

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ANCHORING AN ALLIANCE:
EXPLAINING MULTILATERAL BALANCING ALLIANCE FORMATION

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In memory of my mother

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Chapter 1. Why Study Multilateral Balancing Alliance Formation?

From the Peloponnesian War, the Napoleonic Wars, to the Cold War, multilateral alliances have been one of the strongest instruments to shape the international order. But they also rarely form. This dissertation seeks to clarify the nature of the collective action problem in the formation of multilateral balancing alliances, and shed light on how the problem might be overcome.

The dynamics of multilateral balancing alliance formation are a challenging puzzle. Researchers and policy makers have long recognized that alliance formation is a critical strategy for states to balance against common threats. While states can also choose to increase their internal military capabilities through conscription, arming, or doctrinal innovations, if they face particularly menacing threats, or if they have limited resources, forming alliances is often the most effective strategy.

However, there have been many occasions in which counterbalancing alliances did not form in the face of a large, growing common threat. Why did NATO form in response to the Soviet threat, but the Pacific Pact – which was meant to be an Asian NATO – failed to develop even after the Chinese Communist Party won the Chinese Civil War in 1949? Why did the Triple Entente emerge as a counterweight to Wilhelmine Germany, but the same countries engaged in buck-passing as Nazi Germany expanded? The empirical record of multilateral balancing alliance formation is filled with many similar puzzles.

In essence, why do certain balancing alliances form and not others? Why do large threats sometimes have the effect of binding states together, and other times lead to buck-passing and appeasement? Even with sufficient aggregate power for potential alliance partners to deal with

the common threat, why do all the neighbors not work together sometimes, while at other times they do?

In this dissertation, I argue that alliance formation against a large threat entails solving a specific collective action problem. Security from balancing becomes a *threshold public good*, and this creates disincentives for less powerful states to initiate an alliance or to join one. To overcome this problem, a group of states requires an “anchor” – a state whose power matches that of the adversary – to facilitate alliance formation. The anchor assures states that are on the fence that achieving security from balancing would be viable. Moreover, the anchor ameliorates free-riding by adding elements of club goods to the potential alliance.

To demonstrate my argument, I examine three periods of alliance formation: early-Cold War Western Europe, early-Cold War Southeast Asia, and contemporary Southeast Asia in the context of the South China Sea conflict. In all these cases, there existed a growing regional threat with clear offensive intent (the Soviet Union and China); the threat was adjacent to medium and small states; and the participation in balancing by an extra-regional great power (the US) was possible. I show how different US actions changed the way regional states perceived the viability of balancing, and how specific American policies altered the incentives for intra- and extra-alliance free-riding. The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization would not have been possible without the US as the anchor.

Understanding the dynamics of multilateral balancing alliance formation has important policy implications. Throughout the past decades, Chinese power has been growing exponentially and China’s foreign policy assertiveness increased in tandem. But it is unclear if a regional balancing alliance will coalesce, as many of China’s neighbors choose accommodation or hedging as their strategies. This dissertation, which applies especially to great power politics

in the modern era, will elucidate factors that facilitate the emergence of a multilateral balancing alliance, as well as conditions that could hinder its inception.

Section I. Existing Literature

What does the existing literature have to say about why some balancing alliances form but not others?

There are three schools of thought on this question. Broadly, the prevailing realist view emphasizes the importance of power and offensive intentions; liberal institutionalists see alliances as a mechanism to take advantage of the economies of scale and to reduce transaction costs; and constructivists stress the roles of common identity and anti-colonialist sentiments.

The dominant realist explanation of multilateral balancing alliance formation has undergone a sea change in recent decades. Traditional balance of power theory maintains that states balance against the most powerful state to maintain an equilibrium in the international system. Therefore, states are more likely to join an alliance that does not contain the most powerful state in the system than an alliance that does. Walt (1987) reformulated the balance of power theory and argued that states balance not against power alone, but against threats. Which state presents the greatest threat to a given regional state depends on multiple factors, including aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities as well as aggressive intentions. Hence, there is not one state against which all alliances tend to form; the alliance partner a regional state chooses is contingent on its circumstances. Walt (1987), together with Kaufman (1992), Labs (1992), and Schweller (1994), formed a lively debate on balancing versus bandwagoning. Nonetheless, this debate centered on which country states are likely to balance against via alliance formation, but not which alliance partners will do the balancing (Miller 2003). Even in a bipolar system in which choices of great power partners are limited, some states

pick non-alignment. In a multipolar system, there are even more options. Behind every alliance that formed, there were many combinations that did not emerge. As Fordham and Poast (2016) put, all alliances are at least potentially multilateral. Thus, the debate on balancing and bandwagoning answers only part of the question in alliance formation.

Liberal institutionalist researchers offer their own explanations for the conditions under which multilateral counterbalancing alliances form, although there are limits to their explanations. Whereas alliance formation for realists is a means to counter external threat, institutionalists view alliances to be a vehicle for cooperation. Alliances allow states to produce security more cheaply as a group than unilateral efforts. The efficiency gains can be achieved in multiple ways. First, states can engage in division of labor and specialize in different security-enhancing activities (such as arms production) to exploit the economies of scale. Second, some states might have a comparative advantage in specific security-enhancing activities. Third, alliances reduce transaction costs. It is entirely possible for states to put together ad hoc security cooperation with other states each time a crisis occurs, but each of these transactions carries costs, from gathering information, negotiating, ratifying agreements, coming up with joint defense plans, solving logistical challenges, etc. In a crisis where time is of the essence, the ability to respond quickly and decisively could make a big difference. Alliances allow countries to improve interoperability during peacetime, pool resources, and make joint military plans, etc (H. Brands and Feaver 2017). In so doing, alliance formation reduces the transaction costs of responding to crises.

Given the above logics, alliances that can provide the same unit of security at the lowest costs (including but not limited to transaction costs) to its members ought to be more likely to form.

I do not dispute the general assertion that countries are utility-maximizing, but many of the aforementioned logics are difficult to test empirically, because some benefits and costs are hard to quantify and incommensurable. The reduction of autonomy, for instance, is one of the widely recognized downsides of entering into alliances. Once states are in alliances, they are obliged to carry out certain actions, and this reduces the freedom of action. But how does one quantify the loss of freedom of action? What amount of increase in weapons production as a result of division of labor would make up for the loss of autonomy? The ability to concretely assess costs and benefits might not be crucial for testing some arguments, but for the present research question (why do some counterbalancing alliances form and not others?), it is important to be able to test claims such as “Country Grouping A is the most likely to emerge because they can lower transaction costs more than potential Groupings B, C and D.” Institutional explanations are therefore useful in explaining aspects of alliance formation, but not cross-case comparisons.

Constructivist explanations of alliance formation focus on the role of norms and identity. Acharya (2005) showed that key leaders in the post-colonial world, such as India’s Nehru, were vital in spreading the view that collective security arrangement with great powers would be a continuation of colonial dependency. Based on this argument, grouping of states involving both great powers and post-colonial countries should be less likely to form. Nevertheless, as He and Feng (2012) pointed out, Acharya’s argument could best explain India and Indonesia’s foreign policies. For other post-colonial states, it was not clear if the mechanism operated.

Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002), on the other hand, argued that different levels of cultural identification between states impact the degree to which these states are willing to conduct their security cooperation multilaterally. Perceptions of collective identity lead

policymakers to perceive their partners as relatively equal members in a common community. In turn, they judge it worthwhile to collaborate multilaterally, even if this would entail less freedom of action compared to a bilateral alliance. By contrast, countries that are culturally dissimilar are often viewed as inferior partners “undeserving” of multilateral security cooperation because they will not make good use of the influence a multilateral security institution would offer. This explains why, during the early-Cold War period, US officials opted to create a single multilateral organization in Western Europe, whereas in Asia they preferred dealing with allies bilaterally. Nevertheless, this argument is for explaining why alliances vary in their *form*, not why certain alliances emerge rather than others.

This dissertation does not fully explore the explanatory power of norms and identities, though it will engage deeply with both realist and institutionalist logics. In the realist “power vs. intention” debate, my goal is not to pick one side; all cases in this dissertation begin with a powerful threat with highly offensive intent. Rather, my goal is to move theory forward by clarifying how logics commonly used by institutionalists can explain realist outcomes. Further, I seek to distinguish, among these cases, whether there are any additional factors that can account for alliance formation in some cases but not others.

At the same time as the dissertation grapples with topics traditionally associated with realism such as balancing, it also makes substantial use of insights from the study of collective action (specifically on public goods). Nevertheless, my approach to studying alliances as international institutions will have less in common with literature that seeks to demonstrate how international institutions temper state interests and lead to peace. Instead, alliances are studied as “outer-directed” international institutions that help member states to better deter threats

(Mearsheimer 1995). Overall, the goal of this dissertation is to refine existing balancing theories, particularly in external balancing involving *multilateral* alliances.

Section II. General Argument and Research Design

To understand why some alliances form in the face of clear threat and not others, it is important to understand the nature of the collective action problem in multilateral alliance formation. I argue that, for countries that are adjacent to a rising great power, unless it is a great power itself, security from external balancing becomes a *threshold public good*.¹ The adversary will not be deterred unless the collective capabilities of a group reach a certain threshold. This means that, prior to the threshold being reached, there will be no incentives for a regional state to start or join an alliance, because it would antagonize the adversary for no overall improvement in security. As every regional state waits for other countries to do something, the adversary grows unrestrained.

To overcome this problem, a group of states needs an “anchor”² – a state that is comparably or more powerful than the adversary – to commit to the nascent alliance. The anchor serves two purposes. First, it assures regional states that the endeavor to balance against the adversary would be viable. Second, the anchor introduces “club goods,” such as military aid, to

¹ Threshold goods are also sometimes called binary goods, step goods or lumpy goods in the collective action literature. For lumpy goods and alliance burden-sharing, see Thompson, Fred, “Lumpy Goods and Cheap Riders: An Application of the Theory of Public Goods to International Alliances,” *Journal of Public Policy* 7, no. 4 (1987): 431–49. For a discussion of thresholds as an “aggregation technology” in forming the Gulf War coalition, see Hubble, Jonathan David, “If You Build It, They Will Come: Applying the Lessons of Collective Action Theory to the 1991 Persian Gulf War,” 2010.

² The term is borrowed from Pape, Robert, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7–45. However, my definition differs in how strong the anchor must be. This will be discussed later in the theory chapter.

the portfolio of benefits of joining the alliance, and this reduces free-riding by regional states. In sum, an anchor facilitates alliance formation by lessening the collective action problem.

Empirically, I examine three cases closely: early-Cold War Western Europe, early-Cold War Southeast Asia, and post-Cold War Southeast Asia in the context of the South China Sea conflict. Each of the first two cases contains two sub-cases. The early-Cold War European case is made up of the formation of the Brussels Pact (1948) and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty (1949). The early-Cold War Southeast Asian case comprises the attempt to found a Pacific Pact (1949-1950) and the establishment of the Manila Pact (1954).

In the early-Cold War Western European case, I examine alliance formation in response to the Soviet threat. My theory would predict that the ability of Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to form a multilateral alliance depended on the extent to which the US was willing to serve as an anchor to the region. In the case study, I show how, after the collapse of the London Foreign Ministers Conference in 1947, the possibility of US association with European security heavily drove defense cooperation among Western European states. It changed the alliance model (Rio vs. Dunkirk) Britain and France used, as well as the degree of defense integration the Western Union Defense Organization achieved. During the expansion from the Brussels Pact to the North Atlantic Treaty, American military aid policy was crucial in discouraging free-riding by Scandinavian countries. If the US had reverted to isolationist foreign policy, it was likely that the Soviet threat would at most lead to multiple bilateral treaties among Western European states with limited defense integration.

The present scope of this case covers the “core” countries in the formation of the Brussels Pacts and the North Atlantic Treaty; for comprehensiveness, future iterations of the case study

will also include analyses of more European countries, including Portugal, Switzerland, Austria, and Iceland.

The threat environment in early-Cold War Southeast Asia in many ways mirrored that in Western Europe. The victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War in 1949 was a watershed for the region. My theory would predict that Southeast Asian countries could successfully form an alliance when powerful states outside the region were willing to underwrite the effort. Indeed, when regional states, such as the Philippines, Nationalist China, and Korea attempted to organize a Pacific Pact (which was intended to be an Asian NATO) circa 1949/1950 with no great power support, other Asia-Pacific states were unenthusiastic about the proposal, and the pact never took off. Even as the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Asia-Pacific states did not come together and form a collective security arrangement until the US led the effort in 1954.

This case study focuses less on ideological factors than material factors. For specific Asian states, such as India, anti-colonial sentiments were significant in its choice to not join alliances. Still, whether joining an alliance containing former colonial powers was interpreted to undermine anticolonialism depended on each country's history and thus escaped generalization. That said, in the study of individual countries, the impact of colonialism on perception of alliances should merit special attention.

In the final case study, I examine Southeast Asia's reaction to the rise of China, especially China's increasingly assertive policy in the South China Sea conflict. Not only has a balancing alliance not yet emerged, some Southeast Asian states that attempted to balance – such as the Philippines – backtracked its policy as the threat intensified. I demonstrate that widespread and persistent hedging policies by Southeast Asian claimants were not due to a lack of threat

perception. Rather, as the US focused on the War on Terror, there was great uncertainty about the viability of balancing against China. Wary of antagonizing China, the claimants in the South China Sea conflict adopted accommodative policies.

The South China Sea conflict rapidly evolves and it is by no means a closed case of alliance non-formation. Nonetheless, I argue that the foreign policy choices of Southeast Asian claimants in the past decade can still reveal a great deal about the importance of an extra-regional anchor in putting together a regional response.

In the following chapter, I will expound on the collective action problems inherent in multilateral alliance formation. Chapters 3, 4, 5 will discuss multilateral alliance formation in early-Cold War Western Europe, early-Cold War Southeast Asia, and post-Cold War Southeast Asia, respectively. The final chapter concentrates on theoretical and policy implications based on the empirical analysis.

Chapter 2. Explaining Collective Action in Multilateral Balancing Alliances

Under what conditions would a group of major and minor powers come together to balance against a great power threat? If alliance is a means for countries to pool their resources so they can deal with threats each cannot handle alone, is there a limit to this logic? This chapter will expound on my argument on multilateral balancing alliance formation, and why multilateral alliances are more likely to form under certain conditions. In this discussion, an alliance is defined as a formal relationship of security cooperation between states.¹ An alliance is formed when two or more states sign an agreement that commits each party to provide assistance if any party comes under attack.

All multilateral alliance formations require solving a collective action problem, but not all collective action problems are the same. When states are considering forming a balancing alliance against a common, large threat, they face a specific type of collective action problem. This specific problem requires a specific set of conditions to be solved or at least minimized.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. Section I explains the elements of the public good at issue when forming a multilateral balancing alliance. Sections II and III explain the crucial conditions that must be met to solve the collective action problem for the specific public good in question. Section IV details the research design in this dissertation to evaluate the theory according to evidence, including limits of the evidence in this dissertation for validating the theory.

¹ Based on Walt's (1987, 1) definition. However, my definition excludes *informal* security cooperation.

Section I. Security as Deterrence is a Threshold Public Good

There are three elements to the public good when forming a multilateral balancing alliance: 1) Security that the alliance produces is *the* public good at issue; 2) This security is specifically a “threshold” public good rather than an “incremental” public good, meaning that the public good only obtains when the total capabilities of the members in the balancing alliance reach a certain threshold; 3) Reaching the necessary threshold requires only a portion of the potential partners to band together in the balancing alliance. Each of these elements is crucial to understanding the nature of the collective action problem facing states considering joining a multilateral balancing alliance.

Subsection A. Security is the Public Good

Goods produced by collective action can be differentiated by their degrees of rivalry and excludability (Samuelson 1954). Goods are rivalrous if one party’s consumption of that good reduces the amount that is available to others. Goods are excludable if the provider of the good can exclude specific parties from consuming the good. Goods that are non-rivalrous and non-excludable are known as public goods. Examples include clean air and national defense.

In what ways is security produced by an alliance a public good? First, if the alliance is successful, and the adversary refrains from pursuing in any expansionary foreign policy, then all neighbors of the adversary benefit, regardless of whether they belong to the alliance or not. This makes the benefit *non-excludable*. Second, because security comes from an *absence* of assertive policies on the part of the adversary, when Neighbor A benefits from this absence, it does not reduce the amount that can be enjoyed by Neighbors B, C, D, etc. Thus, the benefit is non-rivalrous.

When security generated by a successful alliance is a public good, it is prone to free-riding. Even when an alliance is successful, being a part of it is never a costless venture. The first kind of costs comes from balancing against the threat itself. This could include higher defense spending, costs to hold joint military exercises, etc. The second kind of costs is imposed by the adversary. The adversary will use all the tools at its disposal to punish states that attempt to balance against it. This can include cessation of benefits (such as trade and economic aid), as well as actions that actively hurt those states, including economic sanctions, sponsorship of insurgent groups, etc.

If other countries are paying the costs to balance against the adversary, and when the benefits their actions create cannot be excluded from non-paying countries, free-riding is a tempting option. An incipient alliance might not attract enough members if every state waits for other states to pay.

Subsection B. Security is a Threshold Good

Public goods can be further divided into “threshold” public goods and “incremental” public goods. For threshold public goods, the collective goods only materialize after the total provision from the group (which can be monetary contribution, manpower, capabilities, etc.) surpassed a certain threshold. Below the threshold, there is no good at all. This stands in contrast with incremental goods. For incremental goods, even the group only managed to amass a modest amount of provision, it can still obtain a small amount of the collective good. Put in another way, threshold goods are *dichotomous*, whereas incremental goods are *continuous*.

When an alliance against an active threat is successful, the security it produces is a threshold public good because the outcome in question is whether the adversary is deterred or

not deterred from launching a military assault – either a military assault aimed at conquest of territory and coercion over a specific issue in dispute, or assaults that typically engage serious security interests of the actors and often trigger serious crises, if not wars, among them.² It is not the case that every little bit that any state puts into balancing the adversary counts. If the alliance against a great power comprises, say, only two small states with paltry military capabilities, the adversary will not be “a little bit” deterred. The adversary will not be deterred *at all*.

Threshold goods create collective action problem in alliance formation because it only makes sense for any member to pay (joining the alliance) if the member knows that enough other members are also paying. While each member prefers that the group obtains the collective good than not, if ultimately not enough members will contribute their resources, it is better for a given member to keep the resources and not have the good, than to spend the resources and still not have that good. If antagonizing the adversary through attempted alliance formation will yield no additional security, it is better to not offend it in the first place.

Subsection C. The Threshold is Intermediate

The security that a successful alliance produces is not just a threshold public good; the threshold is also *intermediate*. What does it mean for a threshold to be intermediate? It means that, in order for the threshold to be attained, it does not require every single member to put in all

² My dissertation does not extend the concept of security beyond deterrence in these situations and so does not include acts such as demonstrations of force, which are often considered hostile but do not consistently engage more serious interests or trigger more intense security crises.

their resources.³ In the case of alliance formation, even to deter a very powerful adversary, it will not require all countries in the international system to contribute all their resources.

Exactly how much it will take to deter a particular adversary might not always be clear to actors at the time who operate on limited knowledge. For instance, after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney travelled to Saudi Arabia and announced a plan to deploy 250,000 US troops there. The US administration expected the announcement and the troop deployment would deter Saddam Hussein from continuing to occupy Kuwait, but Saddam did not withdraw, nor did he release the hostages in Kuwait and Iraq (Hubble 2010). The US later doubled its troop deployment to Saudi Arabia. Still, it was not enough and war ultimately broke out.

A threshold is still intermediate even when the exact location is uncertain. The only thing we need to be certain of is that the threshold does not require all resources from all possible parties. When a threshold public good has an intermediate threshold, it means that rationality alone cannot lead members to cooperate. Put in another way, the situation does not resemble a “stag hunt.”

Let us assume a group of ten members. Each member has only one unit of resources. It will take ten units of resources for the group to obtain the public good. If these parameters are known (the size of the group, how much each member owns, and the price of the public good), then rationality alone would lead each member to contribute their resources, and the group will successfully obtain that public good. However, if only five units of resources are needed, or if

³ For a discussion about public goods with intermediate thresholds, please see Deutchman, Paul, Dorsa Amir, Katherine McAuliffe, and Matthew Jordan, “Common Knowledge Promotes Cooperation in the Threshold Public Goods Game by Reducing Uncertainty,” 2021.

the exact price is uncertain, free-riding is now possible. If enough other members pay for the public good, since the public good is non-excludable, a non-paying member can both enjoy the public good and keep the resources. When all members act according to this logic, they wait for others to become the “suckers,” and the group does not gain the public good.

In alliance formation against a powerful country, when none of the regional states is a great power, it is not clear that the addition or omission of one state would decisively alter the outcome. There are strong incentives for each regional state to wait for other states to organize balancing against the powerful threat, and hope that those states’ effort would be enough to deter the adversary. If other states do not take actions, or if their actions are not enough, each regional state would conclude that even if it starts or joins the balancing now, it would not make a difference. Thus, the best course of action would be to make peace with the adversary and adjust to the new regional order. In sum, a threshold good with an intermediate threshold leads to inaction, and the longer the inaction, the more the rise of the adversary seems like an inevitable tide of history, which in turns leads to more inaction rather than balancing.

To combine these three elements, *security is a threshold public good that has an intermediate threshold*. The publicness and the intermediate threshold lead to free-riding, and the threshold nature induces hesitation among regional states. The dominant strategy for a regional state is therefore to wait and see, instead of taking actions. In the meantime, the adversary expands unabatedly.

Section II. First Condition of Multilateral Alliance Formation – Viability Assurance

In order to ameliorate the collective action problem in forming a multilateral alliance, two conditions must be satisfied: 1) Regional states must be assured that balancing against the

adversary has a good chance of succeeding; 2) Free-riding needs to be reduced to the extent that at least some regional states would join the alliance. This section will focus on the first condition.

To attract regional states to join a prospective alliance, the state (or states) starting the alliance must show that the effort to balance will have a decent chance at succeeding. I argue that parity in military power and latent power between the adversary and the potential balancing alliance is important. Granted, parity in military power does not necessarily lead to successful deterrence. Mearsheimer (1983) has shown that, on the brink of war, as long as one side believes that it would be able to achieve a quick and decisive victory, deterrence is unlikely to obtain even if there is parity in military power. Nonetheless, I argue that, even though power parity is not a sufficient condition, during the earlier stages of conflict when attempts to balance are still coalescing, if a group of states has no hope in matching the adversary in terms of military and latent power, the effort to form the alliance will be judged as futile.

Whether the aggregate capabilities of a group of countries match up to those of the adversary is less important as an indicator of victory if all parties go to war now. Balancing is a long process that can take as long as decades. Parity in military and latent power indicates the kinds of militaries and societies (in terms of manpower and industrial capacity) a group has and its ability to constantly evolve to offset whatever new military capabilities/doctrinal innovations the adversary could achieve. Latent power parity is particularly important, because if the adversary's attempt to achieve a quick and decisive victory fails, and the attack becomes a war of attrition, the adversary is still likely to emerge victorious as long as it can outlast the balancing alliance.

