of 13 February 1960:

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[84] United Nations Digital Library, Security Council Official Records § (1960), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/629496?ln=en&v=pdf.
[85] Ministère des affaires étrangères, 2 Documents diplomatiques français, 1960 § (1996), 620.

"*Hourra pour la France! Depuis ce matin, elle est plus forte et plus fière*" (Hurrah for France! Since this morning, she is stronger and prouder.)

Critique and Defense of Theory

The first and strongest counter-argument against my theory of abandoned state proliferation is a conceptual challenge to the benefit of internal balancing. A state which balances internally sacrifices its ability to easily balance externally. Proliferation narrows the field of possibilities for how a state may respond to a coercive nuclear opponent. These limitations on future action could pose an unacceptable cost to a state. As a solution, some scholars might argue that "hedging" avoids the costs of direct internal balancing and allows for external balancing in the future.[86] A state with an active nuclear arsenal is less likely to be seen as a victim of aggression. This limits which states may choose to ally with the proliferator should it attempt to balance externally. Scholars recognize that the "latency" provided by hedging in nuclear development has proven successful for countries such Japan, Egypt, Iran, and Sweden.[87]

A secondary challenge may be mounted on the basis of circumstance. Critics may argue that France is an outlier in the case of proliferation. The circumstances of the early Cold War were unique, enabling an internal balancing strategy where it would otherwise be implausible for other abandoned states. This criticism limits the scope and applicability of my theory, yet concedes that my analysis of French proliferation itself is correct. Though France's situation shaped its course of action, its distinctiveness cannot be replicated. The early Cold War permitted

[86] Levite, "Never Say Never Again," 59; Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation;" Wyn Bowen and Matthew Moran, "Living with Nuclear Hedging: The Implications of Iran's Nuclear Strategy," *International Affairs* 91, no. 4 (July 2015): 687–707, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12337.
[87] Bowen and Moran, "Living with Nuclear Hedging," 689; Levite, "Never Say Never Again."

proliferation in a world now hostile to the concept. I anticipate this critique based on two factors, one policy-oriented and one fundamental: 1) the unlikely success of US nonproliferation objectives; and 2) the absence of sweeping nuclear nonproliferation norms.

First, France was far too powerful an ally for the United States to consider coercion and too weak for assurances to be effective in Washington's attempts to stymie French proliferation. Nuno Monteiro and Alexandre Debs argue that states with nonproliferation aims may use "carrots" and "sticks" to stop allied nuclear development.[88] In the 1970s, Washington used a "stick" against South Korea and threatened to withdraw US forces from the peninsula if the Republic of Korea did not cease nuclear weapons development.[89] In the 1950s and 1960s, the United States provided "carrots" of nuclear assurances to West Germany to satiate Bonn's desire for an uncontestable German nuclear deterrent.[90] With carrots and sticks, the object taken away or provided must be critical to the target state's security. Otherwise, the benefit of independent proliferation would outweigh losing a great power ally. While France was indeed a lesser power relative to the United States, Paris was the largest NATO country in continental Europe. Monteiro and Debs note that "sticks" are most effective against weak allies and "carrots" against stronger allies.[91] Consider again France's middle power position. The same factors which inhibited correct interpretation of US signaling were likewise detrimental to US nonproliferation efforts. French circumstances were unique, and remain so among proliferation scholarship to this day.[92] If we accept that "carrots" and "sticks" can limit proliferation as history shows, we must reject Cold War France as an aberration in the international system. While we ought to cast aside

[88] Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation," *International Security* 39, no. 2 (October 2014): 19, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00177.
[89] Ibid, 41.
[90] Ibid, 45.
[91] Ibid, 19.
[92] Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 135.

the argument that distinctly 'French' factors informed internal balancing, we should consider the exclusive, exogenous circumstances enabling the behavior in the first place.

Second, a constructivist critic might argue that lack of worldwide nonproliferation norms permitted a low-cost internal balancing. A norm is a behavior widely agreed upon—"a standard of right or wrong" in the words of Nina Tannenwald.[93] The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) took effect in 1970, a decade after the first French nuclear test. In the years following the Second World War, Tannenwald argues that a "nuclear taboo" developed, "a de facto prohibition against the use of nuclear weapons" in US foreign policy.[94] This taboo went hand-in-hand with the United States' promotion of global nonproliferation. The United States developed, to use the term of Matthew Cebul, Allan Dafoe, and Nuno Monteiro, a "reputation for restraint."[95] The United States consistently refused to deploy nuclear weapons when provided the opportunity and remained steadfast in its opposition to nuclear proliferation. France possessed no such limitations, and even supported a US nuclear strike against the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. In this criticism, France balanced internally for lack of widespread international backlash—a far cry from norms which have governed world perception of nuclear weapons since 1970.