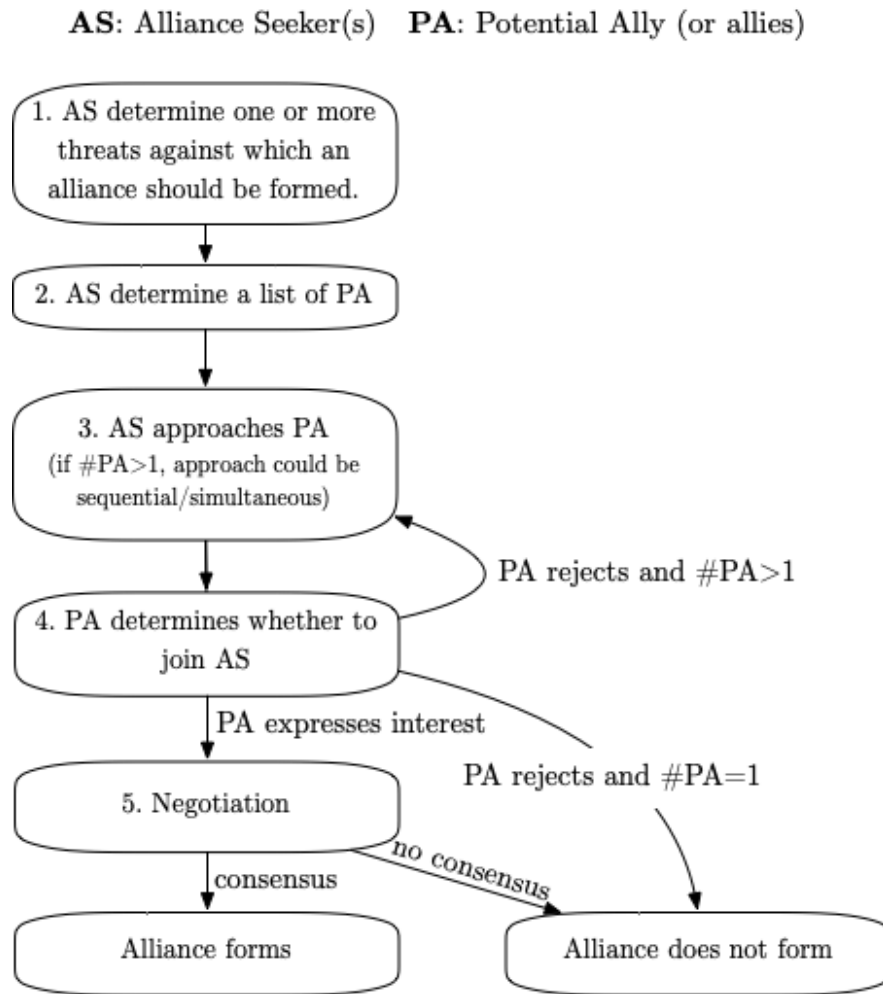
But how can this parity be achieved? Is it a matter of finding a quantitative indicator and stacking together enough states so that the sum of that indicator adds up to a certain number?

Does the *composition* of states in a potential alliance matter? I argue that the composition of states is critical to the dynamics of alliance formation and its subsequent operation. Below I will examine three combinations of states – 1) a group of many minor powers; 2) a group of a few major powers; 3) a group with a great power – to spell out what the consequences on alliance formation will be. In real life, if a multilateral alliance is to form, it would likely contain a mix of different types of states. But for illustrating how the composition of a group affects the dynamics of alliance formation, let us first consider some ideal types.

Subsection A. A Group of Many Minor Powers

A group of many minor powers – regardless of how many there are – is the least likely to be able to balance successfully against a great power threat. The follow chart depicts the steps of alliance formation.

Figure 1. Steps of alliance formation



The formation process begins long before any negotiation takes place. The first task is for a state that is seeking an alliance (“Alliance Seeker (AS)” hereafter) to attract enough states (“Potential Allies (PA)”) to participate in the negotiation. This involves AS diplomats sounding out the interests of different PAs (steps 3 and 4). When AS is a minor power, there are few incentives for other minor powers to join the alliance. Unless the threshold has been met, the marginal payoff of joining the alliance will be negative. The alliance is still too weak to deter the adversary, yet the early members have to absorb potentially very high costs both from operating the alliance and from sanctions by the adversary.

Even if we assume that enough PAs are willing to attend the negotiation, the sheer number of participants means that their preferences on different issues would likely diverge. For each issue to be negotiated, each participant has a preference. When there are more participants, there will be more preferences, and more preferences increase the likelihood that they will diverge (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001; Poast 2012). This in turn lowers the likelihood of consensus.

Alternatively, to push a consensus, the group might water down decisions significantly. For instance, instead of creating a standing army with mandatory troop contribution from each member, the group might make troop contribution voluntary. Instead of declaring that an attack on one means an attack on all, the group could state in the treaty that members would merely consult each other in case of attacks. The deterrent effect of the alliance might diminish so much that it would not deter the threat at all.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that this group of many minor powers is able to reach some sort of agreement. When it comes to pooling their military capabilities, it is unlikely that they would have what it takes to deter a great power adversary. The militaries of minor states are typically developed for border defense against a narrow range of actors (similarly sized neighbors, small non-state actors) and not much else, whereas militaries of stronger states can carry out a wider range of operations in different environments (land, sea, air, space). When a group of minor powers decides to work together, it is not the case that each state would specialize in one area of military capabilities in order to harness the economies of scale. No state would forgo maintaining a military that is, at minimum, self-sufficient for border defense.

To effectively pool their military and economic resources, the minor states will have to integrate their militaries and economies. This takes tremendous political will and a significant

amount of time, during which the adversary can strike deals with minor powers that are on the fence and lure them from the balancing alliance.

A group of many minor powers will also not last long in a war of attrition. Even if the aggregate GDP of a group of many minor powers is the same as that of a great power, the point at which one of the states decides the cost is too much is lower for minor powers. A great power would not welcome an expensive war, but it will tolerate the expense if necessary. For a group of minor powers, even if the cost is split many ways, it could still be untenable.

Thus, for minor powers, if the only alliance partners are fellow minor powers, it is better for them to hedge, declare non-alignment, or even to bandwagon with the adversary.

Subsection B. A Small Number of Major Powers

Some states in the international system are like great powers in all but one or two aspects. For instance, Japan has the third largest economy in the world. It also has an extensive manufacturing base and is one of the world's top technological hubs. But due to its relatively small military, population and territory, Japan is not considered to be a great power. Similarly, India has a sizable territory and a population size that rivals China, but because of its level of economic development, it is also not currently considered to be a great power. An entity that blends Japan's and India's strengths can certainly compete with a great power.

How would a group of a few major powers fare in alliance formation? Because of each state's higher capabilities, a small number of major powers will be needed to attain parity in military and latent power vis-à-vis the adversary. This reduces the difficulty of attracting enough states to negotiate. However, there is a vulnerability that a group of a few major powers has that a group of many minor powers does not. If any one of the many minor powers leaves the group, it will not dismantle the group, as long as enough minor powers remain. But in a group of a few

major powers, one major power's departure will break the group's ability to continue to balance against the adversary. This gives each member a great deal of leverage.

Whether this small group of major powers can reach an agreement that is satisfactory to all depends on how much their interests coincide. Poast (2019) has shown that compatibility of war plans is critical to reaching an agreement. If the major powers are far from each other, they might not agree on how the joint military capabilities should be distributed, or trust that their future allies would fulfill their obligations. Unless each party is significantly better off at dealing with the adversary because of the alliance, there is little reason to bind oneself to it.

Whether the joint might of a small number of major powers is adequate to deter the adversary depends on what it is that different major powers can bring to the table. Some top-tiered major powers invest in military capabilities that have a high cost of entry, such as space programs, but their scale tends to be smaller. For instance, the US has over 1600 satellites in orbit, whereas Japan has 174.⁴ But the issue with scale is broader. What it takes to balance against the adversary constantly evolves. For any measures that the alliance takes to prevent the adversary from gaining a quick and decisive victory, the adversary would innovate technologically and doctrinally to overcome them. While the causes of *individual* breakthroughs vary, there are attributes of societies that are more conducive to military innovation, such as a high concentration of capital, an educated population, a large manufacturing base, etc. Often, these elements need to be present in the same society to engender innovations.

⁴ "Satellites by Country or Organization 11/11/21 4:58:00 AM." Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.n2yo.com/satellites/?c=&t=country>.

The fact that the withdrawal of one major power will cause the whole group to collapse means that decision-making might take longer, and there might be more compromises. Unless the military plan is to create a multi-front war for the adversary, and each member's military will be in charge of a separate front, it is critical for the group of major powers to integrate their military commands ahead of any conflict.

In terms of the ability for a small group of major powers to last in a war of attrition, as major powers they are better able to absorb costs than minor powers, but the point at which one of the major powers decides that the cost is too much will still be lower compared to a great power. This group of states would benefit to have a great power backer as a lender of last resort.

Subsection C. A Great Power Partner

When a great power is present, other states that are considering joining the alliance will have the least doubt about the viability of balancing. A great power has a military that is comparable to that of the adversary, not just quantitatively but qualitatively. Great powers have military capabilities with high costs of entry, including nuclear weapons, global surveillance systems, space programs, aircraft carriers, military academies for training highly skilled troops (such as pilots), and Research and Development units for inventing new weapons and devising military strategies. A great power ally can extend protection to regional states using existing military assets. It can also transfer military technologies to regional states and help them set up their own versions of advanced programs.

Even when the conflict turns into a war of attrition, a great power's vast economy and substantial population size mean that the alliance can last longer than one with less powerful states. A great power's general economic might also means that it can reduce the impact of the adversary's attempt to incentivize or punish major and minor powers. If the adversary offers

military aid, economic aid, trade agreements or loans, a great power can match the offer.

Moreover, a great power can counteract economic coercion by the adversary through providing an alternative source of revenue to regional states.

It is possible that, because of a great power's involvement with the alliance, the alliance is able to attract enough nations in the end so that it actually needs less from the great power. The great power's purpose, nevertheless, is to be the *insurance* during the initial period when it is unclear how strong the alliance is going to be ultimately. It assures the first few states that the alliance will be viable even if the alliance does not get any larger.

A number of researchers have put forward concepts that capture the special role specific states play during alliance formation. Pape (2005) describes the "anchor" as "at least one state that can mount a reasonable defense, at least for a time" against the adversary. By taking on the risk of containing the adversary when other states are "unable, unwilling, or undecided," the anchor provides a public good. Pape lists Britain's role in facilitating the coalitions against Napoleonic France, as well as Britain and the Soviet Union's actions during 1940-41 as examples of anchoring. Ribat (2014) proposes a similar idea. The "coordinator" is a critical state during alliance formation that uses its spare resources to spend on allies and acquire high amounts of additional military capacity for the coalition. However, for Ribat, the military capabilities of the coordinator are secondary; the most important dimension is financial. This dissertation builds on Pape's and Ribat's works to broaden the understanding about unique functions specific states serve during alliance formation. By theorizing addition mechanisms, this dissertation also adds to Morrow's (1991) finding that power asymmetry makes alliance formation more likely.

Having now discussed one function that the anchor can play – assuring regional states that the alliance would be viable – I will move on to discuss the second condition that needs to be fulfilled for multilateral alliance formation.

Section III. Second Condition of Multilateral Alliance Formation – Free-riding Reduction

Even if an anchor successfully assured regional states that joining the alliance will not be fruitless, there is still a free-riding problem. A regional state might prefer joining a viable alliance to joining an unviable one, but what it prefers the most is to not join any, and benefit from the security other countries pay for. An anchored alliance might be successful at deterring the adversary, but it will not be costless. Its members will still be on the adversary's enemy list, and they are likely to be excluded from benefits provided by the adversary, such as trading agreements and economic aid.

If the anchor is extra-regional, it needs the cooperation of regional states proximate to the potential war theater to grant basing rights and provide logistical support so the anchor can effectively project power in the region. For the alliance's legitimacy and long-term sustainability, ideally the alliance would include more regional states. Therefore, reducing free-riding by regional states is crucial, but how can the anchor discourage it?

Subsection A. Reducing the “Public-ness” of Collective Security

Security from alliance, I have argued, is a threshold public good. In the literature on collective action, some researchers have made the argument that aspects of the collective good that defensive alliances produce might be *impure*, meaning that those aspects are rivalrous or excludable to allies.

Sandler (1977) distinguished between weapons that are *deterrent* (i.e. their main purposes are to convey credible threat of retaliation, such as ballistic missiles aimed at enemy population

centers) and those that are *protective* (sheltering allies or repelling against attacks, such as antiballistic missiles). Whereas the benefits of deterrent weapons cannot be withheld from allies, the benefits of protective weapons can be subject to *thinning*, i.e., the larger the land area being protected, the quality of protection decreases. Therefore, if an alliance introduces more impurely public defense benefits, each member will gradually reveal its preference for how much defensive goods it wants. In turn, the alliance can implement a toll scheme to charge different allies according to their demands, thus reducing free-riding in burden-sharing. Russett and Sullivan (1971) also pointed out that smaller members in an alliance might desire prestige goods such as sophisticated military equipment like supersonic aircrafts produced by large states. Since large states control the distribution of such goods, small states can be asked to make more monetary and manpower contribution to the alliance in order to receive those goods. The understanding of some alliance benefits as club goods has also been extended to explain NATO's expansion after the Cold War (Ivanov 2008; Gates and Terasawa 2003) as well as how the costs of the Gulf War were shared (Khanna, Sandler, and Shimizu 1998).

Nonetheless, most of the debate on the implications of certain alliance benefits being club goods has been on burden sharing after the alliance is formed. Some researchers remarked that the insight could have implications on alliance formation. Sandler and Hartley (2001), for instance, stated that if the design of an alliance could allow potential allies to benefit from ally-specific advantages and excludable public benefits, "the payoff pattern may be more conducive to initial formation." I have yet to find more detailed discussions. In the following section and the empirical chapters, I seek to flesh out the concrete ways in which the anchor can engineer club goods aspects during the formation process.

The free-riding problem in burden-sharing after the alliance has formed is somewhat different from free-riding when there is not yet an alliance. Post-establishment free-riding takes the form of smaller allies spending less of their national budgets on defense than bigger allies. By contrast, in pre-establishment free-riding, some regional states contemplate not joining an alliance because they think they can benefit from the efforts of the alliance without undertaking any risks. Put in another way, the means of free-riding is different in alliance formation versus alliance operation.

To understand how incentives for free-riding can be altered, we need to first recognize that security a successful alliance produces could come in two forms: (i) the adversary refrains from expansionary foreign policies in general, or (ii) the adversary refrains from attacking countries that are in the multilateral alliance, but acts freely toward other countries. For the first form of security, no countries can be excluded from benefiting, and free-riding is unavoidable. But for the second form of security, it resembles a club good: only states that are willing to shoulder the risk of being in the alliance would enjoy that good. When security comes in this form, the incentives for regional states to join the alliance are greater.

The degree of “clubness” can be controlled to a certain extent. The alliance can limit the *casus foederis* – situations in which the terms of the alliance would be activated – to only attacks on allies, as opposed to all attacks in a broad area that encompasses allies and non-allies. If, for strategic reasons, the alliance wishes to cover a general area, it can delimit the area stringently by longitude and latitude so that as many non-allies would be excluded as possible. The alliance can also specify the types of threats it would respond to, e.g., only communist attacks, so that the alliance would not be used to settle regional conflicts unrelated to its original purpose.

If a crisis involving the adversary takes place in a regional state not party to the alliance, it is important for the alliance to not intervene – or at least not to the same extent as it would if the attack is on an ally. Otherwise, other non-members will take note and not join the alliance. Why join? They can enjoy the benefits and not antagonize the adversary. Nonetheless, non-intervention will have a trade-off. The adversary can pick up countries not party to the alliance one by one, and this could strengthen the adversary’s military position gradually.

Subsection B. Injecting “Club Goods” to the Portfolio of Benefits of Joining the Alliance

Another way to reduce free-riding is to distribute “club goods” through the alliance. Club goods are benefits that can be excluded from non-members; examples include military aid, economic aid and trade agreements. A great power anchor is well suited to provide these goods compared to smaller countries because it has at its disposal more excess resources. Furthermore, military equipment produced by a great power is more coveted. In addition, access to the vast markets of great powers serves as a strong incentive for regional states to join the alliance even if they are not as that exposed to the adversary themselves.

Club goods can be provided within the alliance treaty, or through separate agreements. Examining alliance negotiations in Europe from 1860 to 1945, Poast (2012) found that offers of trade linkage substantially increase the likelihood of agreement. Kinne and Bunte (2020) also showed that once countries have signed a defense cooperation agreement, it increases the likelihood of country-to-country loan by more than 77%.

When the anchor provides club goods, it can require regional states to pick up more alliance defense burden. In the post-WWII period, Western European states hoped that the US would continue the Lend-Lease program on a bilateral basis. The Lend-Lease program provided war matériel – from military equipment to raw material such as oil – on a lending basis, i.e., cash

payment was not needed upfront. For instance, in 1941 Britain provided rent-free 99-year leases of British bases in the Caribbean as well as Newfoundland to the US in exchange for fifty destroyers.⁵ While the US did get something in return, the program was viewed by American officials as very much a one-way street of assistance.⁶ The program might be justifiable when Nazi Germany was steamrolling Europe in the early 1940s and countries such as Britain and the Soviet Union had inadequate resources to resist, but to continue the program after the war could create indefinite dependence. Hence, US officials made the policy that they would only consider military aid requests from Western European countries if the requests were submitted jointly, after Western European states made steps to pool their defense assets and integrate their defense production. In the short run, Western Europe still relied on US military aid to counter the USSR, but the creation of joint production should, in the long run, allow Western European states to scale up their capacities and achieve self-sufficiency.

It might be the case that, ultimately, some degree of free-riding cannot be eliminated. But the anchor can take actions to inject aspects of club goods throughout the alliance formation process to minimize free-riding and get as many regional states on board as desirable.

Having discussed the two conditions that must be fulfilled for multilateral alliance formation to take place, I will now turn to the research design of this dissertation.

Section IV. Research Design

The heart of the empirical portion of this dissertation is to evaluate the impact of a great power anchor on multilateral alliance formation.

⁵ Conn, Stetson, Rose C. Engelman, and Byron Fairchild. *Guarding the United States and Its Outposts*. Vol. 12. Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1964.

⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1948, Volume III, Western Europe, 220.

First, I will show that alliance formation is generally more likely when a great power is present. For this purpose, I use correlational statistical analysis, not to draw casual inferences from the quantitative data but to show that there is prima facie evidence that the overall relationships my theory posits exist.

Second, I rely on qualitative case studies to demonstrate causal effects in multiple cases of multilateral alliance formation (or non-formation) against common threats. To test for cause and effect, I demonstrate that the theoretical conditions and mechanisms posited by the theory do in fact exist in the case evidence and go further to demonstrate that they occur in the time sequence suggested by my theory. Consideration of time sequences of the causal relationship of the key variables goes beyond simple process tracing to allow for identification of crucial variables in a theory.⁷ Hence, if I can demonstrate that the presence of the anchor took place prior to and actually triggered the expected mechanisms that led to alliance formation, this adds substantial validation to the identification that the posited causal process in fact occurred in the case.

Subsection A. Insights from Statistical Testing

To evaluate the general relationship between the membership of a group of countries and the likelihood of alliance formation, I adapted a dataset constructed by Fordham and Poast (2016). The dataset included all instances of alliance formation around the world from 1815 to 2003, compiled by the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) project.⁸ While the

⁷ For an example of time as a casual identification strategy in qualitative analysis, please see Pape, Robert, *Bombing to Win*, Cornell University Press, 2014.

⁸ Leeds, Brett Ashley, Jeffrey M. Ritter, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Andrew G. Long. "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944." *International Interactions*, no. 28 (2002): 237–60.

data are comprehensive, when the research question concerns alliance formation or non-formation, any dataset needs to contain cases of alliance non-formation. To achieve this, Fordham and Poast generated 26,600 k -ads (groups of k countries) by sampling from all possible combination of states.

To test the effect of a great power anchor on alliance formation, I added a variable – “great power presence” – that shows whether a given k -ad contains a great power. This variable serves as a crude approximation for the power of the anchor in my theory. There is no standard way to operationalize great powers. Although the Correlates of War Project maintains a list of major powers, it uses a rather encompassing definition. A state qualifies as a major power if it has a population greater than 500,000, is a member of the UN, and receives diplomatic missions from two major powers. Therefore, I opted to define great power as any state that possesses more than 15% of global material capabilities, using the Correlates of War’s National Material Capabilities dataset.⁹ The National Material Capabilities dataset contains annual values (1816-2016) for total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, size of military personnel as well as military expenditure.¹⁰ Thus, the composite index (CINC) captures both the military power and the latent power of a country.

Based on the criterion of 15% of global material capabilities, the list of great powers is: the US (most years since 1862), the UK (most years during 1816 to 1916), France (1840-1842), Germany (1914-1918; 1938-1943), Russia/the USSR (majority of years during 1816 to 1856;

⁹ “National Material Capabilities (v6.0) — Correlates of War.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities>.

¹⁰ “State System Membership (V2016) — Correlates of War.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/state-system-membership>.

most years from 1931-1988), and China (1860-1895; after 1998). I also generated versions of the dataset with different definitions of great power (at 10% or 20% of global material capabilities) to ensure that the operationalization did not drive the results.

The statistical test was a logistic regression, which was suitable for outcome variables that were binary (alliance formation or non-formation in this case). The regression contained five variables: alliance formation or non-formation (outcome variable), great power presence within a *k*-ad (main independent variable of interest), the size of the group (control variable), the amount of time since the previous alliance (control variable) as well as the number of failed alliances the group of countries had before (control variable). The result of the regression was as follows:

Table 1. Summary Statistics

Variables	Coefficient
Great power presence	0.44**(0.16)
Number of members	0.13**(0.03)
Time since previous alliance	-0.1**(0.04)
Number of previous alliance failures	-1.25**(0.2)
Constant	-4.34**(0.2)
Number of observations	24,611

The impact of great power presence is positive and significant at the 0.95 confidence level. In versions of the test where a great power is defined as a state that possesses more than 10% or 20% of global material capabilities, the coefficient remains positive.

In Fordham and Poast’s (2016) analysis, they found that alliance is most likely to form when a *k*-ad’s collective material capabilities are near 30% of global material capabilities. They posit that Riker’s “minimum winning coalition” theory (1962) could explain why the number peaks at 30% and not more. At that size, an alliance can compete with any state in the international system. At the same time, the benefits the group obtains will be divided among a smaller number of states, resulting in a larger slice of the pie for each member. In addition to

total capabilities, Fordham and Poast also found geographic distance and the average level of threat in the *k*-ad to have positive and significant impact on alliance formation.

To combine all these insights, generally speaking, alliance formation is associated with a combination of variables, including: a crude approximation of the key variable “anchor” in my theory; joint capabilities of a group of states nearing 30% of global material capabilities; a high level of threat; and geographical proximity.

Nevertheless, I do not intend to use this adaptation of the Fordham and Poast test to draw causal inferences for my theory on the anchor in this dissertation. What I hope to show is that a general relationship between the presence of a great power and alliance formation exists; the causal link between the two will be explored in case studies. Future work should evaluate the sequences of variables to clarify issues of collinearity between the variable “great power presence” in my model and other variables in the Fordham and Poast model.

A number of questions key to understanding alliance formation are unanswered by quantitative findings. For example, which specific states would comprise an alliance? Why are certain states included or excluded? If a great power makes formation more likely, and proximity among members facilitates formation, does it follow that bandwagoning is more frequent? Or does geographical proximity apply only to members that are not the great power? To answer these questions, let us turn to the qualitative research design.

Subsection B. Qualitative Research Design

Sub-subsection i. Broad Structure

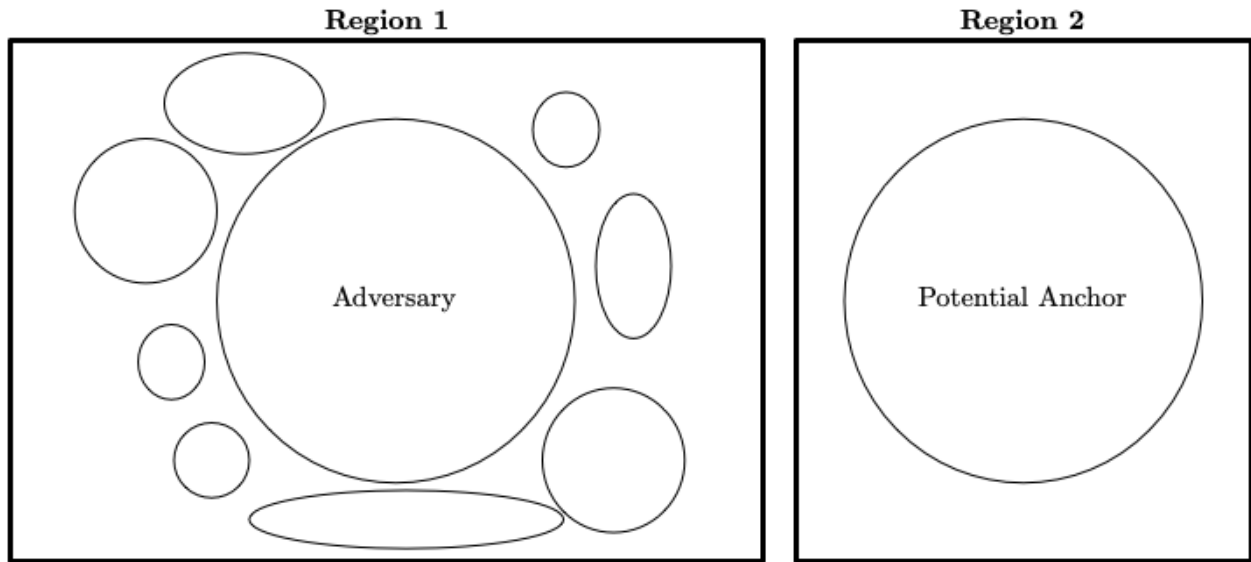
To understand not just *whether* the presence of a great power aids alliance formation, but also *how* it does so, I will carry out a comparative case study of three cases: early-Cold War

Western Europe, early-Cold War Southeast Asia, and post-Cold War Southeast Asia in the context of the South China Sea conflict.

Sub-subsection ii. Case Selection Criteria

For a case to enter my case universe, it must fulfill three criteria: a) there is a large rising regional threat; b) there is not a great power in that region; and c) there is at least one great power in another region. It is this triangular relationship that defines a case. In the three cases I selected, the USSR and China were the rising threats for Western European countries and Southeast Asian countries, respectively. In all three cases, the extra-regional great power was the US.

Figure 2. Case selection criteria



These cases constitute two pairs of cases – early-Cold War Western Europe vs. Southeast Asia (same time period, different region); early-Cold War vs. post-Cold War Southeast Asia (same region, different time period). This design allows me to test the geographical and temporal validity of my arguments. Three other differences are also of theoretical interest. The first is the effect of geography on alliance formation. In the Western European case, the allies are

contiguous, whereas in the Southeast Asian case they are not. The second is the nature of the threat: the communist threats in the Cold War cases had both internal and external components, whereas the threat posed by China in the South China Sea case is primarily external. The third is the type of multilateral alliance being formed. In the Western European case, a strong defensive alliance was formed with a clause that stated an attack on any member would be considered as an attack on all. By contrast, the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty was weaker. It stipulated that the members would “act to meet the common danger” in case of attack without specifying what the nature of that action would be.

For the Cold War cases, each case comprises two sub-cases. The Western European case is made up of the formation of the Brussels Pact (1948) and then the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty (1949). The Southeast Asian case consists of an attempt to establish the Pacific Pact, and then the formation of the Manila Pact (1954). The following table summarizes the theoretical attributes of each case:

Table 2. Summary of all cases

Case	Common Threat	Aggregate Capabilities of Participating States	Committed Anchor	Mechanisms		Outcome
				Viability Assurance	Free-riding Reduction	
1. <i>Early-Cold War Western Europe</i>	Soviet Union					
a. Brussels Pact		Met Threshold	Conditional	Yes	Yes	Alliance
b. NATO		Met Threshold	Yes	Yes	Yes	Alliance
2. <i>Early-Cold War Southeast Asia</i>	China					
a. Pacific Pact		Not Met Threshold	No	No	No	No Alliance
b. SEATO		Met Threshold	Yes	Yes	Yes	Alliance
3. <i>Post-Cold War Southeast Asia</i>	China					
		Not Met Threshold	No	No	No	No Alliance

Summary Coding Rules

- **Common threat:** a state that is significantly more powerful than each of its neighbors and pursues expansionary foreign policies in the region
- **Aggregate Capabilities:** based on Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) and assessments of military power
- **Participating States:** states facing the common threat and are in talks of formulating a collective response
- **Committed Anchor:** a state that exceeds or matches the common threat in terms of CINC. It is considered as committed if it is willing to offer security assistance if alliance formation is successful. It is coded as “conditional” if a country’s willingness to serve as anchor is dependent on some actions regional states take.
- **Viability Assurance:** coded as “yes” when leaders of regional states assess that State X’s involvement is needed to balance against Common Threat, and State X commits to serve as anchor.
- **Free-riding Reduction:** can be intra-alliance or extra-alliance. Coded as “yes” when regional states end up picking up more defense burden than they originally intended.
- **Alliance:** formal defensive agreement that obligates members to provide assistance to each other if anyone comes under attack.

Sub-subsection iii. Structure of Discussion in Each Case

In each case, the discussion will cover the following questions: (a) what was the extent of the regional threat? (b) were there attempts to coordinate a regional response? Was there any anchor involvement? How did regional states respond to those attempts, and what was the rationale? (c) If there were negotiations, what issues were the most controversial, and how did the presence or absence of an anchor ameliorate or exacerbate those disagreements? (d) what was the outcome of alliance formation?

Sub-subsection iv. Operationalization

In terms of operationalization, my chief explanatory variable is whether an anchor is involved during alliance formation. A country is anchoring the formation process if it is a great power and offers a security promise – defined as a public commitment to provide assistance when an ally comes under attack – if the alliance forms. Some anchors play a more active role than others: their diplomats approach the diplomats of potential allies, their leaders preside over the negotiation, etc. But the key factor is the prospective security promise.

As for the outcome variable, a multilateral alliance is formed when an alliance treaty is signed. Existing alliances that have been repurposed to fit a new threat are a trickier issue. Compared to war-fighting coalitions, which are formed to achieve a specific goal and get disbanded after the goal has been fulfilled, defensive alliances have a longer shelf life and can often outlast the threat (NATO is the case in point). If a country has already established a network of alliances in a previous era, it is politically more expedient to repurpose existing alliances for the new threat than to establish new ones. Whether the repurposing would count as a “new” alliance depends on if substantial institutional and military changes have been made to existing alliances. This is easier to differentiate if the previous conflict had a different focal point

compared to the new conflict. In the Vietnam War, for example, the focal point was Indochina. Today, the focal point of the conflict in Southeast Asia shifted to the South China Sea.

If the focal point has changed, are countries relevant to the new conflict and are not a part of existing alliances being linked to existing alliances in some way? Has a formal and public security promise been extended to those new countries? Are countries in existing alliances changing their practices to adapt to the new threat, e.g., changing the location of joint military exercises to the new focal point? Absent substantial and consistent changes, existing alliances should not be considered as a de facto “new” multilateral alliance.

Sub-subsection v. Data Sources

For the Cold War cases, I primarily relied on historical diplomatic documents made public by the US, British, Australian, and New Zealand governments. Where available, I obtained the proceedings of key conferences, such as the Baguio and Manila Conferences, to understand the negotiations. In addition, a number of delegates – who were usually foreign ministers or ambassadors – published memoirs and diaries. These documents were particularly helpful in providing insights about motivations behind the delegates’ decisions. Adding to these primary sources, I consulted a wide range of secondary sources to fill in empirical gaps.

As for the South China Sea case, although it is a negative case, there has been attempts to deal with the conflict regionally via ASEAN. When crises broke out, leaders of Southeast Asian countries were also frequently asked about possible military responses and alliances. These actions and explanations revealed the issues with collective action among Southeast Asian states. Given the recency of the conflict, a substantial amount of the information I use comes from news reports by both international news outlets and national news agencies in Southeast Asian states. Furthermore, I analyze speeches by leaders, defense white papers, and official statements by

governments and regional organizations. To evaluate how militaries of Southeast Asian states changed to deal with the conflict, I employ information from the International Institute of Strategic Studies' annual *Military Balance* assessments.

Sub-subsection vi. Observable Implications

If my theory is correct, during the pre-negotiation stages, more states would be interested in forming a multilateral alliance when a great power was on board. Specifically, in cases where an anchor was absent, when states rejected to join the negotiation they would cite the unviability of the alliance to be the reason (at least privately among diplomats), not an absence of threat. If a negotiation took place, an anchored group would be more likely to reach consensus than an unanchored group. In the unanchored group, there would be more disagreements, and participants would be less likely to concede. If the unanchored group did reach agreements, there would be few enforcement mechanisms.

Sub-subsection vii. Limitations

There are a few limitations in the present research design, which future works should address. The first is the generalizability of the theory. There are important cases of multilateral alliance formation outside Western Europe and Southeast Asia, e.g. the Rio Pact (1947) and the Baghdad Pact (1955). There are interesting variations between NATO and SEATO, such as the strength of the defensive commitments; comparing an even broader range of US-led multilateral alliances could yield further insights about how multilateral alliance designs differ under the same anchor.

Second, in all three cases, the key anchor was the US. How would the process of multilateral alliance formation change when the nature of the anchor was significantly different? The USSR, for instance, anchored the formation of the Warsaw Pact. With drastically different

level of political influence, certain dynamics described in my theory might not apply, and other dynamics could emerge. The constraints would also be different depending on the nature of the anchor. For instance, the controversial ratification process for the North Atlantic Treaty in the US Senate had an impact on how the US approached the Manila Pact. With non-democracies, there was no equivalent consideration. Examining multilateral alliance formation led by a wide range of anchors would differentiate the power of the anchor versus the power of the US as the anchor.

Third, the scope of this dissertation is alliance formation. Does the anchor continue to matter during post-treaty security cooperation? Beyond negotiating the treaty, the alliance needs to take concrete steps to generate the deterrence. Does the anchor's leverage reduce because now regional states can band together to influence alliance decision-making? Or is it preserved through the distribution of club goods like military aid? The anchor-regional state relationship is a case of power asymmetry, and there is no reason to think that it would cease to be influential after the treaty is signed, but the precise ways in which the power asymmetry makes an impact will require further research.

Chapter 3. Multilateral Alliance Formation in Early-Cold War Western Europe

Mr. Bevin [British Foreign Secretary] recognizes that the United States Government might find it difficult specifically to commit United States forces to operate on the continent of Europe. But he considers that, if the United States were able to enter with Great Britain into a general commitment to go to war with an aggressor, it is probable that the potential victims might feel sufficiently reassured to refuse to embark on a fatal policy of appeasement.¹

– Lord Inverchapel, British Ambassador, to Robert Lovett, American Undersecretary of State, January 27, 1948

Section I. Introduction

On April 4, 1949, representatives of the US, Canada, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Portugal gathered in Washington, DC to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. Comprising twelve countries across two continents, the scale of this alliance was extraordinary. Remarkably, this was not a temporary war-fighting coalition, but a defensive alliance that brought genuine military integration.

The establishment of multilateral security cooperation took multiple steps. Britain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium first signed the Treaty of Brussels in 1948. Then, these five states founded the Western Union Defense Organization (WUDO) as they simultaneously negotiated a transatlantic pact with the US, Canada and other states. The resultant North Atlantic Treaty included five additional European countries: Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, and Portugal.

What drove alliance formation in Western Europe during the early-Cold War period? Researchers generally agree that the Soviet threat was NATO's *raison d'être* and the US played a crucial role in NATO's formation. Some researchers emphasized other factors and the influence

¹ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 14-16.

of other countries over the formation process. Trachtenberg (1999) argued that the Cold War should not be understood as a purely two-sided conflict; the issue of German power was at the heart of the war. Many facets of NATO's institutional design were motivated by the need to rearm Germany, and, at the same time, keep its autonomy in check so to not provoke the USSR. Petersen (1982), Frazier (1984), Watt (1984), Petersen (1986), and Folly (1988) stressed the important role played by Britain during NATO's formation, especially as a broker between the US and Western European countries.

My aim in this chapter is not to reject the assertions that countries other than the US were also instrumental in the establishment of NATO. What I seek to do in this chapter is to specify the ways in which US policies in the very early stages – prior to the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty even – set Western European military cooperation on a multilateral path. This chapter explains how American involvement greatly diminished, even if not fully solved, key obstacles to collective action. Specifically, America became an anchor which: 1) created the regional states' perception of viability in balancing against the USSR, and 2) diminished free-riding incentives. Unlike SEATO, in which the military power of regional states was not expected to be a core source of deterrence against China, the US anticipated that Western European militaries would play a substantial role in future defense against the USSR. Thus, the US used the leverage it had as the main supplier of military aid to Western Europe in order to facilitate multilateral military integration. This included encouraging Western European states to design Brussels Pact as a single multilateral treaty as opposed to multiple bilateral treaties, and requiring Western European states to take steps to pool their military assets and merge defense production before the US would consider their military aid requests.

In the rest of this chapter, I will first evaluate whether Western Europe could defend itself against the USSR in the post-war period, and US willingness and capabilities to anchor for the region. Then, I will show how US aid policies facilitated military cooperation among Brussels Pact members. Lastly, I will examine how anchor presence affected the negotiation process of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Section II. Rising Soviet Threat

The USSR suffered massive damages from WWII. 15% of its population perished, and 25% of Soviet pre-war production power was lost by the end of the war.² Nonetheless, the USSR expanded its territories significantly by annexing Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad, part of present-day Ukraine, Belarus as well as Moldova. During the initial years of the Cold War, the USSR continued to expand eastward and consolidated control in Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany. The territorial gain – together with the economic potential and manpower in those territories – partially made up for the loss of material power during the war.

The first unmistakable sign that the USSR was seeking expansion beyond territories it occupied in WWII came when it helped the Polish Workers' Party manipulate the 1946 election. Stalin had promised during the Yalta Conference that there would be free elections in Poland. Roosevelt expected that Poland would align with the USSR in terms of foreign and military policies, but he and his advisers still aimed for Poland to be autonomous in domestic affairs.³ But with Soviet help, the Polish Workers' Party committed electoral fraud in both the pre-election

² Klemann, Hein AM, and Sergei Kudryashov. *Occupied Economies: An Economic History of Nazi-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

³ Trachtenberg (1999).

plebiscite and the national election itself. Leaders of opposition parties were assassinated or forced into exile.⁴ Eventually, the government legislated that all non-leftist parties would be illegal in 1946, ensuring the victory of the Polish Workers' Party's in 1947.

Soviet efforts to change Czechoslovakia's regime was even more brazen. Klement Gottwald, leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), orchestrated a coup d'état with assistance from Soviet deputy foreign minister Valerian Zorin. Responding to the controversy over the appointment of noncommunist officials to senior posts in the police force, the KSČ arranged mass demonstrations by workers (many of whom armed) and the demonstrators later took over Prague.⁵ The KSČ also took control of the headquarters of opposition parties, as well as ministries previously held by leaders who opposed the KSČ.⁶ As the coup took place, the Red Army, which stationed on Czechoslovakia's border, was ready to intervene. Soon, the only senior non-communist minister Jan Masaryk fell to his death; it was later discovered that it was an assassination by the Soviets.⁷ President Edvard Beneš ultimately gave in and the National Assembly comprised only communists and communist-friendly supporters. In the end, a new constitution that cemented the domination of the KSČ was signed into place.

⁴ Gidyński, Joseph. "The Relation of the Polish Communist Party to the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic." *The Polish Review* 21, no. 1/2 (1976): 41–53.

⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica. "The Breakup of the Republic." Accessed September 23, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Czechoslovak-history/The-breakup-of-the-republic>.

⁶ "The Breakup of the Republic."

⁷ Kaplan, Lawrence. *NATO 1948: The Birth of the Transatlantic Alliance*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007, 50.

Both Italy and France had powerful communist parties. They could soon share the fate of Poland and Czechoslovakia. A communist takeover of the European continent was not inconceivable.

Section III. Inadequate Regional Capabilities

USSR CINC (Composite Indicator of National Capability) (1947): 14.5% of global material power

Joint CINC of Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (1947): 14.7%

How does the capabilities of Western Europe as a whole compare to those of the USSR? In terms of material power, as the CINC above shown, the USSR and Western Europe were close to equal in 1947. But how did their military power measure up, especially when countries were actively demobilizing in the post-WWII period?

The strength of the Soviet military lied in its vast land army. At its peak in 1944, the Red Army comprised 11.3 million men.⁸ After post-war demobilization, the number lowered to 2.8 million.⁹ Nevertheless, the Soviet system enabled rapid remobilization. Since 1918, it implemented universal military service.¹⁰ All men were subject to military service until age fifty. Children received civil defense training since elementary school, and in secondary school boys received mandated courses in military training.¹¹ Therefore, by conscription age, young men had already received substantial training, thus reducing the need for long periods of basic training

⁸ Odom, William E. *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*. Yale University Press, 2000, 39.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Odom, 43.

¹¹ Ibid.

prior to commencing active duty.¹² If a Soviet man of conscription age was not on active duty, he would be enrolled in the reserves and be subject to mobilization.¹³ Thus, behind the vast Soviet land army stood an even more vast pool of reserves.

Britain, by contrast, did not implement a National Service scheme until after the war. It passed the National Service Act in 1947, but the scheme was not due to launch until 1949.¹⁴ In 1947, its armed forces had already demobilized from over four million to around three-quarters of a million service members.¹⁵ In Europe, the British army had, officially, three divisions and miscellaneous units in Germany, one brigade in Austria, one brigade in Trieste, and nine Territorial Army divisions as well as multiple Active Army units at home.¹⁶ In actuality, the Territorial Army existed “in skeletal form”; it could garner only 5% of its personnel and did not possess crucial equipment.¹⁷ The Royal Armored Corps and Royal Artillery units were undermanned. There were not enough officers, non-commissioned officers and technicians across all units.¹⁸ As French (2012) assessed, “on the Continent...Britain could never hope to match the Red Army man-for-man.” In July 1948, the British Joint Planning Staff warned the Chiefs of Staff that if war broke out, Britain would “suffer a military disaster on the Western Front.”¹⁹

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ French, David. *Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-1971*. Oxford University Press, 2012, 44.

¹⁵ Pope, Rex. “British Demobilization after the Second World War.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 1 (1995): 65–81, 75.

¹⁶ French, 39.

¹⁷ Ibid, 40.

¹⁸ Ibid, 39.

¹⁹ Ibid, 40.

As for France, in the immediate post-war period there was an effort by Charles de Gaulle to restore the French Army. In the beginning of 1946, the army numbered 1.8 million men, but by 1947, it reduced to 500,000.²⁰ In the same year, France faced an economic crisis. Its gold and dollar reserves were only at \$445 million and they would be completely depleted before the end of the year. In mid-December, US Congress approved \$284 million of interim aid to bail France out.²¹ Economic hardship meant that it was extremely difficult to rearm the French military. Beyond economic crisis at home, the First Indochina War increasingly drained French military resources. The war in Indochina grew from costing 3.2 billion francs in 1945 to 53.3 billion in 1947 and then 89.7 billion francs in 1948.²² In 1949, half of France's military budget would go to the war.²³ If a war against the USSR broke out, the French Council of Ministers estimated that, "if we are alone, the battle will last ten days. We must have the support of the United States."²⁴

Therefore, the joint might – in terms of manpower and monetary resources – of the two most powerful Western European countries, plus the capabilities of the three much smaller states (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) would not be enough against the Red Army. British and French leaders recognized the reality. Even though Bevin hoped that Western Europe could constitute a "third force" in international politics as late as 1948,²⁵ by 1949 he decided that

²⁰ Rist, Charles, "The French Financial Dilemma," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 3 (April 1947): 451-464.

²¹ Hitchcock, William I. *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954*. The New Cold War History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998, 84.

²² Rice-Maximin, Edward Francis. *Accommodation and Resistance: The French Left, Indochina, and the Cold War, 1944-1954*. Contributions to the Study of World History, no. 2. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, 68.

²³ Kalb, Marvin. *The Road to War: Presidential Commitments Honored and Betrayed*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

²⁴ Bagnato, Bruna. "France and the Origins of the Atlantic Pact." In *The Atlantic Pact Forty Years Later*, 79–110. De Gruyter, 2011, 92.

²⁵ Trachtenberg, 67.

Western Europe was not strong enough to balance against the USSR.²⁶ Prime Minister Attlee had this realization earlier in 1946. He thought Britain would have to be considered as “an easterly extension of a strategic area the center of which is the American continent.” De Gaulle understood this as early as 1945 that cooperating with the US would be necessary if France “wished to survive” against the USSR.²⁷ By 1947, other French officials came to share his view that the security of the West would have to depend on American power “at least for the foreseeable future.”²⁸

Section IV. Anchor Availability

Subsection A. US Ability

USSR CINC (1947): 14.5%

US CINC (1947): 31%

US material power in 1947 was double that of the USSR. Due to demobilization, however, US military presence in terms of ground forces did not reflect the advantage. Globally, only 12 divisions operated in 1947, down from 97 divisions in 1945.²⁹ In fact, what maintained the deterrence in Europe in 1947 was US nuclear monopoly (the USSR did not test its first weapon until August 1949, four months after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty).

As Trachtenberg (1999) outlined,³⁰ the US could afford a tripwire strategy when it held the monopoly. In a one-sided nuclear war, the US was “bound to prevail in the end,”³¹ thus it

²⁶ Ibid, 68.

²⁷ Ibid, 70.

²⁸ Ibid, 68.

²⁹ Condit, Kenneth W. *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1947-1949*. Vol. II. Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996, 11.

³⁰ Trachtenberg, 89.

³¹ Ibid.

mattered less what happened in the initial phase of the war, even if Western Europe would get overrun by Soviet ground forces. American military planners envisioned that, once a war against the USSR broke out, the US would carry out a sustained atomic bombardment campaign on Soviet military targets. Then, with bombers and bombs produced after the war started, the US would steadily destroy USSR industrial and war-making capacities.³² Victory would be inevitable, and this understanding should deter the Soviets from starting a war. In turn, this allowed the US and its allies to not maintain an extensive and expensive ground troop presence in Europe.

US atomic monopoly – something that does not get captured in CINC – meant that it had the luxury of time to only mobilize after a war broke out. Therefore, while US ground troop presence in Europe might not match that of the Red Army, US overall deterrent effect was still substantial. The US was able to anchor for Western Europe inasmuch as it was willing to lay a tripwire and inasmuch as it held the nuclear monopoly.