Rebuttal

I concede that internal balancing makes external balancing more difficult, if not downright impossible. However, external balancing is only useful insofar as conventional forces are concerned. Balance-of-power at the nuclear threshold is not the same as at the conventional.

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[93] Nina Tannenwald, "The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use," *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 436, https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899550959.
[94] Tannenwald, "The Nuclear Taboo," 436.
[95] Matthew Cebul, Allan Dafoe, and Nuno Monteiro, "Coercion and the Credibility of Assurances," *The Journal of Politics* 83, no. 3 (July 1, 2021): 976, https://doi.org/10.1086/711132.

An increased number of nuclear weapons is irrelevant if a given state already has a large and survivable enough arsenal to ensure destruction of an adversary. The objective of a strategic nuclear arsenal is not battlefield victory, but the continuity of society. Force stacking matters for conventional conflict; it does not in a nuclear standoff. Kenneth Waltz makes this point in *Theory of International Politics*—that the "nonadditivity" of nuclear weapons decreases the value of external balancing.[96] For France, the inability to externally balance was of little consequence provided the benefits of nuclear weapons acquisition. Indeed, bipolarity restrained France's potential to balance externally. But, more importantly, France's balancing prospects were restrained by the inapplicability of external balancing in meeting the Soviet nuclear threat to begin with. Even if France could have balanced externally, both the uncertainty of threat in alliance politics and the "nonadditivity" of nuclear weapons make internal balancing the logically better option. This is also why hedging strategies are unproductive for states facing an existential nuclear challenge. The main benefit of hedging is to preserve external balancing options, a useless endeavor at the nuclear threshold if a state faces a challenge to its existence.[97]

France is an outlier in proliferation, but it is not unique. The central premise of the first (secondary) objection raised is that no state is truly in the 'middle' between "carrot" and "stick" modes of allied nonproliferation objectives, save for France in the 1950s. I argue that "carrots" and "sticks" create a false dichotomy of power understanding in alliance politics. Monteiro and Debs predicate their argument on "strong" states being able to independently proliferate, whereas "weak" states cannot.[98] If we accept Monteiro and Debs' framework, French proliferation may appear to be a unique set of circumstances. This definition is problematic. In the twenty-first century, weaker states can easily acquire nuclear weapons. The meaning of "strong" and "weak"

[96] Waltz, *Theory,* 182.
[97] Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation," 127-128.
[98] Monteiro and Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation," 22.

has shifted in favor of nuclear acquisition by poorer states. North Korea and Pakistan are good examples. If a state is strong enough to develop inexpensive nuclear weapons and weak enough in its power position relative to its great power ally, neither sticks nor carrots will work. While perhaps 'unique' in the context of the early Cold War, a plethora of states now exist in a similarly middle-ground position. Here, France's situation remains relevant.

While my thesis does not deal with norms, the constructivist challenge to the applicability of the French case ought to be addressed. For sake of argument and rebuttal, I accept that norms have a tangible effect on state behavior. The constructivist critic would argue that the opposite is true, too: the absence of norms also influences state behavior, the basis on which it could be stated that the French case is irreplicable. There are two main problems with this argument. First, norms fail to stop internal balancing. India, Pakistan, and Israel each developed nuclear weapons despite nonproliferation norms. If norms cannot stop internal balancing, their absence cannot cause internal balancing. Second, international norms do not affect nuclear internal balancing. It has been established that external balancing is worthless at the nuclear threshold. Norms are enforced by the multitude of states upholding them. The primary drawback to breaking norms is drawing the ire of potential allies, a non-factor in nuclear internal balancing. Norms only go so far as to influence interstate interactions.

Conclusions

During the 1950s, France felt abandoned by the United States. In response, Paris balanced internally against its principal geopolitical adversary, the Soviet Union. We may draw two conclusions from this study of French abandonment. First, the balance of threat is a

zero-sum game. As abandonment fears grow, so does the threat posed by an adversary. And, provided the existential nature of nuclear conflict, the best means of achieving a state of equilibrium in threat is to balance internally. The uncertainty of alliance politics and the non-stacking ability of nuclear weapons increases the possibility of internal balancing. Second, there is a direct, causal relationship between abandonment and support for internal balancing. As the perception of allied credibility decreases, calls for construction of an independent nuclear deterrent increase. The findings suggest a third option for abandoned state behavior beyond external balancing and bandwagoning. At the nuclear threshold, internal balancing is a superior choice to alliance formation or joining an adversary.