Subsection B. US Willingness in the Early-1948 Period

The US was able to serve as an anchor for Western Europe, but was it willing? The earliest indication that the US might be willing to play a role in Europe's long-term security was an address Secretary of State James Byrnes gave in Stuttgart in September 1946.³³ Byrnes stated that the US would not withdraw its force from Germany as long as another power was still

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 50.

maintaining an occupation force there. By the end of 1946, 200,000 US troops remained in Germany, plus a Constabulary force of 30,000 men.³⁴

When Bevin first broached to US Secretary of State George Marshall on establishing a union of Western democracies, Marshall was open to it. This took place after the London Foreign Ministers Conference collapsed in December 1947, which ended the possibility of the four occupying powers in Germany working together. Bevin initially approached French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault to stress the need for “some sort of federation in Western Europe, preferably of an unwritten flexible kind.”³⁵ Bevin also noted that “the Americans must be brought in.”³⁶ Later that day, Bevin met with Marshall to pitch a “system” that would include the US, Britain (including its Dominions), France and Italy.³⁷ The system needed not be a formal alliance; it could be a “spiritual federation of the West” undergirded by “power, money and resolute action.”³⁸ Marshall was receptive but cautious, stating that he agreed with Bevin’s proposal on a general level, but for the US to make any formal commitment, Bevin’s proposal needed to be more specific.³⁹

This led to an outline of a “Western Union” sent later by British Ambassador Lord Inverchapel to Marshall. The union would comprise Britain, Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, Italy, Greece, possibly Portugal, and the union would have the backing of the Americas

³⁴ Tøllefsen, Trond Ove. “The American Occupation of Germany: A Representative Case of Nation-Building?” Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://core.ac.uk/display/30852795>.

³⁵ Baylis, John. “Britain, the Brussels Pact and the Continental Commitment.” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs)* 60, no. 4 (1984): 615–29, 619

³⁶ Baylis 619; Wiebes, Cees, and Bert Zeeman. *Belgium, the Netherlands and Alliances 1940–1949*. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1993, 161.

³⁷ Baylis (1984), 620.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

and the Dominions.⁴⁰ Eventually, the Union would include Spain and Germany. Marshall replied, after consulting Truman, that the initiative to form a Western Union would be “warmly applauded in the United States.” Marshall said Bevin should know that he wished “to see the United States do everything which it properly can in assisting the European nations in bringing a project along this line to fruition.”⁴¹ This was interpreted as a green light. Nevertheless, in subsequent correspondence, when Lord Inverchapel wrote that Bevin wondered if the US could provide a general commitment to go to war with Britain in case of aggression,⁴² Lovett recognized that Bevin was in fact asking if the US would consider a military alliance with Britain, and he responded that such a proposal would require careful assessment by the National Security Council and then consultation with Congressional leaders. In the short run, while the Marshall Plan was still under review by Congress, it would be best to delay this conversation.

Lovett articulated the condition of US consideration for a security commitment to Western Europe the next month. Lovett stated that “the United States will carefully consider the part it might appropriately play in support of such a Western Union” when “there is evidence of unity with a firm determination to effect an arrangement under which the various European countries are prepared to act in concert to defend themselves.” While British officials were disappointed that the US was deferring the consideration, they did not regard the deferment as American intention “to leave the Western European democracies to shoulder the whole burden of their collective defense.”⁴³ They viewed US request that Western Europeans should take the lead

⁴⁰ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 5.

⁴¹ Condit, 192.

⁴² FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 14-16.

⁴³ Insall, Tony, and Patrick Salmon. *The Brussels and North Atlantic Treaties, 1947-1949: Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series I, Volume X*. Routledge, 2014, 45.

themselves to “[correspond] most closely with the line which the administration pursued in regard to European recovery where, as a preliminary to United States decisions in the matter, the countries concerned were invited to agree upon their own program and thereafter to make known their wish for an American contribution.” British diplomat Jock Balfour referred to Byrnes’ speech in Stuttgart and the “Truman Doctrine” speech as evidence of “America’s strategic interest in Europe.”⁴⁴ Therefore, US demands should be understood with that in mind.

The Western Europeans proceeded to negotiate the Brussels Pact on their own, and Marshall green-lit the start of US-Western European talks the week before the Brussels Pact was signed. Truman stated in an address to Congress the day the Brussels Treaty was signed that “the determination of the free countries of Europe to protect themselves will be matched by an equal determination on our part to help them to do so.”⁴⁵ With that statement, the endeavor to establish a transatlantic security system entered a new phase.

Was the US a willing anchor during the period leading up to the establishment of the Brussels Pact? This is admittedly a tricky case to code, because the US was neither anchoring in the active sense, nor was it rejecting to endorse the project. To anchor in the active sense means to lead the alliance formation concretely. This entails publicly declaring its support, organizing preparatory activities such as study groups, military staff talks, treaty drafting, etc. These the US did not do. But the US was not doing nothing. A considerable number of US troops remained in Germany to serve as a tripwire while Western European states sorted the Brussels Pact out. This reduced the concern that the USSR would carry out immediate significant military actions

⁴⁴ Ibid, 47.

⁴⁵ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 54.

against Western Europe. The US also committed billions of dollars to help reconstruct Europe economically. Moreover, through liaising bilaterally with representatives of countries party to the Brussels Pact negotiations, the US was aware of important developments and influenced the directions the group would take (this will be elaborated later). For these reasons, I argue that the US was anchoring for Western Europe, though its role was more a “shadow anchor.”

Subsection C. US Willingness after the Establishment of the Brussels Pact

US willingness to anchor was clearer once the talks for the North Atlantic Treaty began. Technically, before the treaty was signed, it was not certain that US-Western European military cooperation would happen. But US officials – both on the political front and the military front – acted in ways that suggested the cooperation was likely to happen.

On the political front, the key action to signal that the US was serious in its intent to anchor was passing the Vandenberg Resolution. The resolution stated that the US government should pursue the “progressive development of regional and other collective arrangements for individual and collective self-defense in accordance with the purposes, principles, and provisions of the [UN] Charter” and to “[associate] the United States, by constitutional process, with such regional and other collective arrangements as are based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, and as affect its national security.”⁴⁶ Given the important role the Senate Foreign Relations Committee played in treaty relations, and the general importance of Congressional approval in war declaration, the passage of the Vandenberg Resolution in June 1948 was critical to assure Western European countries that the project was viable.

⁴⁶FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 135.

On the military front, the US sent a group of “observers” to WUDO, the institution created to implement the Brussels Pact. The US delegation included thirteen Army, three Air Force and one Navy officers who would meet with different WUDO bodies in London.⁴⁷ Generals Lyman Lemnitzer, A. Franklin Kibler, and Clarence R. Huebner headed the delegation.⁴⁸ Even though the delegation was instructed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to only assist WUDO with drawing up a coordinated military supply plan, Kaplan (2007) described its involvement with WUDO activities as “intimate” on every level.⁴⁹ The generals advised on WUDO’s organizational structure, guided the standardization of weapons to maximize compatibility with American standards, and even gave pointers on how to structure plans that would win votes of US congressmen.⁵⁰

Thus, during the period after the formation of the Brussels Pact, US political and military personnel signaled that there was sincere willingness for the US to anchor for Western Europe.

Section V. Regional States’ Perception of Alliance Viability

Having discussed the availability of the US as an anchor, I will now discuss the effects. In the theory chapter, I described security against a large threat as a threshold public good with an intermediate threshold. With such a good, two problems need to be resolved or reduced for collective action to happen. The first is that participants need to be assured of the viability of collective action. The second is minimizing free-riding. In this section, I will focus on the

⁴⁷Huston, J. A. “Prospects and Problems of European Integration: A Lecture Delivered at the Naval War College 21 October 1959.” *Naval War College Review* 12, no. 10 (1960): 17–42, 21.

⁴⁸Kaplan, Lawrence S. *NATO 1948: The Birth of the Transatlantic Alliance*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007, 147, 159.

⁴⁹Kaplan (2007), 159.

⁵⁰Kaplan (2007), 157-158.

problem with viability. I seek to show that Western European countries were aware that an alliance against the USSR would only be viable if the US would be a part of it. Because the US wanted Western Europe to first demonstrate their unity and determination through negotiating an alliance on their own, this motivated Western European countries to set aside their differences so they could obtain the greater prize, which was a formal security association with the US.

Some Western European countries were keenly aware that their future security would depend on some sort of joint action. Belgium, which was invaded by Germany in both the First and the Second World Wars, knew that neutrality would do it no good in the face of Soviet threat. Sir George Rendel, British Ambassador to Belgium, reported at the end of 1947 that “the Belgians [were] at present more than ever anxious for a common defense policy.”⁵¹ Britain also understood that technological innovation undermined its “splendid isolation.” In a November 1944 paper created by the British Foreign Office Post-Hostilities Planning Staff, analysts pointed out that because of technological advancements – specifically in air power and long-range missiles – Britain’s strategic position was not as protected by the English Channel as before.⁵² Britain’s security in the future would be intertwined with the security of the European continent. Unless some sort of “United Nations Organization” would be set up and that it would be able to protect all members *effectively*, the planning staff advised that Britain should consider a “Western European Security Group” to deal with threats from a rearmed Germany and the USSR.⁵³

⁵¹ Insall and Salmon, 11.

⁵² Baylis, John. “Britain and the Dunkirk Treaty: The Origins of NATO.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 1982): 236–47, 236.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 237.

However, the understanding that some sort of joint security action should be carried out was always accompanied by an awareness that American participation would be crucial. In a minute by British diplomat Sir Moore Crosthwaite, he remarked that “when the possibility of a treaty with Belgium [had] been discussed in the past, it had, however, always been assumed that [the British] would clear the project first with the Americans.”⁵⁴ Dutch Ambassador Eelco van Kleffens said similarly in a meeting with US officials that “the military features of the [Brussels Pact] did not mean a great deal unless backed, in some form or other, by the United States.”⁵⁵

The awareness of US indispensability led Britain to take less risk during the period before the US officially committed to transatlantic talks. For instance, Britain decided against inviting Scandinavian countries to join the Brussels Pact. Bevin realized that “[it] would be a mistake, since France and the United Kingdom, with the Benelux countries, could not by themselves effectively defend Scandinavia against [Soviet] pressure.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Britain would not risk a “show-down” with the USSR unless it was certain of US support.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding the caution, Crosthwaite pointed out, “everyone will...agree that an arrangement which ties down the Americans in Europe must have high priority than any other treaty.”⁵⁸ Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak argued that treaty-making should be proceeded “in the belief that if we produced something together we could then anticipate

⁵⁴ Insall and Salmon, 11.

⁵⁵ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 43.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 47.

⁵⁷ Trachtenberg, 68.

⁵⁸ Insall and Salmon

American support.”⁵⁹ Belgian initiative was important, as Luxembourg “had difficulties over neutrality and other matters,” and the Netherlands was “in a difficult position vis-à-vis France.”⁶⁰

The anticipation of future US involvement also led Western European states to opt for a multilateral design for the Western European treaty. Britain and France originally wanted to replicate the bilateral Treaty of Dunkirk, which was concluded in 1947 to boost the French Socialist Party against the French Communist Party on the eve of the presidential election.⁶¹ Through the Dunkirk Treaty, Britain and France promised “military and other support” in the event of “German aggression,” a worry important to the French populace even though Germany was still under occupation at the time.⁶² For future Western European military cooperation, Britain and France planned to use the Dunkirk Treaty as a model and sign a series of bilateral treaties with individual Benelux countries, instead of a single multilateral treaty. Britain and France thought that if Western European countries created a supranational organization, it could lead the US to think that Europeans were able to manage their own security affairs, and this would cause the US to withdraw troops from Europe.⁶³ Benelux, however, preferred a multilateral structure because their eventual goal was to establish a true European community that would facilitate political, economic, and social cooperation in addition to joint military defense.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Ibid, 50.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Baylis (1982); Greenwood, Sean. “Return to Dunkirk: The Origins of the Anglo-French Treaty of March 1947.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 6, no. 4 (December 1983): 49–65.

⁶² “Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance between His Majesty in Respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the President of the French Republic (1947),” United Nations Treaty Collection, <https://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280164b5f>.

⁶³ Stein, George. *Benelux Security Cooperation: A New European Defense Community?* Routledge, 2019, 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

The US, although not party to the Brussels Pact negotiations, supported a multilateral approach. Ideally, the future Western European arrangement would model after the Rio pact, a multilateral treaty signed in 1947 by the US and other countries in the Americas. There were two reasons. First, if the Western European pact were to expand to include the US later, the Senate would be more likely to approve an arrangement that had a precedent.⁶⁵ Second, the US wanted Western European states to leave a door open for West Germany to join later.⁶⁶ The Treaty of Dunkirk was explicitly anti-Germany since “German aggression” was cited as the purpose in the treaty text. Replicating the Treaty of Dunkirk with Benelux now would lead to difficulty to expand to include West Germany later. The US expected West Germany, when rehabilitated, to once again be an economic engine of Europe. A Western European alliance with Germany would be more likely to be financially self-sufficient – and would pose less of a burden to the American economy – than one without.⁶⁷

Western European countries sought US opinion bilaterally throughout the Brussels Pact negotiations. Through Inverchapel, Bevin asked US officials “how the mind of the United States Government is moving and what arrangements he could propose – out of various alternatives which have suggested themselves as a result of preliminary studies in London – with the best prospect of finding that they would commend themselves to Mr. Marshall from the point of view of possible United States participation at a later stage.”⁶⁸ Officially, the US did not tell Western European officials to pick the Dunkirk model or the Rio model. Unofficially, US officials did

⁶⁵ Ireland, Timothy P. *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. 50. Praeger, 1981, 67.

⁶⁶ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 8.

⁶⁷ Ireland, 76.

⁶⁸ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 20.

communicate their concerns about extending the Dunkirk Treaty model. In a meeting including Inverchapel and John Hickerson (Deputy Director of the State Department's Office of European Affairs) in DC, Hickerson presented his “observations” about the limitations of the Dunkirk model and the merits of the Rio model. Hickerson nevertheless qualified that “in presenting these observations informally they were in no sense intended to detract from the hearty support [the US] wished to give.”⁶⁹

In any case, US suggestions had an impact. Spaak reported to US Chargé to Belgium Hugh Millard that he thought US influence “had done [the] trick.”⁷⁰ Britain and France each prepared alternate drafts of a pact that were based on the Rio Pact rather than the Treaty of Dunkirk for the negotiation.⁷¹ Spaak remarked that he “wanted [a] treaty which had [the US’] fullest sympathy which he hoped would facilitate our future collaboration.”⁷² Millard noted that he had a “feeling [Spaak] may have used this thought with [the] French and British.”⁷³ Based on British documents, Spaak did indeed make the argument that making references to the Rio treaty in the Western European pact would have “valuable effect” on US public opinion.⁷⁴

The Brussels Pact, which was signed on March 17, 1948, was a multilateral pact with elements from the Rio treaty. Throughout the process, although the US acted only as a “shadow anchor,” the possibility of its involvement and its preferences had significant effect on the cooperation among Western European countries. There was a great deal of friction among

⁶⁹ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 38.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Insall and Salmon, 48.

Western European states themselves. The Netherlands was reluctant to get tied up with France.⁷⁵ Luxembourg foreign minister Joseph Bech said there could be “no chance of...negotiating bilaterally with Britain or with France” owing to Luxembourg’s domestic ambivalence toward neutrality; but acting as a part of Benelux would be a different matter.⁷⁶

If it were the case that only Western European states were negotiating with each other with no anticipation of future US involvement, Britain and France would have the most relative bargaining power, and they would have few reasons to give up the Dunkirk model. This would lead Benelux to not sign any treaties with Britain and France since Benelux wanted a multilateral arrangement. Alternatively, if Benelux relented, the result of Western European military cooperation would be based on multiple Treaties of Dunkirk, and this would make it difficult for West Germany to join later, thus undermining the long-run ability of Western Europe to resist the Soviet Union. The fact that the US made clear that Western Europe must first demonstrate their unity and determination through an alliance – ideally based on the Rio treaty – provided motivation for Western European countries to set aside their differences and work with each other to create the multilateral Brussels Pact.

Section VI. The Anchor and Free-riding Reduction

The second problem of creating collective action when the good in question is a threshold public good is free-riding. In this section, I argue that the presence of an anchor helps reduce free-riding, provided that the anchor adopts certain policies. In the NATO case, the US reduced intra-alliance free-riding and extra-alliance free-riding via military aid policies.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 43.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Subsection A. Extra-alliance Free-riding

Extra-alliance free-riding takes place when countries outside of the alliance (or countries that are not party to the negotiations, if the alliance has not yet formed) enjoy the benefits produced by countries in the alliance.

If the adversary is deterred by the alliance and decides not to pursue expansionary foreign policies *in general*, countries that are not in the alliance benefit just as much as countries that are in the alliance. Free-riding in this sense is unavoidable. But it is possible for the adversary to be deterred from encroaching on countries that are in the alliance but act freely toward countries outside the alliance. In this scenario, security is more like a club good than a pure public good. When this is the case, there would be incentives for countries to join the alliance even if it carries a considerable cost.

Part of the incentives to free-ride cannot be influenced by the alliance, but part of them can be. The part that cannot be influenced is how the adversary would react to the alliance and perceive what it can do. The adversary might be extremely cautious and not dare to challenge the status quo. Alternatively, the adversary might think there is a limit to the resolve of countries in the alliance, and decide to push just short of that limit. How the adversary decides to react cannot be ascertained a priori, not to mention that misperception by the adversary can occur.

The part that *can* be influenced by the alliance is what they would do to safeguard a non-member's security. If the alliance does not do anything, and the non-member gets annexed or becomes a part of the adversary's sphere of influence, this would be to the detriment of the alliance. But if the alliance does as much for a non-member as it would for a member, other non-members will observe that and decide to not join the alliance because free-riding is possible. This too will be to the detriment of the alliance. It is therefore a balancing act for the alliance to

decide what to do toward non-members. And when the alliance is power asymmetric, the policy is, de facto, the anchor's call.

During the expansion from the Brussels Pact to the North Atlantic Treaty, the list of prospective countries that could become a part of the transatlantic alliance was in flux. It was certain that the Brussels Pact members and the US would be in the future alliance if the negotiation would be successful, but beyond that there were many potential candidates.

In order for US troops and war matériel to cross the Atlantic Ocean in great volume and at reasonable speed, the US required some “stepping stones” – countries that could provide access to bases (or territory for base construction) as well as general logistical support. The “stones” were Iceland, Greenland (Danish territory), Spitsbergen (Norwegian territory), the Azores (Portuguese territory) and possibly Ireland.⁷⁷

Among Scandinavian countries, Sweden made an effort to form a neutralist Scandinavian Defense Union.⁷⁸ If any of the Scandinavian states could remain neutral and still obtain military aid from the US – i.e. free-riding – this would be a tempting option. Norway made the appeal to US officials that it would be to US advantage to strengthen Norway even if Norway was non-aligned.⁷⁹ While Sweden was stridently neutral, US Ambassador H. Freeman Matthews stated that the Swedes firmly believed that regardless of neutrality “the US will ultimately come to Sweden's military aid.” The belief was based “partly on an exaggerated view of the strategic importance of Sweden to the US and partly on the complacent assumption that since Swedish

⁷⁷ Kaplan, Lawrence S. *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years*. University Press of Kentucky, 2014, 83.

⁷⁸ Petersen, Nikolaj. “Danish and Norwegian Alliance Policies 1948-49: A Comparative Analysis.” *Cooperation and Conflict* 14, no. 3 (1979): 193–210.

⁷⁹ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 280.

sympathies are all with the west [*sic*] the US must regard her as an ally to be helped.” In fact, the Swedish Foreign Office and the general public thought “by constantly proclaiming Swedish neutrality Sweden is in fact rendering a service to the US by ‘doing nothing to upset the tranquility of this area.’”⁸⁰

The US firmly and consistently maintained that a one-sided commitment would not be possible. Lovett informed Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Halvard Lange that US military assistance would be allocated based on the Vandenberg Resolution, i.e., the US would prioritize countries in collective defense arrangements with the US. Requests from states that were not in these arrangements “must take places in long queue for residue assistance *if any*.”⁸¹ When Swedish officials inquired Theodore Achilles (head of US State Department’s Office of Western European Affairs) privately if Sweden would be eligible for military assistance if they did not join the treaty, Achilles and Hugh Cummings (counselor of the American embassy in Stockholm) replied that “they would, of course, be eligible – if there was anything left after everyone else’s needs had been taken care of.”⁸²

US officials also made an effort to clarify to Sweden that the assumption behind their neutral policy – i.e., the US would come to their rescue regardless of their neutrality – was not true. Matthews communicated to Sven Grafström (Political Director of the Swedish Foreign Office) that by proclaiming neutrality, the Swedish government was in effect “[warning] the United States that it did not want help.” Matthews also noted that “one cannot expect the United

⁸⁰ Ibid, 97.

⁸¹ Værnø, Grethe. “The United States, Norway, and the Atlantic Pact, 1948–1949.” *Scandinavian Studies* 50, no. 2 (1978): 150–76, 173

⁸² Achilles, Theodore Carter. *Fingerprints on History: The NATO Memoirs of Theodore C. Achilles*, 1992, 28.

States to go to war to help a neutral which is unwilling to join with other free nations in the common interest of the Western free world and share common risks and responsibilities.”⁸³

Although Sweden ultimately decided to remain neutral, it did do so knowing that it could not count on US rescue.

This ally-only aid policy was decisive in both Norway’s and Denmark’s ultimate participation in the North Atlantic pact, and their participation in turn enabled North American military personnel and resources to cross the Atlantic Ocean efficiently, thus strengthening the alliance’s ability to deter the USSR. The neutralist Scandinavian Defense Union never materialized.

Subsection B. Intra-alliance Free-riding

Intra-alliance free-riding takes place when some members do not pay their fair share. Even in alliances where some members are much more powerful than others, there are ways for smaller members to contribute. In the case of Western Europe, it was true that, in the early-Cold War period, all Western European countries were still recovering from WWII. Even if they pooled their resources, it would not be adequate against a behemoth that was the Soviet Union. But there were still steps they could take to integrate their militaries so that, at some point in the future, when their economies recovered, their militaries could function as one and be self-sufficient against any great power threat. But integration was not easy. It required countries to relinquish control over aspects of their militaries, such as command, military planning, decisions on what military equipment to produce, where defense resources would be allocated, how personnel would be trained, etc. It would take a great deal of time and effort to carry out the

⁸³ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 114.

integration. It was easier to not take the steps to integrate – or to delay as much as possible – and ask the anchor to bear the whole burden of defense indefinitely. Instead of the anchor serving as a temporary shield while regional states build themselves up, there was interest for regional states to stay just weak enough so the anchor would never leave. In this case, it would be important for the anchor to structure incentives properly. One way to do that was to attach conditions to benefits. For instance, if allies wanted to receive certain benefits, they must take steps to achieve integration. American demand that Western European states needed to demonstrate their unity through a regional treaty prior to talks on any transatlantic alliance was an example.

Another effective tool to achieve this purpose was military aid. Because the anchor could control the flow of military aid to only allies, access to military aid served as an incentive to join the alliance, thus reducing extra-alliance free-riding. If the anchor made genuine military cooperation among regional states in negotiation a condition of receiving military aid, the aid would serve a double purpose to reduce intra-alliance free-riding.

After the five Western European states signed the Brussels Pact, there was a lull in their collective action. Signing the alliance should begin concrete military integration, but some of the Brussels Pact members thought that unless the US provided a firm commitment – the negotiation for the North Atlantic Treaty was in progress and it would not conclude for another year – there was not much that Western European states could do. Bevin told Douglas, US ambassador to Britain, that “the French were disposed to hold back and go slow on the grounds that there was little the five signatory powers could do against the overwhelming strength of the Soviet, unless

the US were committed to come promptly to their support.”⁸⁴ Douglas replied that “whatever [the US] did would be conditioned largely upon the clear and unmistakable determination of western Europe to defend itself.”⁸⁵ Sentiments expressed by the French were “precisely the attitude which, among other things might deter the US from making any commitment.”

In addition to waiting for US commitment before doing the work of military integration, some Western European countries expected to receive military aid bilaterally from the US through the resumption of the Lend-Lease program, which had ended after Japan’s surrender. During WWII, through the Lend-Lease program the US transferred \$50 billion’s worth of war matériel – ranging from warships, weapons to oil – to a range of countries. Almost a fifth of the US’ expenditure in the entire war went to the Lend-Lease program.⁸⁶ Non-consumable war matériels were supposed to be returned to the US after the war, but what happened was that they were sold at a steep discount for the allies to keep. As Lovett characterized, the Lend-Lease program was very much a “one-way street of assistance.”⁸⁷

Multiple countries made an appeal to restart the Lend-Lease program. Norwegian Foreign Minister Lange inquired if it would be possible for his country to receive military supplies on a Lend-Lease basis without participating in a formal regional arrangement.⁸⁸ French ambassador Henri Bonnet emphasized that France was “in urgent need” of war matériel and its requests for military assistance should “receive immediate attention.”⁸⁹ Other European officials made the

⁸⁴ Ibid, 89.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ McNeill, William H. *America, Britain, and Russia, Their Co-Operation and Conflict, 1941-1946*. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970, 778.

⁸⁷ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 220.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 280.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 220.

point to Jefferson Caffery (US ambassador to France) that “experience in lend-lease, post-war loans, et cetera, has established experience in carrying on negotiations on bilateral basis in Washington and tendency is to assume that this will be repeated.”⁹⁰

Internally, the NSC decided on the policy (NSC 9/3) that the US National Military Establishment (predecessor of the Department of Defense) would participate in military conversations with Brussels Pact powers and made it clear that the Marshall Plan should act as a precedent. The report also stated that Brussels Pact states should plan coordinated defense “with the means presently available.”⁹¹ In other words, they should not make military plans that would rely on the US providing a large amount of military resources quickly. Furthermore, the Brussels Pact powers should determine how their collective military potential could be increased by coordinated production and supply, including standardization of equipment. These would be prerequisites of US consideration and screening of military aid request from Western Europe.

Externally, Lovett sent a list of questions to Brussels Pact states concerning the degree of defense integration they planned to achieve. The questions covered the pooling of manpower and resources, standardization of equipment, harmonization of military organization, the size of force the five powers could assemble in the air and at sea, as well as a plan of military action before American help would become available. The answers were expected before the conversation between the US and the Brussels Pacts powers would begin.⁹² The list of questions served three functions: it showed that the US cared a great deal about military integration among Western European states; it prodded Western European states to have the conversations about military

⁹⁰ Ibid, 405.

⁹¹ Ibid, 140.

⁹² Ibid, 124.

integration and make difficult decisions; and the reply Western European states sent back to the US served as a written commitment of what military integration they planned to achieve. In addition to the list of questions on military integration, in the first meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks, Lovett emphasized that the expression “military lend lease” was unpopular in the US, and the Senate emphasized “self-help” and “mutual aid” in the Vandenberg Resolution because they wanted to prevent the transatlantic arrangement from becoming another Lend-Lease program.⁹³

US expectations spurred substantial efforts by Western European states toward military integration. Shortly after Douglas’ conversation with Bevin, the Brussels Pact states started military talks. As Pierre Henri Teitgen, French Minister of Armed Forces, described, they set up a “four story edifice” with national defense ministers on the “top floor,” the Chiefs of Staff on the “third floor,” the Ambassador’s Committee on the “second floor,” and a committee of special military representatives on the “first floor.”⁹⁴ Responding to Lovett’s questions on military integration became the first task of the military committee.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the committee of military representatives from all Brussels Pact countries began a joint study of issues to be resolved in order to set up a common command and with a similar system of supply and communications.⁹⁶ The goal was that all five states’ formations and units would be “comparable in strength” and they would operate alongside each other efficiently. Adding to that, the military committee began to inventory all the mobilizable and potential military forces and resources.⁹⁷

⁹³ Ibid, 151.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 112.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 124.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 125.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

There was admittedly a great deal of difference between what the Brussels Pact states said they would do and actual progress. The five states did tackle the (relatively) easier task of command integration. A Commanders-in-Chief committee was soon established in Fontainebleau, with British Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery as the chairman and French general Jean de Lattre de Tassigny as the commander-in-chief of the land forces.⁹⁸ But there was more friction in standardizing equipment and merging defense production. An Army Standardization and Inventory Subcommittee was created to manage weapons and equipment, and a military supply board was created to take care of distributing logistical services to WUDO members. Still, the various committees missed deadlines in creating inventories, and the ones made were a good deal briefer and more incomplete than what was promised.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, more progress in military integration was made than the alternative in which all Brussels Pact states would adopt the French mindset that nothing could be done unless the US provided a firm security guarantee.

The presence of an anchor, by itself, was not sufficient to reduce extra- and intra-alliance free-riding. There was no doubt that the anchor brought with it a range of club goods that could be distributed to potential allies, but it was the way it chose to distribute those goods that reduced free-riding and facilitated collective military action. By withholding benefits from non-allies, the anchor provided incentives for states that were on the fence to join the alliance. By tying military integration among regional states to the transfer of military aid, the policy encouraged the

⁹⁸ Kaplan (2007), chapter 6.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 156.

creation of institutions that would enable the group of regional states to be self-sufficient in the long run.

Section VII. The Anchor and Negotiation

In this section, I will discuss the impact of the US on North Atlantic Treaty negotiations. If the previous sections painted a picture that the anchor had the wherewithal to shape collective action to its preferences, this section should show the limits.

In Snyder's (2007) theory of alliance formation, he stated that there could be a bargaining range where all parties value the alliance under negotiation higher than their best alternative. An alliance will form, but "its terms are indeterminate." The negotiation decides the terms.

When preferences among countries in negotiation diverge, the anchor's importance to the alliance should, generally, give it a great deal of leverage to negotiate a final outcome that is close to its preferences. Nonetheless, if a regional state with divergent preferences is important to the alliance, the anchor might have to make significant concessions.

During the North Atlantic Treaty negotiation process, the most controversial issue was the membership. As Poast (2019) showed, parties in the negotiation disagreed on the geographic reach of the Soviet threat. The US and Britain thought that Northern Europe would be the most at risk, thus the inclusion of Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Denmark was critical. France was concerned about the USSR's influence over Southern Europe, particularly the possibility of Italy joining the communist bloc. Furthermore, France wanted its North African colonies to be included in the treaty. Ideally, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia would be included. At minimum, the treaty must cover Algeria, which was considered a part of metropolitan France at the time.

Different parties from multiple countries were against the inclusion of Algeria and Italy. The US Foreign Relations Committee insisted that the US should not be put in a position of going to war to uphold colonialism.¹⁰⁰ Lovett and Kennan viewed that treaty membership should be confined to the North Atlantic community only.¹⁰¹ Otherwise, as Lovett stated, the alliance would “get into a mid-European, Near Eastern or Mediterranean group.”¹⁰² Britain, Canada and the Netherlands opposed for the same reasons. Moreover, the representatives argued that Italy could not contribute militarily to the alliance under the conditions of the peace treaty. Belgium was not in principle opposed to the inclusion of Italy if it was favored by other governments.¹⁰³

France refused to back down. Bonnet stated that France would oppose Norway’s entry to the pact unless Italy would be included.¹⁰⁴ France gave the ultimatum on March 1, 1949. Bonnet said that if Norway would be included but not Algeria or Italy, France would have to reconsider its participation in the North Atlantic Treaty.¹⁰⁵ Norway, as Lovett made clear in the Washington Exploratory Talks, was crucial to the pact.¹⁰⁶ Norway’s Spitsbergen was one of the stepping stones between North America and Western Europe. On top of that, Norway was at the time facing clear and present danger. In February 1949, Stalin offered Norway a non-aggression pact, which Norway did not accept.¹⁰⁷ The US had three choices: (i) pick France and lose Norway, but this would leave Norway in the lurch; (ii) pick Norway and lose France, but defending Central

¹⁰⁰ Achilles, 23.

¹⁰¹ Reid, Escott. *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947-1949*. McClelland & Stewart, 1977, 201-202.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 201.

¹⁰³ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 341.

¹⁰⁴ Bagnato, 105.

¹⁰⁵ Wall, Irwin M. *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 146.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS, 1948, Volume III, 159.

¹⁰⁷ Bagnato, 105.

Europe without France's support would be unimaginable; (iii) include Algeria and Italy in order to keep both France and Norway. This, admittedly, made the scope of the treaty broader than what the US wanted, but it was the lesser evil. The day after France gave the ultimatum, Acheson met with Truman to discuss the issue, and said "we had to believe them."¹⁰⁸ Truman gave in. In addition to including Algeria and Italy in the treaty, France also got a US promise of a Military Assistance Pact before any other Brussels Pact countries did.¹⁰⁹

France made some concessions as well. Ideally, the entire French Maghreb should be covered by the treaty, not just Algeria. But the compromise that France made was less than what the US and other parties in the negotiation made. Because the Central Front could not be defended without France, France had significant bargaining power despite its inadequate military capabilities in 1948-1949. Overall, the negotiation showed that an anchored alliance formation would be more likely to succeed, but the exact terms of the alliance might not always track the anchor's preference.

Section VIII. Chapter Conclusion

Against a large threat like the USSR, deterrence became a threshold public good with an intermediate threshold. To make collective action happen, two problems must be solved: participants must be assured of the viability of deterrence, and free-riding needed to be reduced. In this chapter, I hope I have shown that the presence of an anchor lessened these problems.

Even though the US was not party to the Brussels Pact negotiations, its "shadow anchoring" still significantly shaped the incentives of Western European states. This differed

¹⁰⁸ Wall, 146.

¹⁰⁹ Wall, 147; FRUS, 1949, Volume IV, 147.

dramatically from the formation process of the Pacific Pact, in which the US unequivocally rejected participating in the alliance. Although US response to forming an alliance with Western European countries was a “maybe,” it was not an empty “maybe.” The US still left its troops in Germany while Western European countries were working out their differences. And through the Marshall Plan, the US demonstrated that it was committed to reconstructing Europe. It also showed that, when the US government asked European countries to come up with programs themselves before the US promised support, it was not just a delaying tactic. If US troops had returned to America, and if the Marshall Plan never happened, Brussels Pact states might never trust the sincerity of US demands enough to achieve the deep military integration necessary for the US to concretely explore the possibility of a transatlantic treaty.

US military aid policy was significant in reducing free-riding, both extra-alliance and intra-alliance. Scandinavian states hoped to receive US military assistance and remain neutral. But the US made clear that a one-way street would not be possible. Sweden still took its chances, but Norway and Denmark did not and decided to join NATO. And with their accession, the two “stepping stones” – Norway’s Spitsbergen and Denmark’s Greenland – were secured. As for intra-alliance free-riding, the US made the policy that any military aid requests from Western European states must be submitted on a joint basis. This provided incentives for Western European states to begin standardizing their equipment, integrating their weapons production, and taking inventory of all mobilizable and potential resources. The Brussels Pact states also established WUDO, which combined military command and war-planning. Absent US demand, Western European states could adopt France’s view that there was nothing they could do before the US provided a security guarantee.

But the power of the anchor was not without limits. As the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty showed, if some members with divergent preferences had unique leverage, such as France, the anchor would have to accept a final outcome that diverged from its preferences.

There was no question that, throughout the alliance formation process, the Soviet threat loomed large. But by itself – not knowing the actions and attitudes of an external great power – it was not enough to predict whether Western European states would be extremely cautious and refrain from taking actions that might be perceived by the Soviet Union as provocative, or whether they would take the risk to integrate their militaries. The presence of the anchor and the policies it carried out to foster collective action made the difference.

Chapter 4. Multilateral Alliance Formation in Early-Cold War Southeast Asia

...[For] the interests of the international revolution, [the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)] should make some division of labor: [the CCP] may take more responsibility in working in the East, on those colonial and semi-colonial countries, so that you will play a more significant role there; and [the CPSU] will take more responsibility in the West, and work more on the West.¹

– Joseph Stalin, July 1949

Section I. Introduction

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (more commonly known as “the Manila Pact”), which served as the basis for the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), was signed on September 8, 1954 by delegates from the US, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan. The Manila Pact was a defensive alliance that covered the general area of Southeast Asia, though the commitment was weaker than that in the North Atlantic Treaty. The treaty stipulated that, in the event of “aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area,” “[the parties] will...act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”² Whether the action would be military in nature was not specified; by contrast, the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) equated an attack on one as an attack on all, and mentioned “the use of armed force” as a possible response.

Besides the strength of defensive commitment, SEATO also differed from NATO in its institutional design. NATO featured a joint standing force with troop contributions from every member country. The military command was also centralized. By contrast, SEATO was a consultative arrangement. The treaty designated a council for foreign ministers of member

¹ Zhe, Shi, and Chen Jian, “With Mao and Stalin: The Reminiscences of Mao’s Interpreter Part II: Liu Shaoqi in Moscow,” *Chinese Historians* 6, no. 1 (April 1993): 67–90, 85.

² “Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact).” Accessed October 20, 2021. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu003.asp.

countries to meet from time to time. But there was no joint force or joint command. NATO and SEATO were similar in that both were defensive alliances headed by the US, but there existed considerable differences.

Relative to the study of NATO, there has been scant scholarly attention on SEATO. There have been four books – Modelski (1962); Buszynski (1983); Fenton (2012); and Guan (2021) – devoted to the study of SEATO. Among them, only Buszynski and Guan delved into the formation process in considerable detail. Nevertheless, using a historical approach, the foci of Buszynski and Guan were not to develop a generalizable theory of alliance formation.

In the broader area of study – alliance formation in Asia during the Cold War – researchers tended to focus on why the US opted to create bilateral alliances with its *East* Asian allies, as opposed to establishing an equivalent of NATO in Asia. Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002) argued that American decision makers' strong cultural identification with Europe as well as prejudice that Asian states were not equals led the US to pursue bilateral arrangements in Asia, which maximized US dominance over its allies. He and Feng (2012) argued that US policymakers' perception of threat was the primary driver. As leaders judged that the threat level was higher in Europe than in Asia, it was deemed worthwhile to enter into a multilateral alliance with Western European states, where the prospect of getting help from multiple allies outweighed the risk of lower freedom of action. Rather than external threat, Cha (2016) asserted that US desire to control Asian allies was the main explanatory factor of its alliance strategies. The need to constrain leaders in Taiwan and Korea from pulling the US into unwanted conflicts, as well as the goal to control Japan's political and economic recovery in a direction that suited US interest, motivated the US to pick bilateral arrangements which increased US leverage on

individual allies. Nonetheless, the heart of this literature was the form of the alliance – bilateral or multilateral – as opposed to why the alliances arose in the first place.

Section II. Argument and Chapter Layout

In this chapter, I seek to explain why SEATO formed. I argue that US willingness to anchor the formation process was crucial to the successful establishment of SEATO. Non-communist Asian states had long recognized the magnitude of communist threat and the need for a coordinated regional response. This was exemplified by the effort to form the Pacific Pact in 1949-1950. But without US support at the time, a range of regional states viewed the endeavor to be an exercise in futility, and a pan-Asian alliance did not coalesce.

Originally motivated to boost France's negotiation position in the Geneva Conference, the US played an active and public role in pushing for a regional alliance in 1954. Given US involvement, regional states that previously doubted the Pacific Pact took the proposal much more seriously. During the negotiation process, despite divergent preferences in the treaty's institutional design, US leverage was crucial in pushing select countries to compromise, which led to the signing of the Manila Pact.

The rest of this chapter comprises five sections. Section III discusses the rise of the communist threat in Asia (scope condition). Section IV delves into the explanatory variable (anchor availability). Sections V and VI are on the two anchor functions: viability assurance and free-riding reduction. Section VII dissects how anchor presence impacted the negotiation process.

Section III. Rising Communist Threat

The communist movement began to take root in Southeast Asia as early as 1920.³ In fact, the very first communist party established in Asia was in the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). Although the communist ideology was transnational, the way the movement developed in Southeast Asia was inextricably bound with nationalism and anti-colonialism.

The role communist groups played in resistance against Japan during WWII strengthened their legitimacy and credibility. In addition, as part of broad anti-Japanese fronts, some Southeast Asian communist parties received Allied training in guerrilla fighting, weapons and supplies.⁴ During the post-war era, communist leaders in the Philippines and Malaya were particularly successful in co-opting the guerrilla forces for their agenda.⁵ In Indochina, the communists were able to steer the broader nationalist movement in a favorable direction.⁶

The strength of the communist movement in Southeast Asia was the result of both domestic and international factors. Both the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau and the CCP played a significant role in the establishment and growth of multiple Southeast Asian communist parties. CCP cadres were sent to Thailand, Singapore and Malaya in order to "[proselytize]" specifically among the Chinese diaspora, which numbered nearly three million in Southeast Asia by 1925.⁷ In 1926, the CCP created a "South Seas Committee" to connect "'national revolutionary'

³ Van der Kroef, Justus Maria. *Communism and South-East Asia*. Macmillan, 1981.

⁴ Ibid, 27, 28, 36.

⁵ Ibid, 19.

⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁷ Ibid, 7.

organizations” in Indochina, Burma, Thailand, Malaya and Indonesia.⁸ Later on, the South Seas Communist Party emerged as a regional organization.

When the CCP won the Chinese Civil War in 1949, not only did it reinvigorate other national communist movements in the region but it also freed up military resources to export to other communist groups. Mao stated that, “since our revolution has achieved victory, we have an obligation to help others. This is called internationalism.”⁹ China’s aid was crucial as Stalin prioritized helping European communist movements, as shown in the epigraph of this chapter. When Ho Chi Minh travelled to Moscow to request assistance, Stalin told Ho that assisting the Viet Minh would be primarily “a Chinese business.”¹⁰

The reorientation of Chinese military resources to neighboring states began soon after the formal establishment of the People’s Republic. In early 1950, the CCP established the Chinese Military Advisory Group to assist the Viet Minh in the First Indochina War against France. Chinese advisors trained Viet Minh troops and devised strategies for the Cao Bang border campaign and the Northwest campaign, both of which were crucial to the Viet Minh’s later victory in the siege of Dien Bien Phu.¹¹ Some leaders of non-communist Asian states sought external help even before the CCP secured victory in the Chinese Civil War. But whether and which state would be willing and able to supply the assistance necessary were the foremost questions.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ McMahon, Robert J. *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia Since World War II*. Columbia University Press, 1999, 41.

¹⁰ Zhai, Qiang. “Transplanting the Chinese Model: Chinese Military Advisers and the First Vietnam War, 1950-1954.” *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 4 (1993), 693.

¹¹ Ibid.

Section IV. Anchor Availability

During the early-Cold War period, did Southeast Asia have an anchor?

In the theory chapter, I defined the anchor to be a country that is willing and able to supply assistance to regional states to counter the regional threat. My conception of how able the anchor must be is more stringent than Pape's (2005) definition, which only required the anchor state(s) to be able to "mount a reasonable defense" against the adversary "at least for a time." My definition requires the anchor to be able to have a reasonable chance at not losing¹² for the entire (possible) war, not just for the initial period.

Operationally, a country is considered to be *willing* to defend a region if: (i) it has sent or is willing to send troops to fight or station in that region; and/or (ii) it has extended or is in the process of extending a public and formal commitment to supply assistance if a regional state comes under attack. When a country is willing to defend only a portion of the region, I consider its willingness to be partial.

A country is *able* to be an anchor when its material power exceeds or approximately matches that of the adversary. By "adversary" I mean the "source" country from which the regional threat emanates. In the case of early-Cold War Southeast Asia, it was China. To compare different countries' material power, I employ the Correlates of War project's Composite Index of National Capability (CINC), which captures aspects of military power and latent power. A country "matches" the adversary if its CINC is no less than 90% of the adversary's score. Where relevant, I will also add information about other demands a country faced, such as wars or major military commitments in another region.

¹²Borrowed from Monteiro's (2014) definition of a great power.

In this and subsequent sections, I focus on two periods: 1949 and 1954. In both periods, Asian communists were coming close to or have achieved major settlements. In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party won the Chinese Civil War. In 1954, the Viet Minh won the First Indochina War. Thus, in both periods, threat levels were high. This case selection criterion does not rule out threat as an explanation. But if there are still variations in the outcome variables, it shows that threat alone cannot account for the outcome.

Subsection A. Main Providers of Security in Pre-WWII Southeast Asia

Prior to WWII, with the exception of Thailand, all of Southeast Asia was colonized. The US controlled the Philippines. Britain controlled Malaya, Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore. France controlled Indochina. The Netherlands controlled Indonesia. Internal and external security were supplied by the metropolitan government with personnel recruited from both the center and the periphery.

WWII upended this arrangement. Japan occupied Southeast Asia throughout the war. When Japan surrendered, nationalists in Indochina and Indonesia declared independence before colonial military personnel could return. The Philippines and Burma, on the other hand, gained independence with the acquiescence of the US and Britain, respectively. Below I will go through each (former) colonial power's willingness and ability to defend the region in 1949 and 1954.

Subsection B. The US

Sub-subsection i. 1949 Willingness

American ties to Southeast Asia prior to the Cold War were mostly through its colony the Philippines. In 1946, the Philippines became independent without a violent struggle. This is a key distinction. Generally, new states that obtained their independence through a bloody conflict tend to eschew ties with the former colonial power. When new states were granted independence

peacefully, some ties between that state and the former colonial power remain. Many former British colonies, for instance, joined the Commonwealth. Some former colonial powers also provided security guarantees to colonies upon independence. Britain, for example, established the Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement when Malaya became independent in 1957.

In 1949, the US had not yet committed to providing a security guarantee to the Philippines. Nonetheless, there were substantial security ties. The US signed a Military Base Agreement with the Philippines in 1947, which allowed the US to retain the use of 16 bases/military reservations, including Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. The US also signed a Military Assistance Agreement with the Philippines in 1947, which formally established a Joint US Military Advisory Group to advise and train the Philippine armed forces. The agreement further authorized the transfer of \$169 million's worth of military aid and matériel to the Philippines.

Still, the US was unwilling to underwrite the security of the whole region in 1949. Beginning from late 1949, the Philippines, Nationalist China, and Korea sought to create the Pacific Pact, which was conceptualized to be an Asian NATO. The US was not interested in joining. Given widespread anti-colonial sentiments throughout Asia, American officials thought if the US headed a military bloc, it might be accused of imperialism.¹³ Additionally, State Department officials suspected that the pact was Korean president Syngman Rhee and Nationalist Chinese president Chiang Kai-Shek's strategy to extract more aid from the US.¹⁴ The State Department policy planning staff thus recommended that the US "should avoid at the outset

¹³ McIntyre, W. David. *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policy-Makers, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945-55*. Springer, 1994.

¹⁴FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1161.

urging an area organization.”¹⁵ As a result, the US took the position that it would not lead the creation of a Pacific pact; the initiative should be taken by Asian states.¹⁶ Secretary of State Dean Acheson released a formal press statement in May 1949, in which he stated unequivocally that “the United States [was] not currently considering participation in any further special collective defense arrangements other than the North Atlantic Treaty.”¹⁷

The willingness of the US to defend Southeast Asia in 1949 was at most partial as its security interests were limited to the Philippines.

Sub-subsection ii. 1954 Willingness

By 1954, the US was willing to lead the creation of a multilateral security arrangement for Southeast Asia. The impetus was the impending Geneva Conference in April to settle both the Korean War and the First Indochina War. The Korean War was at a stalemate. In the First Indochina War, the Viet Minh, with substantial Chinese military aid, defeated the French decisively.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles thought that if non-communist states in the region formed a united front, it would facilitate an “honorable” peace settlement since it would present “a strong alternative” to the communists.¹⁸ Given French defeat in Dien Bien Phu, it was not implausible that the Viet Minh would strive to gain control over the entire Vietnam in the

¹⁵Ibid, 1130.

¹⁶Ibid, 1189.

¹⁷Ibid, 1143.