Today, nuclear internal balancing is a greater possibility than ever before. South Korea has long contemplated nuclear acquisition in the face of a US extended deterrent perceived to be non-credible.[99] The Republic of Korea (ROK) remains a nuclear-capable state, and calls for nuclear internal balancing among the South's most prominent politicians and defense strategists have increased.[100] The ROK is in a similar position to that of pre-nuclear France. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) are next-door nuclear adversaries, actively threatening Seoul's survival on a daily basis.

South Korea has three choices. It may balance externally, balance internally, or bandwagon with the PRC and DPRK. Here, internal balancing is the clear winner. Whether the United States' sticks or carrots will work is uncertain, and is irrelevant to the critical point of the ROK's behavior: that the *tendency* to internally balance is present, proving the applicability of my theory to the modern day. It is likely that should scholars delve into the present rhetoric of

[99] Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia."
[100] Mun Suk Ahn and Young Chul Cho, "A Nuclear South Korea?," *International Journal* 69, no. 1 (March 2014): 26–34, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702013518495; INSS Staff, rep., *Evaluation of the Results of the Russia-North Korea Summit and Ripple Effects on the Korean Peninsula* (Seoul, South Korea: INSS, 2024).

South Korean leaders, they would find greater abandonment fears coincide with the perception of the DPRK and PRC as threats and the recent resurgence of nuclear internal balancing in ROK politics.

Taiwan is another candidate for nuclear internal balancing. While scholars debate the potential for Taiwanese nuclearization, they generally agree that the threat posed by the DPRK and PRC makes internal balancing an attractive option.[101] Taiwan faces an active aggressor: China. Though the United States continues to arm the island, Washington's commitment to Taipei's defense is consistently questioned. With a PRC invasion looming, some experts assert that nuclear coercion will be a likely feature of any confrontation between China and Taiwan.[102] Should China delay its expected invasion, the possibility of internal balancing will remain open. In the immediate term, Taiwanese leaders appear content to receive "carrots" of conventional US military aid in exchange for inaction on nuclear weapons development. In the future, the Taipei government will have to choose between external balancing with the United States and nuclear internal balancing. The latter course of action seems likely—Taiwan is not covered by the United States' umbrella of extended deterrence, making nuclear balancing a necessity.

The last major candidate for nuclear internal balancing is Japan. Tokyo possesses a massive stockpile of plutonium, and could create a nuclear weapon very quickly. While Japan has maintained that it reserves the right to possess nuclear weapons, internal balancing is the least likely to occur in Japan.[103] First, Japan has a history of blanketly opposing nuclear weapons

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[101] Christopher W. Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Implications for the Nuclear Ambitions of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan," *Asia Policy* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 75–104, https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2007.0000; Gloria Kuang-Jung Hsu, "Control or Manipulation?: Nuclear Power in Taiwan," essay, in *Learning from Fukushima: Nuclear Power in East Asia*, ed. Peter van Ness and Mel Gurtov (Acton, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2017), 155–86.

[102] James H. Anderson, "The next Taiwan Crisis Will (Almost) Certainly Involve Nuclear Threats," U.S. Naval Institute, March 22, 2024, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2024/march/next-taiwan-crisis-will-almost-certainly-involve-nuclear-threats.

[103] Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons," 83.

worldwide.[104] US strikes against Hiroshima and Nagasaki soured Japanese opinion of an independent deterrent. Second, Japan is credibly protected by the United States' nuclear arsenal under formal treaty obligation. There is little doubt that were Japan attacked, Washington would come to its aid. Japan exists in far too advantageous a position to be abandoned by the United States. In many ways, it is the geographical and economic 'Britain' of Asia. Wealthy, well-defended islands are excellent bases of operation. In a war with China or North Korea, Japan could effectively become the equivalent to that of the United Kingdom in the Second World War. Unlike Cold War France or modern South Korea or Taiwan, the United States cannot afford a strategic threat against its most powerful ally in Asia.

Nuclear internal balancing among abandoned US allies is a distinct possibility in the twenty-first century. South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan are each excellent candidates for further study. Scholars of international relations theory and nuclear strategy ought to examine the rhetoric of these allies in the near term. I am confident that further research will corroborate my observations on the relationship between abandonment, threat, and internal balancing. US policymakers ought to understand that perception is not reality, often leading to a disconnect between sent and received signals. Should the United States continue its policy of nonproliferation among allies, remaining sensitive to abandonment concerns will prove critical.

[104] Ibid.

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