¹⁸Kim, Benedict Sang-Joon. “The United States and SEATO.” Doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1964, 30.

conference. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden thought the plan could endanger the negotiation and urged Dulles to delay it until the conference concluded.¹⁹

Nonetheless, Dulles made public that the US would be willing to take “united action” with Southeast Asian states in a speech titled “The Threat of a Red Asia” before the Overseas Press Club of America in New York City on March 29, 1954.²⁰

Under the conditions of today, the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole free community. The United States feels that that possibility should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action. This might involve serious risks. But these risks are far less than those that will face us a few years from now if we dare not be resolute today.²¹

Dulles heeded Eden’s advice to delay publicizing the details of the plan, but in private, he continued to develop how this “united action” could take place. Dulles envisioned an ad hoc grouping of ten states: the US, Britain (including its Southeast Asian colonies), France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and the three Associated State of Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam).²² In his plan to Eisenhower, this group would issue a joint warning to China: if it continued to aid the Viet Minh, the group would intervene militarily, even on the ground if necessary. Additionally, the group could carry out bombing raids against selected targets in China.²³ Eventually, this group of states would constitute a collective defense mechanism in Southeast Asia.

¹⁹ Ibid, 37-38.

²⁰ Ibid, 31.

²¹ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 400.

²² Kim, 32.

²³ Ibid.

Even as the Geneva talks were still in session, the US began to plan for the collective security arrangement. From June 2 to June 11, representatives from Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand met in Washington to discuss with US officials the military aspects of defense in Southeast Asia.²⁴ A joint US-UK study group created a draft treaty in June and July.²⁵ Council meetings of the Australia, New Zealand, United States (ANZUS) Security Treaty also became occasions to plan for the Southeast Asian collective security arrangement.²⁶ In mid-August, the US announced that it, alongside Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan would confer in early September to discuss creating a pact for Southeast Asia.

The US sought allies, but records showed that the US was willing to intervene in Southeast Asia unilaterally if necessary. In an ANZUS meeting, Dulles stated that, in the event of open Communist Chinese aggression, the US would “regard such a threat so seriously that the President would go to our Congress to ask for war powers.” Dulles said he hoped Australia and New Zealand would “[stand] with [the US]” but the US “might have to stand alone on it.” In a NSC meeting, Dulles reiterated that the US should not “let the willingness of our Pacific allies to concert with us become a condition to our action to repel overt Chinese Communist aggression.”²⁷ Thus, US willingness to defend Southeast Asia in 1954 should be considered as full.

²⁴ Ibid, 43.

²⁵ Franklin, John K. *The Hollow Pact: Pacific Security and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization*. 2006, 122.

²⁶ Ibid, 123.

²⁷ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 534.

Sub-subsection iii. 1949 Ability

The US' CINC (1949): 27.32% of global material power

China's CINC (1949): 10.41%

The US emerged a victor in WWII. Because it entered the war later than other countries, it suffered relatively fewer casualties. Its continental homeland was also unscathed, which limited the amount of reconstruction it had to carry out after the war.

The post-war economic boom meant that the US government was able to fund extensive international military and economic aid programs. The US launched the Marshall Plan in 1948, which provided \$5 billion's worth of aid to 16 European countries. In Asia, most of American aid had gone to Nationalist China; in 1948, Congress allocated \$400 million.²⁸ But as CCP victory became more and more certain, the State Department began to divert aid for China to a generalized fund for the Far East, of which Southeast Asia was considered a part.

The post-war years also saw an expansion of US international commitment. The US inked the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (more commonly known as the "Rio Pact") with 23 countries in the Americas. In 1949, the US signed the North Atlantic Treaty with 10 European states as well as Canada. As the American network of allies grew, the requests for military aid also mounted.

Overall, the US had the ability to intervene unilaterally in Southeast Asia and help Southeast Asian states to resist China if it wanted to. But the political will had not yet crystallized in 1949.

²⁸ Feaver, John H. "The China Aid Bill of 1948: Limited Assistance as a Cold War Strategy." *Diplomatic History* 5, no. 2 (1981): 107–20.

Sub-subsection iv. 1954 Ability

The US' CINC (1954): 28.09%

China's CINC (1954): 9.44%

By 1954, the US had spent three years fighting in the Korean War. At its height, the US sent more than 326,000 troops.²⁹ In comparison, China sent 2.3 million “volunteers” to fight in the Korean War.³⁰ This led Dulles to conclude that, since China's vast land army could not be matched, the US needed to think in terms of mobile striking power with strategically placed reserves.³¹

American international commitments expanded further. In exchange for accepting a non-punitive peace treaty for Japan, the US extended security guarantees to the Philippines (via a mutual defense treaty), Australia and New Zealand (via ANZUS). A US-Japan alliance treaty also accompanied the 1951 peace treaty. In 1953, the US established a mutual defense treaty with South Korea. As for its commitments in Europe, in 1954 the US assigned 350,000 troops – around 10.6% of all US military personnel – to the European Command as West Germany planned to establish the Bundeswehr in 1955.³²

In terms of international aid, starting from 1951, the US replaced the Marshall Plan with the Mutual Security Act to distribute military, economic, and technical foreign aid. In Southeast

²⁹ Kane, Tim. “Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2005.” The Heritage Foundation. Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2005>.

³⁰ Yan, Xu, and Li Xizo-Bing. “The Chinese Forces and Their Casualties in the Korean War: Facts and Statistics.” *Chinese Historians* 6, no. 2 (October 1993): 45–58.

³¹ Jha, Ganganath. *Foreign Policy of Thailand*. Radiant Publishers, 1979.

³² Rosato, Sebastian. *Europe United: Power Politics and the Making of the European Community*. Cornell University Press, 2010.

Asia, the US distributed \$374 million (constant 2019 \$) in 1954. By contrast, Europe received \$11 billion (constant 2019 \$).³³

In sum, US material power far exceeded that of China in 1954. While the commitment to Western Europe consumed a substantial level of international aid, there was still a considerable amount of resources to allocate to other parts of the world if the US wanted to do so.

Subsection C. Britain

Sub-subsection i. 1949 Willingness

Despite rapid decolonization after WWII, Britain still controlled large swath of Southeast Asia in 1949. Only Burma obtained independence in 1948. Therefore, Britain still had substantial interest in the region. Militarily, the Sembawang naval base in Singapore was crucial to Britain's defense in the Far East. Economically, Malaya's tin and rubber export to the US played a critical role in offsetting Britain's "dollar gap." When the Malayan Emergency – a de facto guerrilla war against Malayan communists³⁴ – was declared in 1948, the British government was willing to deployed 16 infantry and armored car battalions.³⁵

As for Burma, when it gained independence, the British and the Burmese governments signed a treaty in which the British government "[agreed] to give all reasonable facilities for purchase by the Government of Burma of war material." Britain also committed to send a Naval, Military and Air Force Mission to train personnel for the new Burmese armed forces. There was, however, no security guarantee.

³³ U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook), 1945-2019." Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://foreignassistance.gov/reports>.

³⁴ It was not called a war so insurance companies would compensate for damages to plantations.

³⁵ McGrath, John J. *Boots on the Ground: Troop Density in Contingency Operations*. Combat Studies Institute Press, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2006.

The willingness of Britain to defend Southeast Asia in 1949 was therefore partial as it was limited to only Malaya and Singapore.

Sub-subsection ii. 1954 Willingness

The Malayan Emergency persisted. In 1954, Britain deployed 23 battalions formed into five brigades. Malaya was the third largest destination of British and Commonwealth troops, after West Germany and the Egyptian Canal zone.³⁶

When the US initiated that Western nations and non-Communist Asian countries should take “united action,” Britain and France initially rejected the plan.³⁷ British leaders did change their minds later. However, in order to not derail the Geneva negotiations, Eden asked Dulles to push the effort until after the conference. While Britain was willing to join US effort, its willingness to defend Southeast Asia remained partial, since there was no evidence that Britain would lead the formation of such a pact without the US, or be willing to intervene unilaterally in areas outside of Malaya and Singapore.

Sub-subsection iii. 1949 Ability

Britain’s CINC (1949): 7.08%

China’s CINC (1949): 10.41%

³⁶ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 570.

³⁷ Fineman, Daniel. *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958*. University of Hawaii Press, 1997, 191.

Britain was still recovering from WWII in 1949. The war depleted a quarter of British national wealth.³⁸ To maintain financial solvency, Britain borrowed \$5.5 billion from the US and Canada.³⁹ Even after the war, both France and Britain continued rationing food for years.⁴⁰

There were substantial challenges in providing military aid for Burma and Thailand. The British Ministry of Defense reported that military resources were in short supply, noting that “it is hard to name a country in the world which is not badgering us for arms and equipment.”⁴¹ Even though Foreign Secretary Bevin prioritized Burma’s request, deliveries were made with difficulty and often at reduced volume.⁴² Other countries that also requested British military aid, including India, Pakistan, Egypt, and Italy, did not get any.⁴³

When Thailand requested military aid from the US and Britain, Britain was only able to furnish small arms, ammunitions and radio equipment.⁴⁴ Britain wanted the US to be responsible for supplying jeeps as well as armored vehicles to Thailand. Britain was also unwilling to provide the small arms as grants (which Thailand wanted). Britain insisted on selling, and this became a source of tension.⁴⁵ As a result, Thailand only purchased a portion of what Britain made available.⁴⁶ This showed that Britain had limited capabilities to militarily help Southeast Asian countries in 1949.

³⁸ Reynolds, David. “A ‘Special Relationship’? America, Britain and the International Order Since the Second World War.” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 62, no. 1 (1985): 1–20.

³⁹ “Britain Finally Pays off WWII Debt,” 2006. <http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2006/12/29/britain-finally-pays-off-wwii-debt>.

⁴⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. “Bread Rationing in Britain, July 1946–July 1948.” *Twentieth Century British History* 4, no. 1 (1993): 57–85.

⁴¹ Foley, Matthew. *The Cold War and National Assertion in Southeast Asia: Britain, the United States and Burma, 1948–1962*. Routledge, 2009, 19.

⁴² *Ibid*, 23.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 19.

⁴⁴ Fineman, 85.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

Some Asia-Pacific states – such as Australia and New Zealand – that had relied on British protection before the war started to seek new security arrangements with the US.⁴⁷ Swift Japanese conquest in Asia during WWII showed that Britain did not have adequate resources to defend its colonies as well as Commonwealth countries in the Pacific.⁴⁸ During the war, Australia and New Zealand sought assistance from the US to fight against Japan.⁴⁹ This in turn led them to intensify security cooperation with the US after the war, culminating in the ANZUS treaty.

Summing up, WWII drastically diminished Britain’s ability to continue its pre-war role as security provider in Southeast Asia. The British government adjusted by asking the US to supply military aid to Southeast Asian nations. And regional states also adapted by seeking security assistance from the US.

Sub-subsection iv. 1954 Ability

Britain’s CINC (1954): 5.65%

China’s CINC (1954): 9.44%

Progress in economic recovery remained slow. Annual per capita growth of real output was at 0.9%, which was among the lowest for developed countries.⁵⁰ In Southeast Asia, the Malayan Emergency continued to deplete military resources. In Kenya, the Mau Mau Uprising began in 1952. Suppress the uprising would end up costing Britain £55 million.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Lloyd, Trevor Owen. *The British Empire, 1558-1995*. 2nd ed. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 316.

⁴⁸ Franklin.

⁴⁹ Franklin, 27.

⁵⁰ Cooley, Thomas F., and Lee E. Ohanian. “Postwar British Economic Growth and the Legacy of Keynes.” *Journal of Political Economy* 105, no. 3 (1997): 439–72.

⁵¹ Gerlach, Christian. *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 213.

Some Southeast Asian states appeared to have fully pivoted from seeking security assistance from Britain to the US. Thailand's army and air force were originally British-armed and designed.⁵² But since receiving substantial aid from the US in 1950, Thailand reorganized its army to fit US standards. It borrowed West Point's curriculum, adopted US training techniques, and shaped the general staff after the US model.⁵³ The Philippines, Australia and New Zealand also successfully obtained a security guarantee from the US in 1951 for accepting a "mild" peace treaty with Japan. The fact that Britain was excluded from ANZUS remained a source of contention for British leaders.

Britain continued to provide security for Malaya, but, in other parts of Southeast Asia, it did not seem that Britain could a similar role.

Subsection D. France

Sub-subsection i. 1949 Willingness

Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnamese independence on the day Japan surrendered in September 1945. In the next few years, French forces fought against Vietnamese communists in mainly guerrilla wars. By mid-1949, French Union Forces in Vietnam encompassed nearly 150,000 troops.⁵⁴ Because the war was deeply unpopular in France, to prevent popular opinion from deteriorating, the French government forbade conscripts from metropolitan France from being sent to Indochina. As a result, most of the French Union troops in Vietnam were recruited

⁵² Fineman, 69.

⁵³ Foley.

⁵⁴ Tucker-Jones, Anthony. *Dien Bien Phu: The First Indo-China War, 1946–1954*. Casemate Publishers, 2017.

from other French colonies, including those in North Africa and other parts of Indochina (Laos and Cambodia).⁵⁵

France was determined to keep its empire. There was no doubt about its commitment to defend Indochina against communist forces. However, its interests lied only in Indochina, so its willingness to defend Southeast Asia was partial.

Sub-subsection ii. 1954 Willingness

French defeat in the First Indochina War led to the partition of Vietnam. France also gave up its territorial claims to all of Indochina. Formally, France only had military obligations toward Laos through a Treaty of Friendship and Association signed in 1953.⁵⁶ The treaty stated that the Lao government would allow free circulation of French troops to defend Laos along with the Lao Army. Informally, France hoped to retain a sphere of influence in Indochina sans North Vietnam.⁵⁷ Thus, it wanted the US to protect the status quo established by the Geneva Accords.⁵⁸

Similar to British willingness to defend Southeast Asia in 1954, French willingness was partial and conditional on the US also defending the region.

Sub-subsection iii. 1949 Ability

France's CINC (1949): 3.55%

China's CINC (1949): 10.41%

France was devastated by WWII. It had been under Nazi occupation from 1940 to 1945. Throughout the war, the French economy was siphoned to fund Nazi war effort. At its height in

⁵⁵ Tucker-Jones; Rice-Maximin.

⁵⁶ Stuart-Fox, Martin. *A History of Laos*. Cambridge University Press, 1997, 83.

⁵⁷ Brands, Henry William. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*. Oxford University Press, 1992, 258.

⁵⁸ Buszynski, 42.

1943, 55% of France's GDP was transferred to German authorities.⁵⁹ After the war, there was extensive need to reconstruct the country and France, along with other European countries, relied on Marshall Plan funds to do so.

Indochina was not the only international concern the French government had. In its North African colonies, there were agitating independence movements. In Europe, France had to cope with the Soviet threat. In February 1948, with Soviet backing, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia overthrew the sitting government. While the North Atlantic Treaty successfully brought in the US to Western European defense, the prospect of restoring the West German economy concerned French leaders.

All in all, in 1949, France was scarcely able to fight against communists in Vietnam. It was not in a position to provide security for the entire region.

Sub-subsection iv. 1954 Ability

France's CINC (1954): 3.3%

China's CINC (1954): 9.44%

In 1954, the Viet Minh gained a decisive victory against French forces, even though France had begun to receive US military assistance through its membership in NATO. From 1950 to 1954, the US transferred \$2.6 billion's worth of military aid to France and Associated States (South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia).⁶⁰ Notwithstanding US assistance, the cost of the war

⁵⁹ Occhino, Filippo, Kim Oosterlinck, and Eugene N. White. "How Occupied France Financed Its Own Exploitation in World War II." *American Economic Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 295–99, 2.

⁶⁰ Rice-Maximin, 147.

ballooned to \$6.8 billion.⁶¹ Pierre Mendès-France was elected as the French Premier to end the war. The French public was war-weary and no longer wanted military involvement in Indochina.

Both in terms of military capabilities and domestic politics, France would not be able to serve as anchor for Southeast Asia.

Subsection E. The Netherlands

Sub-subsection i. 1949 Willingness

Indonesian nationalists declared independence three days after Japan surrendered. Like France, the Netherlands wanted to keep its colony. By November 1946, the Netherlands deployed 55,000 troops to Indonesia. One year later, the number increased to 100,000.⁶² Dutch ability to maintain substantial military presence in Indonesia relied almost entirely on diverting aid the Netherlands received through the Marshall Plan.⁶³

However, American and international public opinion grew increasingly unfavorable toward Dutch effort in suppressing the Indonesian independence movement, particularly after the first “Police Action” (*Politioenele Acties*), a major military offensive in Java and Sumatra. This led to the introduction of the Brewster amendment in US Congress, which linked a settlement in Indonesia to Congressional approval of funds to European economic and defense programs.⁶⁴ Acheson conveyed to Dutch leaders clearly in March 1949 that there would be “no chance whatever of the Congress authorizing funds for military supplies to the Netherlands” unless the

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Tucker, Spencer C. *The Roots and Consequences of Independence Wars: Conflicts That Changed World History*. 2018, 311.

⁶³ McMahon, Robert J. *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-49*. Cornell University Press, 1981, 286.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 276.

Netherlands would enter into meaningful negotiations with Indonesian republican leaders.⁶⁵ The Dutch government finally recognized Indonesia's independence in December 1949. With Indonesia's independence, Dutch interest in Southeast Asia vastly diminished.

Sub-subsection ii. 1954 Willingness

By 1954 the Netherlands had no considerable political interest in Southeast Asia. It is worth noting that the Netherlands' situation in Indonesia was different from that of France in Indochina in 1954. With the settlement of the Geneva Conference, France relinquished its claims to Indochina. But France still had substantial influence over newly independent South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia because these three states gained their independence amicably. France's relationship with South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia was similar to that between the Philippines and the US, whereas the relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands was similar to the relationship between North Vietnam and France in 1954. In North Vietnam and in Indonesia, independence was obtained after years of bloody conflicts, and the new states severed ties with the old colonial powers as much as possible. There were still some interests for France to protect in Indochina after 1954 but there was not much in Indonesia for the Netherlands to fight for after 1949.

Sub-subsection iii. 1949 Ability

The Netherlands' CINC (1949): 0.81%

China's CINC (1949): 10.41%

Dutch ability to maintain substantial military presence in Southeast Asia depended on funds received through the Marshall Plan. When the US public and Congress stopped supporting

⁶⁵ Ibid, 293.

Dutch effort to regain Indonesia, the Netherlands' capacity to operate in Southeast Asia militarily disappeared.

Sub-subsection iv. 1954 Ability

The Netherlands' CINC (1954): 0.01%

China's CINC (1954): 9.44%

The Netherlands did not have independent ability to fight against communists in Southeast Asia or to help regional states to do so.

Subsection F. Section Summary

To be an anchor, a state has to be both willing and able to defend a region. Based on the above discussion, anchor availability in Southeast Asia in 1949 and 1954 is as follows:

Table 3. Anchor availability in Southeast Asia

State	Year	Willingness (full, partial or none)	Ability (match or mismatch)	Anchor
US	1949	partial	match	
Britain	1949	partial	mismatch	
France	1949	partial	mismatch	
The Netherlands	1949	partial	mismatch	
US	1954	full	match	✓
Britain	1954	partial	mismatch	
France	1954	partial	mismatch	
The Netherlands	1954	none	mismatch	

Only the US during 1954 was both willing and able to serve as an anchor for Southeast Asia. For other states, such as Britain, France and the Netherlands, their willingness to defend the region remained partial, and after the ravage of WWII none was able to provide security for the entire region.

Section V. Regional States' Perception of Alliance Viability

How did the absence of anchor in 1949 and the presence of one in 1954 affect regional states' perception of the viability of balancing? The process of alliance formation starts long before negotiation begins. The first phase is to sound out states that might be interested in joining an alliance. Attracting enough states is not sufficient for alliance formation, because the negotiation can still break down later, but it is a necessary condition.

States typically gauge the interest of other states through diplomatic communication. During the embryonic stages of alliance formation, this might be done informally. By the time the initiating state (or states) sends out formal invitations, it usually excludes states that clearly expressed disinterest.

Regional states express interest or disinterest for different reasons, and I argue that the perception of the possible alliance's viability is key. When a weak state (A) starts an alliance against a strong state (B), even if another country (C) shares the threat, C might think A's endeavor will be futile. This might lead C to reject attending the negotiation, or C might attend the negotiation without planning to make a commitment.⁶⁶

A strong state (say, D) could make a difference in C's decision to join the negotiation in two ways. D can become the state that initiates and coordinates the alliance formation, or it can let C and other states know its plans to join A's effort to create an alliance. The participation of D does not guarantee successful deterrence, but it gives the alliance a serious chance at not failing. This possibility brings C to the negotiating table.

⁶⁶ This might seem illogical, but diplomats often attend international gatherings even though their governments do not plan to support the cause. Sometimes, the attendance is to gather information about what other countries are doing. Other times, it is to not snub the states that are initiating the international meeting.

Of course, C is not a single state. Depending on A's vision of the alliance, C might be a few states or many. The point is C's plan to join A's effort is not just a function of the threat posed by B, but also of D's actions.

In the following sections, I will examine how regional states responded to alliance proposals in 1949 (Pacific Pact) and in 1954 (SEATO), respectively. I will discuss each state's assessment of viability, their choice to attend or not, and their sincerity in negotiating an alliance.

Subsection A. 1949

As it became increasingly clear that Chinese communists would win the Chinese Civil War, a group of three states – Nationalist China, Korea, and the Philippines – advocated for forming a “Pacific Pact.” The leaders of these states asserted that “countries of the Pacific in general, and Far Eastern countries in particular, [were] facing a greater danger from international Communism today than any other part of the world.”⁶⁷ In order to “contain that common threat,” they urged Asian states to “at once organize themselves into a union for the purpose of achieving solidarity and mutual assistance.”⁶⁸ Diplomats from this core of three states began to approach other Asia-Pacific states in late 1949.

As mentioned, the US issued a statement stating that it was “not currently considering participation in any further special collective defense arrangements other than the North Atlantic Treaty.”

⁶⁷FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1184.

⁶⁸FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1167.

Sub-subsection i. Southeast Asian Responses

Thailand was attentive to US and British backing of the Pacific Pact proposal. After being approached by the Philippines, on August 17 Prince Wan Waithayakon, Thai Ambassador to the US, held a meeting in Washington with Charles Reed and Kenneth Landon, who were Chief and Assistant Chief of the US State Department's Division of Southeast Asian Affairs respectively. Prince Wan said that he had been instructed by the Thai government to inquire what the US State Department's views were on the question of a Pacific Union.⁶⁹ The Thai Foreign Office in Bangkok also sounded out other governments' views, specifically Britain's.⁷⁰ Reed told Prince Wan that the US position was still the same as what Secretary Acheson iterated in his press statement on May 18, i.e., the US was not currently considering participating in any collective defense arrangements other than the North Atlantic Treaty.

Deliberation among Thai leaders showed concern over antagonizing communist countries without any backup. Deputy Foreign Minister Phot Sarasin counseled Prime Minister Phibun that "if the Thai government will be committed to participating in some activity, including military cooperation, that will antagonize any country, the Thai government should consider carefully whether [it] will receive support from those countries in a position to give real assistance [e.g. the US or Britain]."⁷¹ Thailand decided to send a delegate to the preliminary conference for the Pacific Pact. However, the Thai government instructed the delegate to "eschew any military commitments and to emphasize social and economic discussions."⁷²

⁶⁹FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1188.

⁷⁰FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1195.

⁷¹Fineman, 94.

⁷²FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1538.

Burma declined the invitation to attend the preliminary conference. Prime Minister Thakin Nu rejected any union in the nature of a military alliance.⁷³ Foreign Minister U Maung told the Burmese parliament that the government would not sign any anti-left or anti-right agreements; Burma's goal was to maintain friendly relations with all major powers.⁷⁴ As Nu explained to the parliament later, given Burma's geographical position next to China, it was "hemmed in like a tender gourd among the cactus. We cannot move an inch. If we act irresponsibly...and thrust the Union of Burma into the arms of one bloc, the other bloc will not be content to look on with folded arms."⁷⁵ Thus, absolute neutrality was what Burmese leaders thought to be the best strategy to survive. In fact, unlike other former British colonies, Burma opted out of joining the Commonwealth. Moreover, it rejected all foreign aid so to not compromise its independence even though the country was in dire need of economic assistance.⁷⁶

Sub-subsection ii. South Asian Responses

India decided to send delegates to the preliminary conference, but it made its opposition to alliance formation well known. Similar to Burma, India embraced a policy of neutrality. But the policy was motivated by strength, not weakness. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, believed that the role of South Asia was to become a "third force in the Asiatic world,"⁷⁷ and to act as a mediator between the two blocs.⁷⁸ Therefore, India should avoid aligning with the capitalist or the communist bloc.

⁷³Levi, Werner. "Union in Asia?" *Far Eastern Survey* 19, no. 14 (August 16, 1950): 144–49.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Charney, Michael. "Ludu Aung Than: Nu's Burma and the Cold War." In *Imperial Retreat and the Cold War in South and Southeast Asia, 1945-1962*, edited by Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, 333–55. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

⁷⁶Levi.

⁷⁷FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1198.

⁷⁸FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1146.

Nehru also thought that the timing was premature.⁷⁹ He argued that there were too many internal conflicts in Asia. The pact “could only increase the menace of aggression without increasing the capacity to resist it.”⁸⁰

Although India was many times weaker militarily than the US during the early-Cold War period, its clear commitment to non-alignment – and therefore non-support for anti-communist efforts – had an important impact on how other states evaluated the viability of the Pacific Pact. In a telegram Philippine General Carlos Romulo (who would soon become the Secretary of Foreign Affairs) wrote to Philippine president Elpidio Quirino, he said “it [was]...obvious that no such Asian group could get very far without the full support of the government of India.”⁸¹ In private diplomatic communication, John Burton, Secretary of the Australian Department of External Affairs, told Peterson Jarman, American Ambassador in Australia, that although Australia favored some kind of pact *in principle*, it desired to avoid taking opposite side from Nehru.⁸² How India’s position affected the Philippines and Australia illustrated the interdependent nature of alliance formation.

Sub-subsection iii. Oceanic Responses

Australia planned to attend the preliminary conference, but its leader publicly stated that he believed the effort would be fruitless. Percy Spender, the new Australian Minister for External Affairs, said “Australia was prepared to enter into a Pacific Pact if she could find support. But a

⁷⁹FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1143.

⁸⁰McIntyre, 257.

⁸¹FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1165.

⁸²FRUS, 1950, Volume VI, 26.

Pacific Pact which did not include the great power of the United States would only be a meaningless gesture.”⁸³

New Zealand rejected joining the negotiation. On August 9, New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser told Chinese Consul-General Feng Wang in Wellington candidly that any pact without the US and Britain would be futile; but if the Pacific Pact could become like the Atlantic Pact, New Zealand would welcome that.⁸⁴ In fact, in internal deliberations, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs Sir Alister McIntosh thought that, unless the US would be involved, being a part of the Pacific Pact would very much present a danger to New Zealand.⁸⁵ This echoed Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Sarasin’s advice to Thai Prime Minister Phibun.

In sum, without the participation of the US or Britain, and given that Nationalist China was one of the states that were leading the alliance formation effort, any state that joined the Pacific Pact is likely to get drawn into the losing side of the Chinese Civil War with no great power support. The payoff was negative.

Leaders of states that pioneered the Pacific Pact were painfully aware of the effect of the US’ lack of interest. Even though the US already made a public statement about its non-participation in the Pacific Pact, the pioneering states continued to lobby for the US to at least not rule out future involvement. In July 1949, when Nationalist Chinese Minister Chen Chih-ping called Thomas Lockett, American chargé in the Philippines, to inform him that the Philippines, Nationalist China and Korea would go ahead to pursue the Pacific Pact, Chen added

⁸³McIntyre, 259

⁸⁴Ibid, 249

⁸⁵Ibid, 264.

that he hoped the US would give the Pacific Union at least moral support.⁸⁶ In Washington, Tsui Tswen-ling, Counselor of the Nationalist Chinese Embassy, called Fulton Freeman, Assistant Chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs, to convey that the Nationalist Chinese government was anxious to have the US government's "moral support and sympathy" for the Pacific Pact initiative.⁸⁷ Romulo told US officials that the "[Southeast Asian] union [would] die unborn unless State Department is willing, if asked by representatives of countries of [Southeast Asia] and of Great Britain, to indicate the US approves project...if [the] US evinces [a] lack [of] interest nobody in [Southeast Asia] will have [the] necessary confidence in [the] union's future."⁸⁸

Granted, for some states, such as India and Burma, their reasons for not joining were not based on the perceived viability of the future alliance. In those cases, even if the US or Britain indicated that they were interested in joining, it would not have changed India's or Burma's decisions. But for other states, such as Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, great power participation clearly mattered.

Subsection B. 1954

President Eisenhower announced in May that the US was planning a Southeast Asian security organization. By mid-August, the US declared that a conference will be held in early September and invited any interested Asian nations to attend.

⁸⁶FRUS, 1949, Volume VII, Part 2, 1159.

⁸⁷Ibid, 1171.

⁸⁸Ibid, 1190.

Sub-subsection i. Southeast Asian Responses

As soon as Dulles proposed “united action,” the Philippines expressed its support for a pact in Southeast Asia. US participation in a regional pact was exactly what the Philippines wanted five years ago when it initiated the Pacific Pact. Nonetheless, the Philippines stated that its participation would be contingent on three conditions. The first was any actions should respect Asian peoples’ right to self-determination. The second was any “united action” should respect the independence of Indochinese peoples. The third was that the US should provide the Philippines a “clear and unequivocal guarantee of...help in case of attack under [the US-Philippine] Mutual Defense Act.” The 1951 treaty contained qualifications – for instance, American assistance would be subject to “constitutional processes” – and Philippine leaders worried that they could serve as a de facto escape clause, which was why they wanted a firmer promise.⁸⁹

Thailand, which bordered Indochina, also welcomed the news. Sarasin informed Dulles of Thailand’s acceptance of the “united actions” call.⁹⁰ When the US announced the Manila Conference, seven other states made similar statements on the same day, and Thailand was one of them. Prince Wan, the Foreign Minister of Thailand, said that the multilateral alliance should be patterned on NATO.⁹¹ Specifically, Thailand hoped that the alliance would contain a provision for automatic assistance like the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article V.⁹²

⁸⁹Buszynski, 31.

⁹⁰Ibid, 30.

⁹¹Jha, 44.

⁹²Buszynski, 30.

Burma rejected the invitation. Burma had a diplomatic falling-out with the US due to “Operation Paper.” In 1950, the US launched a covert operation to aid Nationalist Chinese (KMT) armies to fight against Chinese communists. The US transported weapons, ammunition and personnel from Japan and Taiwan to Bangkok, then to Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai in northern Thailand. After that, Thai border troops arranged delivery to KMT guerrillas that had retreated from China to Burma.⁹³ This was all done without consulting the Burmese government. The British government was also not informed of this operation. The truth came out in a golf trip between Thai Prime Minister Phibun and Sir Geoffrey Wallinger, the new British ambassador to Thailand.⁹⁴

The fact that attacks against China were launched from Burma meant that Burma was liable to being attacked by China, regardless of whether the Burmese government supported the KMT guerrillas or not. Burmese diplomatic appeals for KMT withdrawal did not yield satisfactory results. And U Nu announced to the Burmese parliament that he would take the matter to the UN.⁹⁵ On March 17, 1953, Burma terminated its economic agreements with the US unilaterally. It was thus unsurprising that Burma rejected the invitation to negotiate an alliance.

Indonesia also declined the invitation, stating that they wished to maintain their “active neutrality (*bebas aktif*)” policy.⁹⁶ In a speech “Rowing Between Two Coral Reefs,” Prime Minister Hatta explained that Indonesia’s national interest would be best served by an independent foreign policy. Indonesia would not join the Western bloc or the Eastern bloc.⁹⁷ It

⁹³ Foley.

⁹⁴ Fineman.

⁹⁵ Foley, 104.

⁹⁶ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 668.

⁹⁷ Leifer, Michael. *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy*. Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1983.

would also not participate in a third bloc “designed to act as a counterpoise to the two giant blocs.”⁹⁸ Privately, President Sukarno told US ambassador in Indonesia Hugh Cumming that it would be a mistake for the US to invite Indonesia to join as “such an approach might be taken by some Indonesians as a form of pressure to draw Indonesia away from its independent policy into [US] defensive system.”⁹⁹ There were also reports that Indonesia considered signing a non-aggression pact with China, Ceylon, India and Burma just to offset a future US-led alliance.¹⁰⁰

Sub-subsection ii. South Asian Responses

India continued its neutral policy and rejected joining the negotiations. Its official position was it would be “unbecoming and inappropriate” for India to join since it had accepted the chairmanship of three armistice commissions for Indochina.¹⁰¹ In addition, Nehru viewed that US-led collective defense to be “a new form of spheres of influence.”¹⁰² He commented that collective defense pacts with great powers would simply be “a continuation of power politics on a vaster scale.”¹⁰³

Ceylon rejected joining the conference. Nonetheless, in an official statement, it stated that it was “prepared to maintain an open mind on the subject.”¹⁰⁴ In private, Ceylon’s Prime Minister told Sir Claude Corea, High Commissioner of Ceylon to Britain, that he was “personally for SEATO.” But due to other Asian neutralist states’ rejection of the conference, Ceylon decided

⁹⁸ Sukma, Rizal. “The Evolution of Indonesia’s Foreign Policy: An Indonesian View.” *Asian Survey* 35, no. 3 (1995): 304–15, 308.

⁹⁹ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 678.

¹⁰⁰ Kim, 62.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 63.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Acharya, 107.

¹⁰⁴ “Ceylon Keeping an Open Mind,” *New York Times*, Aug 14, 1954.

not to join.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the Prime Minister insisted that countries that would be in the US-led pact should “[leave] the door open [to Ceylon] against the possibility of joining the pact in the future.” Separately, Pakistani Foreign Minister Zafrullah Khan confirmed to Dulles that India strongly dissuaded Ceylon from joining the pact.¹⁰⁶

Pakistan was interested in attending the negotiation. In a meeting between the ambassador of Pakistan and John Jernegan, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, Jernegan observed that “it seemed very important to [the ambassador] that the allocation and provision of troops should be an integral part of the [Southeast Asian defense arrangement].” The Pakistani ambassador also said that Pakistan had the manpower for defense; what it needed was “equipment.”¹⁰⁷ It can be surmised that the possibility of obtaining more military aid motivated Pakistan’s interest to attend. Nonetheless, when Pakistan made the announcement to join the Manila Conference, it added the qualification that its attendance did not constitute prior commitment to the pact.¹⁰⁸

Sub-subsection iii. Oceanic Responses

Australia and New Zealand welcomed the news. They announced their intent to attend the Manila Conference the day the US publicized it.

Australia was involved in the defense of Malaya since WWII.¹⁰⁹ During WWII, when Japan controlled Southeast Asia, Japan launched over a hundred aid raids on Australian territory

¹⁰⁵ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 902.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 677.

¹⁰⁸ Buszynski, 32.

¹⁰⁹ McGibbon, Ian, “The Defence Dimension,” in *Southeast Asia and New Zealand: A History of Regional and Bilateral Relations*, ed. Anthony Smith (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in association with Victoria University Press, 2005), 11.

from Southeast Asia.¹¹⁰ Therefore, stability in Southeast Asia was of strategic importance to Australia. As for New Zealand, while it was geographically more insulated, it adopted a “forward defense” strategy to deal with threats from the north.¹¹¹ For these reasons, both Australia and New Zealand joined the Five Power Staff Agency for Southeast Asia, a body formed in 1953 to coordinate the US, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand’s strategies in the Pacific.

Remarkably, Australia was willing to consider committing troops to the treaty area, something that it had never done during peacetime. Prime Minister Robert Menzies stated publicly that “we have decided that in any great defensive organization of the kind, we must accept military commitments.”¹¹²

Sub-subsection iv. East Asian Exclusion

South Korea and Nationalist China were obvious candidates for an anti-communist coalition. Japan would also be a logical candidate given that it was expected to recover from the war eventually and become once again a key player in Asia. However, these three states were excluded from consideration altogether due to British objections. British leaders thought that a coalition that involved both South Korea and Nationalist China would be too risky. South Korean and Nationalist Chinese leaders’ desire to unite their countries would make them eager to provoke war.¹¹³ Also, Britain viewed that the inclusion of these states would discourage the neutralist states, such as India, Burma, and Indonesia, from joining the pact in the future.¹¹⁴ The

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 2.

¹¹² Kim, 65.

¹¹³ Ibid, 61.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

US acquiesced to limiting the alliance partners to Southeast Asian and Oceanic states because this would mean Hong Kong would be excluded. There was a chance that Communist China would seize Hong Kong, and the US did not want to defend it on Britain's behalf.

As for Japan, multiple reasons prevented its participation in addition to British objections. The memories of WWII were still fresh; many Asian states that had been attacked, invaded or occupied by Japan still distrusted it.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Japan's constitution limited its ability to join military alliances.¹¹⁶ As a result, the multilateral pact the US led in 1954 was not as encompassing as Dulles' initial vision of a crescent that would start with Japan, go down to South Korea, Nationalist China, Southeast Asian states, and end with Australia and New Zealand.

Compared to 1949, more countries were interested in joining a Southeast Asian collective security arrangement in 1954. The interest of the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan was directly or indirectly influenced by US military capabilities. By "direct" influence I mean regional states were drawn to what the US could do to the communist threat. And by "indirect" influence I mean that regional states were also drawn to what the US could do for their militaries. The military assistance a regional state could obtain from the anchor would enhance its security in a more encompassing way, because some states, such as Pakistan, were in regional conflicts unrelated to communism. Once a regional state allied with a great power, it could divert the military aid meant for countering communists to countering other threats.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Therefore, even for states that were not heavily affected by the communist threat, there were reasons for them to join an anti-communist alliance.

Certainly, some countries – namely, India, Ceylon, Indonesia and Burma – would not participate in a military alliance, anchored or not. Certain countries’ (such as Burma’s) neutralism was informed by strategic concerns, but anti-colonialism also played a large role. During the post-war years, when decolonization was at its height, there might be nothing any country could offer that would bring these countries to join a group that looked like a reunion of colonial masters.

Section VI. The Anchor and Free-Riding Reduction

In this section, I discuss how the US as an anchor dealt with free-riding by regional states. As discussed in the Western Europe chapter, free-riding can be extra-alliance or intra-alliance. In extra-alliance free-riding, some regional states do not join the alliance. They plan to free-ride on those regional states that did join the alliance. In intra-alliance free-riding, less powerful members free-ride on more powerful members by not picking up their share of defense burden.

Another way to put it is that free-riding can be “shallow” or “deep.” Shallow free-riding is considered to be solved when a regional state signed an alliance treaty. Signing the treaty itself carries costs, because by associating itself with a balancing alliance, the regional state antagonizes the adversary. This might lead to retaliation by the adversary such as economic coercion, cessation/ineligibility of aid, etc. Nonetheless, this form of costs is different from taking up a significant share of the joint defense burden through increasing defense spending, contributing troops to standing army/joint operations, etc.

In SEATO's formation, "shallow" free-riding was solved. Regional states, including the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand all publicly attached themselves to an anti-communist alliance. But "deep" free-riding was not quite solved. To be exact, there was not a *need* to solve deep free-riding because of the strategy – "massive retaliation" – that the US decided to adopt.

"Massive retaliation" would rely on mobile striking power (including the use of nuclear weapons), as opposed to manpower-intensive ground defense. What the US needed from regional states was access to military bases or permission to build bases on their territories, not military equipment or personnel. In any case, many of the regional states, especially Asian ones, lacked the equipment (aircraft, explosives) and personnel (trained pilots) needed to support a strategy like "massive retaliation."

Among all the regional states in negotiation, Thailand was the most important state for American ability to project power in Indochina. The Philippines was separated from Indochina by the South China Sea, whereas Northeastern Thailand was close to North Vietnam. The distance was only 75 miles from Nakhon Phanom Province.

US-Thai security cooperation had begun to develop since 1951, but to secure Thai assent to basing there was an extra push to demonstrate US commitment through increasing military aid in May 1954. Dulles told Thuaithep Thewakun, chargé of the Thai embassy, that the US "[wanted] to see the strength of the Thai army increased as fast as possible" and urged Thailand to submit an aid request immediately.¹¹⁷ Internally, the State Department justified to the JCS – which was wary about spreading resources too thin – that the aid would be necessary for

¹¹⁷ Fineman, 192.

“[obtaining] full Thai cooperation with respect to a Southeast Asian treaty.”¹¹⁸ The increase to Thailand’s military assistance package would end up being \$25 million.¹¹⁹ In addition to more aid, the JCS proposed high-level staff talks between the Thai and the American militaries in Washington.¹²⁰

Thailand agreed that the US would assist in building bases in Nakhon Ratchasima in the northeastern region and Takli in the north. The bases would belong to Thailand, but the US could use them in the future.¹²¹ The eventual range of bases that the US would have access to included U-Tapao, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Udorn, Takhli, Korat, and Don Muang. Many of them would come to play a critical role during the Vietnam War.

By allowing US basing, Thailand undertook a greater risk than it otherwise would, even if it still joined the alliance. *Because of* the bases in Thailand, the US would be able to project force in Indochina – and, in fact, China – much more efficiently and effectively. China now had stronger interest to destabilize Thailand. The *People’s Daily* published an article calling for the Thai populace to “wage a struggle against...the government of Thailand,” which was characterized as a “puppet” of American imperialism.¹²²

This form of assuming more defense burden was admittedly different from what Western European states did after signing the Brussels Pact, which was to merge their military production and establish joint command. But given the overall difference in US strategy in Europe and Southeast Asia, Thailand’s decision was no less significant in enabling the mission of the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 727.

¹²⁰ Fineman, 193.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, 196.

alliance. In a later section, I will address the causes of the difference in US strategy. Now, let us examine the negotiations for the Pacific Pact in 1950 and the Manila Pact in 1954, and analyze the ways in which the presence of an anchor made a difference.

Section VII. The Anchor and Negotiation

When a group of states contains an anchor, it is more likely for that group to agree on an alliance treaty. How does an anchor facilitate the successful negotiation of a defensive alliance? There are two mechanisms. The first is the anchor has a great deal of leverage against other participants. Because its power will be the sine qua non of the potential alliance, once the anchor lays out the terms of the alliance it is willing to accept, other states can take them or leave the negotiation. If a non-anchor state leaves the negotiation, an alliance is still possible as long as there is another non-anchor state. By contrast, when a group of states does not contain an anchor, every state is needed for defense to be viable. When different states have difference preferences on an issue, the group tends to adopt the lowest common denominator as the final decision to preserve agreement. This could cumulatively water down the settlement to the extent that it is no longer a defensive alliance.

The second way an anchor can enhance the likelihood of agreement is that it has the resources to offer side payments to persuade specific states to change their positions. Poast (2012) has shown that issue linkage in alliance negotiations can increase the probability of agreement by over 30 percent. Strengthening (or not hurting) the bilateral relationship with a great power in different domains – military, economic, diplomatic – can be a powerful motivator for regional states to yield in multilateral negotiations. In negotiations without an anchor, the incentive to stand firm is greater.

In the following discussion, I will examine the negotiation process as well as the settlement in the 1950 Baguio Conference and the 1954 Manila Conference. In each sub-case, I will discuss the initial preferences of different participants on crucial issues. Then, I will explain what states changed their preferences and why, and analyze where the group finally settled on those issues.

Subsection A. 1950

In May 1950, delegates from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia (at this point it had obtained independence), the Philippines, Thailand and Australia met in Baguio. The alliance was more or less dead on arrival. The original effort to create a Pacific Pact was headed by Nationalist China, Korea and the Philippines. But before the conference even started, Nationalist China and Korea dropped out. Nationalist China announced that unless the conference would adopt an anti-communist objective, it would not participate. Knowing India's and Indonesia's neutralist stances, Quirino did not make that guarantee.¹²³ As a result, both Chiang and Rhee did not send delegates to the conference.

To reaffirm that the conference was not anti-communist in nature, Romulo made a radio broadcast on the eve of the conference, stating that the conference was “non-military in character,” and it was not “directed against any nation or group of nations,” and that “no military commitments [would be] contemplated.”¹²⁴

Philippine leaders were nevertheless ambitious about the non-military objectives that they could achieve at the conference. The cooperation could serve as a basis for future military joint

¹²³ Eayrs, James. “A Pacific Pact: ‘Step in the Right Direction?’” *International Journal* 7, no. 4 (1952): 293–302.

¹²⁴ *Final Act and Proceedings of the Baguio Conference of 1950*, 4.

action. Prior to the meeting, Romulo circulated draft resolutions to support the nationalist aspirations of dependent peoples, proposals for semi-annual meetings of states participating in the Pacific Union, a draft convention to establish a permanent consultative body in Manila with political, economic and social departments, and plans to rationalize economic development for Southeast Asia.¹²⁵

Throughout the conference, only economic, social and cultural matters were discussed. Delegates deliberated on plans for lowering illiteracy, establishing multilateral clearing mechanisms to facilitate intra-regional trade, creating international cultural institutes, etc.¹²⁶ Some nations attempted to resuscitate the original vision of Pacific Pact. Australia and the Philippines sponsored proposals about military cooperation, but in the end they got pushed off the agenda.¹²⁷ The Philippines sought to pave the way for future Nationalist Chinese and Korean association. Romulo made two proposals: the first was to include Nationalist China and Korea to the grouping.¹²⁸ India, Pakistan, and Indonesia objected. Given that the group had previously agreed that all decisions must be unanimous, the resolution did not pass. Romulo then initiated a second proposal to include Nationalist China and Korea not as members of the group, but as *observers*. That resolution also failed.¹²⁹

The product of the week-long conference was an omnibus resolution that recommended “considerations” on a range of economic, social and cultural issues. However, the resolution contained mostly general statements and objectives, such as “[the governments represented at

¹²⁵ McIntyre, 267.

¹²⁶ Final Act and Proceedings of the Baguio Conference of 1950, 40-41.

¹²⁷ Levi.

¹²⁸ FRUS, 1950, Volume VI, 101.

¹²⁹ Final Act and Proceedings of the Baguio Conference of 1950.

this conference should] act in consultation with each other through normal diplomatic channels to further the interest of the peoples of the region.”¹³⁰ While resolutions were passed, they involved no specific commitments by individual governments.¹³¹ No permanent organizations were created to turn those resolutions into reality. The resolutions were only words on paper.

The conference did not produce an alliance treaty. It also did not serve as a basis for further discussion on military cooperation. By the end of summer, the push for the Pacific Pact entirely vanished.¹³²

Subsection B. 1954

In September 1954, delegates from the US, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan met in Manila. The objective of the conference was to establish a collective security arrangement in Southeast Asia.

Sub-subsection i. The NATO vs. ANZUS Models

What would this collective security arrangement look like? In 1954, two alliances served as reference. The first was NATO, and the second was ANZUS. There were two key differences between the models: the strength of defensive commitment, and the level of military provision.

The NATO model contained a strong defensive commitment, as exemplified by the “attack on one is attack on all” statement and the specification of “the use of armed force” as a response in Article V. While not stipulated in the original treaty, by 1954 NATO had developed an elaborate military machinery with a joint standing force and centralized command.

¹³⁰ Final Act and Proceedings of the Baguio Conference of 1950, 46.

¹³¹ McIntyre, 268.

¹³² Franklin, 36.

By contrast, the defensive commitment in ANZUS was weaker. Instead of “an attack on one is considered an attack on all,” the treaty stated that “each party recognized that an armed attack...on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety.” Instead of naming the use of armed force as a possible response, the treaty merely said that “[each party] would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.” ANZUS established a council which consisted of foreign ministers, and they met on a regular basis to discuss matters relevant to security cooperation. But there was not a permanent secretariat, fixed troop contribution, standing army, or centralized command. ANZUS was very much a minimal alliance.

Sub-subsection ii. Initial Preferences

Going into the negotiation, what did the attending states want, and why?

Asian States (the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan)

The Asian states wanted the NATO model. The Philippines stated that countries that “are, so to speak, or are likely to be, in the frontline in case of war, as shown in past experiences, must insist that when [they] are attacked, that attack shall be repelled by all and instantly, because, during these times when the atomic and hydrogen bombs and other weapons of that type will be likely used and, if [they] are to depend on constitutional processes, [they] may all be wiped out in this Archipelago before action is taken.”¹³³ Thailand similarly sought the tightest, most restrictive terms the US would accept. Prince Wan lobbied for creating joint forces with centralized command. For Pakistan, its interest in obtaining an “attack on one equals an attack on all” guarantee from the US was twofold. In 1954, Pakistan comprised West Pakistan and East

¹³³ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 876.

Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh), and East Pakistan was adjacent to Burma, which had a serious communist insurgency. Thus, Pakistan had some degree of security interest in Southeast Asia. On top of that, if the treaty would contain the “attack on one equals an attack on all” clause, and the clause did not specify the nature of the attack, it would be applicable to Pakistan’s conflict with India. For these reasons, the Asian nations desired a NATO-like arrangement.

European States (Britain, France)

The European nations favored the ANZUS model because establishing SEATO was supposed to be a means to relieve their defense burden by getting the US to underwrite Southeast Asian security.¹³⁴ A treaty design that would increase their own military commitment would be against the point. The new French president Pierre Mendès-France was elected to end the war in Indochina. Going forward, France could not sustain a substantial military presence in Southeast Asia. For Britain, it had been devoting scarce military resources to the ongoing Malayan Emergency. Adding more troop obligations to defend Indochina was not something it wanted to undertake. A minimal alliance arrangement that could associate the US with Southeast Asian defense without adding more defense demands on their own plates thus made the most sense for Britain and France.

Oceanic States (Australia, New Zealand)

In terms of defensive commitment, Oceanic states were content with an ANZUS-level commitment. Casey stated that he did not believe it was “a matter of substance” whether the treaty language would read like NATO or ANZUS. What mattered was “the purpose and attitude

¹³⁴ Buszynski; McIntyre, 394.

of mind of the signatories.”¹³⁵ In terms of the level of military provision, however, Oceanic states wanted something more than ANZUS, but not totally NATO. Australia wanted the treaty to require troop contribution from member countries. In a meeting between Casey and Dulles the day before the Manila Conference, Casey said that the Australian government was “prepared and desirous of substantially increasing its defense budget.” Therefore, the government “wished, as a result of the SEATO Treaty...to be able to say that under this Treaty its military obligations were X number of land forces, Y number of air forces, and Z number of naval forces.” A treaty design that included troop contribution would “immeasurably help Australia in obtaining parliamentary authorization for additional defense forces if they can say that these additional forces are required to meet Australia’s contribution under SEATO.”¹³⁶ New Zealand wanted, as Deputy Secretary of the External Affairs Department Foss Shanahan put it, a “half-way house between ANZUS and NATO.”¹³⁷ Ideally, the pact would involve US assistance with defense infrastructure and earmarked forces.

The US

The US wanted the ANZUS design in terms of the strength of defensive commitment and the level of military provision. The US did not want a NATO design for SEATO for two reasons. The first was concern over Congress approval. The second was US defense plan for Southeast Asia did not require a vast joint military machinery. An ANZUS design would allow greater freedom of action.

¹³⁵ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 2, 860.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 849.

¹³⁷ McIntyre, 383.

During the Senate hearing for the North Atlantic Treaty, the wording of Article V caused considerable controversy. In the American political system, the Congress was responsible for declaring war. Many interpreted Article V to mean that an attack on another country could obligate US military actions, thus bypassing congressional power. The controversy almost obstructed the passage of the treaty. In a National Security Council meeting that took place one month before the Manila Conference, Dulles explained that he came up with the wording “constitutional processes” to avoid a repetition of the NATO debate in Congress.¹³⁸ Three alliance treaties after the North Atlantic Treaty – the US-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty (1951); the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (1951); and the US-South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty (1953) – all employed this language.

During the deliberation on US objectives for the Southeast Asian treaty in a NSC meeting, the group in fact considered a stronger commitment, which would involve the agreement of participating countries that there should be immediate retaliation against Communist China if it directly or indirectly committed armed aggression against any non-communist Southeast Asian nation. Other than concern over congressional opinion, Dulles himself thought the stronger commitment was undesirable because countries other than the US could in effect decide that the US must go to war. Eisenhower stated that he wanted to decide what to do “at the time the aggression occurred.”¹³⁹ He thought that action without Congressional consent should not be taken unless the action was necessary “in order for the United States to survive.”¹⁴⁰ If the treaty contained wordings that implied automatic reaction was

¹³⁸ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 1, 727.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 728.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

possible, Eisenhower feared that planning staff would plan on their own interpretation of vital interests or automatic counter actions, and the US “might get into a mess.”¹⁴¹ Thus, to maximize freedom of action, the US sought a less binding treaty language, even if the more binding version would be more deterrent.

Political reasons aside, there was a military rationale as to why the US did not want a NATO design for Southeast Asia. US military plans to defend Southeast Asia as conceived in 1954 relied on striking power, including the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it was not worth the cost of maintaining a joint standing force in Southeast Asia.

In evaluating what military force and resources would be necessary to hold Southeast Asia, the JCS considered two military concepts: static type defense (as used in the Korean War), and an offensive to attack the source of aggression, i.e. China. The JCS rejected static type defense on the grounds that it would take too long to build up the necessary bases and facilities to support the forces. Furthermore, the forces would have to remain in the region for an extended period, which would not only be costly, but would also allow communist powers to propagandize, which in turn could foster anti-Western sentiments in post-colonial countries. In addition, maintaining large forces in Southeast Asia would “dissipate” Allied strength and weaken the European front. Therefore, the JCS recommended striking the source of aggression, i.e. China, rather than defending local points of attack in Southeast Asia.¹⁴² In a high-level meeting in the Oval Office in June 1954, it was decided that “in the event of overt, unprovoked Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia...the US should then [after Congress declared

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid, 514.

war] launch large-scale air and naval atomic attacks on ports, airfields and military targets in mainland China, using as militarily appropriate ‘new weapons [i.e. nuclear weapons].’”¹⁴³

The plan was kept from allies. Both Eisenhower and Dulles were aware how allies could perceive this plan. Eisenhower cautioned that “we must take care not to frighten our friends...by bellicose talk.” Dulles pointed out that it would be important “to give the Thai people, the Burmese, and the Malayans some hope that their area would not simply be overrun and occupied until China was destroyed, in order to keep them by our side.” Dulles moderated the JCS’ suggestions, stating that retaliation against China should be limited to military targets that had a demonstrable connection to Chinese aggression, and that the US should be ready to lend “token or small (ground) forces” to local countries so they would not feel abandoned.¹⁴⁴ But the broad thesis that the defense of Southeast Asia should be primarily based on striking power, not ground force, stood. In the debated, approved NSC 5429/1 “Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East,” it stated the future collective security treaty should “not limit U.S. freedom to use nuclear weapons, or involve a U.S. commitment for local defense or for stationing U.S. forces in Southeast Asia.”

In short, the preferences of states that attended the Manila Conference could be represented as follows:

¹⁴³ Wells, Samuel F. “The Origins of Massive Retaliation.” *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 1 (1981): 31–52, 37.

¹⁴⁴ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 1, 522.

Figure 3. Defensive commitment (preference)



Figure 4. Military provision (preference)



Subsection C. Negotiation Outcome

After three days of negotiation, the group successfully reached an agreement. I will first discuss the “grand bargain,” and then go backward to explain: (i) what states compromised? (ii) how much did they compromise? (iii) why did they compromise?

Figure 5. Defensive commitment (final)

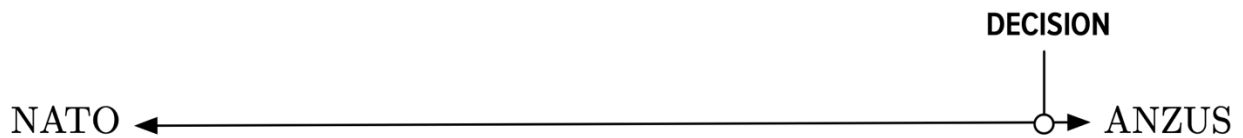
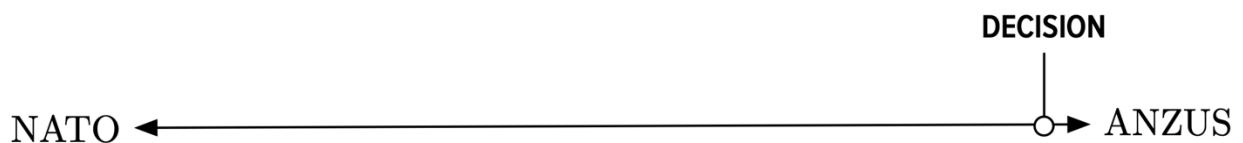


Figure 6. Military provision (final)



The group decided to adopt an ANZUS design for the new Southeast Asian collective defense arrangement. This meant that the defense commitment was weaker, compared to the

North Atlantic Treaty. The signatories committed to “act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes” if “aggression by means of armed attack” took place, though the nature of reaction was not specified. In terms of institutionalization, the treaty stated, in Article V, that the parties would establish a council for discussing matters concerning the implementation of the treaty. The council would provide consultation “with regard to military and any other planning.” Beyond that, there were no plans to create a joint force with centralized command, or to set up a permanent secretariat. It was the ANZUS model through and through.

Comparing the grand bargain to different parties’ initial preferences, the Asian states – the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan – compromised the most. The Oceanic states also conceded considerably on the military provision issue. What motivated the changes?

Some states were persuaded by the domestic political constraint the US faced. During the Manila negotiation, Dulles quoted questions that senators raised about the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article V from a report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Dulles cautioned that if the Southeast Asia treaty adopted the language of the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article V, it would “reopen that debate with consequences which no one can predict.”¹⁴⁵ The Thai delegate later responded that “although I would prefer the Philippine form of the proposal [i.e. NATO Article V wording]...I realize the difficulty and therefore I agree that we should keep the wording as near as possible to the latter type of treaty [i.e. ANZUS] in order to facilitate or even enable approval by the United States Senate.”¹⁴⁶ In the negotiation the next day, the Thai delegate re-emphasized this point, saying that that he accepted the wording proposed by the US

¹⁴⁵ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 1, 878.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 883.

delegation as he “would like to see the Treaty come into operation as rapidly as possible, and hence [he] would desire as rapid a ratification as possible of the Treaty.”

Australia also yielded its proposal to add the clause “such subsidiary machinery as may be necessary to achieve military and other objectives of treaty.”¹⁴⁷ In a private meeting between Casey and Dulles, Dulles stated that the US “had no intention of earmarking specific forces for SEATO.” Dulles explained that if the US “started earmarking forces for here, there, and everywhere, it would run out of forces very rapidly since its commitments were global.” Nonetheless, Dulles said that the US generally maintained substantial mobile air and sea forces in Asia, and some reserve land forces in Okinawa as well as Hawaii.¹⁴⁸ If an attack occurred in Southeast Asia, the US would respond using those forces. With regard to Australia’s proposal to insert the term “machinery...to achieve military...objectives,” the US military disliked it because it did not want to create the expectation that any permanent machinery would be set up at all.¹⁴⁹ The US could at most accommodate by adding “the [SEATO] Council shall provide for consultation with regard to military planning as required by the situation in the area” in Article V. Casey responded that the Australian government was “content to support whatever draft [Dulles] believed (from his knowledge of the American constitutional position and of the reactions of Congress) would give the [US] President the powers he required without the need to consult Congress again after an incident had occurred.” While Australia wanted the treaty to specify establishing some sort of military machinery so the Australian government could justify

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 839.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 851.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 831.

increasing military spending, if this would risk the US Congress not ratifying the treaty, Australia would rather relent.

Other states obtained a stronger defensive commitment separately. Two days before the Manila Conference, the US-Philippine mutual defense treaty council held its first meeting. The joint communiqué specifically quoted Dulles saying:

I wish to state in the most emphatic terms that the United States will honor fully its commitments under the Mutual Defense Treaty...If the Philippines were attacked, the United States would act *automatically*. In case of the Philippines, no specific orders are required. Our forces would automatically react.¹⁵⁰

By gaining an automatic defense commitment separately, the Philippines did not have to insist during the multilateral negotiations for SEATO.

The Pakistani case was somewhat unusual. The delegate signed the treaty, but he added a proviso stating “signed for transmission to my government for its consideration and action in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan.”¹⁵¹ After the conference, the delegate said “the treaty will be considered by the government when its text and the report of our delegation arrive.” Then, Pakistan did not ratify the SEATO treaty for four months. Presumably, it was due to the fact that the US unilaterally attached a reservation to the treaty stating that it would only respond to communist aggression, thus the treaty would not be applicable to the Indo-Pakistani conflict. Pakistan ultimately ratified the treaty under US pressure that military assistance to Pakistan could be withheld if Pakistan did not participate in the first SEATO meeting.¹⁵² Nevertheless, Prime Minister Ali did comment that neutralism was no alternative to alliance with

¹⁵⁰ Kim, 71.

¹⁵¹ Buszynski, 33.

¹⁵² Ibid.

the US,¹⁵³ which suggested that the capabilities of the anchor was a causal factor in Pakistan's acceptance of a questionably relevant treaty.

To sum up, the US, Britain and France got what they wanted. The US did make some concessions, such as Dulles' statement on the Philippines and the mention of military planning in Article V to accommodate Australia. The other noteworthy concession the US made was to put the specification that it would respond to communist aggression only in a separate reservation, rather than in the treaty itself. But in terms of the most critical issues, i.e. the strength of the defensive commitment and the level of military provision, there was not much deviation from the US' initial preference.

The reason Asia-Pacific delegates were willing to adjust their positions due to possible US Senate reaction was that everyone understood if the US ended up not ratifying the treaty, the whole endeavor would be pointless. In discussing US reservation that it would only respond to communist aggression, Pakistani delegate Khan said, in private, to Casey that "in effect the American reservation binds us all, in that if and when an incident occurs, if the United States were to decide not to intervene, it would, in practice, be impossible to conceive that other signatories (with very much lesser forces) should intervene."¹⁵⁴ Because US power was so central to the alliance as a whole, its actions and preferences became, in effect, the actions and preferences of the group. It was unimaginable that any state, or combination of states, at the conference could have made the US commit to more than what the US was willing to take on. When a group contained an anchor, it was more likely for the group to reach an alliance

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Casey, Richard Gardiner Casey Baron. Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R. G. Casey, 1951-60. Collins, 1972, 182.

agreement. At the same time, the terms of the agreement would tend to settle near the anchor's preferences just because of the sheer leverage it had against other members of the group. There might be exceptions, as shown by France in the NATO case, but generally the anchor set the terms of the negotiation.

Sub-subsection iii. Explaining Difference in US Strategy: "Massive Retaliation" in Southeast Asia vs. "Forward Defense" in Western Europe

If SEATO resembled ANZUS because the US wanted it, and the US wanted it because of its military plans for Southeast Asia, what explained the difference between US defense strategies in Southeast Asia and Europe? By 1954, the same year as the SEATO treaty was negotiated, the US had approximately 350,000 troops on the ground in Europe. If striking power was so powerful, why did the US not apply the same military concept globally?

I argue that there were two underlying factors. The first was what the US thought the consequences would be if the adversary overran the potential theater (Indochina or Western Europe). The second was the role militaries of regional states would play. If overrunning the territory would lead to the adversary winning a general war with the US, and the regional forces were expected to play a heavy role in their own defense, the US would be willing to heavily but temporarily invest in military and economic assistance via a NATO-like arrangement to make its allies self-sufficient. But if the US thought the potential theater could be overrun and be recouped later, and/or US forces were expected to bear most of the burden in the event of war, it would opt for a light alliance design that would maximize American freedom of action.

Table 4. Determinants of alliance models

		Will allies play a heavy role in their defense?	
		Yes	No
If the territory was overrun, would it lead the adversary to win the general war?	Yes	NATO	ANZUS
	No	ANZUS	ANZUS

As aforementioned, the guiding defense concept for Southeast Asia was striking power. In the event of overt Chinese aggression, the plan was to strike (including using nuclear weapons) at the source, i.e. China, rather than to defend local points of attack in Indochina. In Western Europe, the guiding defense concept was “forward defense.” Since early 1949, it was obvious to US leaders that Western Europe had to be “defended on the ground, and as far to the east as possible.”¹⁵⁵

US leaders were reluctant to risk Western Europe getting overrun by the USSR, even if recouping it might be possible later. One of the military rationales was that if Western Europe was lost to the USSR, the “great human and economic resources” of that subregion could be decisive in a long war.¹⁵⁶ In order to keep US allies on its side, US Army chief of staff General Bradley explained that the US must demonstrate to its allies that US war strategy would not be “first abandon them to the enemy with a promise of later liberation.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, the US needed a strategy that would provide genuine security to Western Europeans, and that was to “share [its] strength...on a common defensive front.” By contrast, the US was willing to let Southeast Asian countries get overrun. Even though Dulles described a logic that was identical to that articulated

¹⁵⁵ Trachtenberg, 100.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 101.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

by Bradley, i.e. to keep US allies on its side, it would be important to give Southeast Asians hope that their area would not be overrun and occupied until China was destroyed, Dulles was essentially in agreement with the JCS' assessment that Southeast Asia should be defended by offensive striking power, and not by defensive ground force. Dulles only said that "token forces" might be sent to Southeast Asian allies "so that they would not feel abandoned" as opposed to sending hundreds of thousands of US troops to the region so that Southeast Asian allies would actually not be abandoned. The perception that Indochina could be lost temporarily meant that there was no need for a "forward defense" strategy in Southeast Asia. Therefore, striking power should be the guiding defense concept and there was no need to establish and maintain a massive joint standing force in Southeast Asia.

US conception of what role local forces would play in the defense of the region also influenced why the US developed NATO into an elaborate military machinery but opted for a minimal arrangement in Southeast Asia. The US foresaw that in order for Western Europe to have a chance at defending against the USSR, Western European countries must militarily integrate. The Brussels Pact was essentially a test for Western European states to demonstrate that they could work with each other before the US associated itself to the defense of the region. After the outbreak of the Korean War, the US anticipated that the USSR might launch attacks against Western Europe. Therefore, the US agreed to send a Supreme Allied Commander and four to six additional divisions to Europe on the condition that Western Europeans would agree on West German rearmament.¹⁵⁸ To reassure France that it would not be abandoned to deal with the USSR and a rearmed West Germany that might go rogue later, the US increased the troop

¹⁵⁸ Rosato.

size of its European Command prior to West Germany formally joining NATO. The US expected that Western European forces would play a huge role in the defense of their region, so it was willing to take these measures to foster a strong joint force. The purpose of centralized command was to allow West Germany to rearm but to not have the military autonomy to control the forces.

By contrast, US leaders did not anticipate that local forces in Southeast Asia would play a significant role in the defense of the region. The JCS viewed that there were no developed military forces in Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁹ Burma and Thailand only had enough force for internal security. Military force could be built in Southeast Asia “only at considerable cost.”¹⁶⁰ Eisenhower also opined that in case of war, the main burden would fall on the US, and US allies in the region could be expected to provide little more than token forces. The importance of SEATO was political. It existed, so that if and when the US would intervene in Southeast Asia, the US would not “stand alone before the world as an arbitrary power supporting colonialism.”¹⁶¹

When the US expected to bear most of the costs, adopting a NATO alliance design would be “inimical to US interests.” A NATO design could, as the acting Secretary of Defense Robert Anderson put, “be exerted to commit the US to a military effort disproportionate to its overall responsibilities and commitments.” Also, it would “reduce, without compensating military advantage, United States military freedom of action; and it could give other countries of the Pact power of veto over the type and scope of plans evolved.” The cost and reduced freedom of action were worthwhile for NATO because, in exchange, the US gained military advantage as Western

¹⁵⁹ FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume XII, Part 1, 655.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 533.

Europeans would bear a significant portion of the defense burden. In ANZUS and in SEATO, it would not be worthwhile since the US would bear most of the cost. It was ironic – though not without strategic logic – that more military and economic support were given to the region that needed it less. The criterion was not need, but chances of self-sufficiency.

Had the US wanted a NATO design – troop contribution from each state, joint standing force with centralized military command – would regional states have accepted it? Britain and France would not have agreed to additional military commitment, but if the US was willing to field the deployment, I argue other states in SEATO (Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan) would have accepted it. Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan already pushed for a NATO-like design. For Oceanic states, they objected to some parts of the NATO design (Australia, for example, did not want an elaborate machinery) but both wanted something more than ANZUS, and both were willing to contribute troops.

Of course, these were not the only regional states. (In fact, states that opted to attend the negotiation were already self-selected in terms of openness to cooperate with the US militarily.) For India, Indonesia and Burma, they would not have joined any alliance, even if the US was willing to adopt a NATO-like design, commit to deploying to the region and provide generous military aid. Anti-colonialism played a role in their resistance, but it was not absolute, since Pakistan did join SEATO ultimately.

Section VIII. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed alliance formation attempts – both successful and failed ones – during the early-Cold War era in Southeast Asia. Through examining two high-threat periods, I sought to show that high level of threat alone was not enough to get states together to form an alliance. Against a large threat such as communist China, the effort to form an alliance needed to

be initiated by a great power anchor or had its support. In 1949, when Nationalist Chinese/Korean/Philippine diplomats reached out to regional states, the response of states such as Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand was not “we did not think there was a communist threat,” but “there was a threat, though without great power backing, this effort would be futile.” In fact, in internal Thai and New Zealand deliberations, their conclusions were “this was not only futile, but joining an anti-China alliance without great power backing would actively harm our national security.” No matter how clear and present the danger was, as long as this was how regional states evaluated an effort to start an alliance, that alliance would never get off the ground.

When the US led the formation of a collective security arrangement in 1954, while not all regional states clamored to join, more regional states were interested. None were skeptical of the viability of a US-led alliance. And the leverage that American preponderance of power brought also meant that the US was able to push the group to adopt an ANZUS design. Of the eight countries that joined the negotiation, five preferred more military provision. But knowing that the treaty would be pointless if the US did not ratify it, they compromised. Absent the leverage that only the anchor had, the negotiation of a group with such divergent preferences would likely collapse.

Chapter 5. Multilateral Alliance Non-formation in Contemporary Southeast Asia

In 2002, ASEAN completed negotiation with China and released a “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.” The signatories pledged to “resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force.” Moreover, they will “exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes.” The declaration was, however, non-binding. There was no mechanism for enforcement or dispute resolution. There were no sanctions against violators either. In the years following the declaration, signatories routinely accused each other of breaking the agreement based on different interpretations of what activities demonstrated a lack of “self-restraint.” It was clear that the declaration failed to achieve its purpose to discourage claimants from partaking in activities other claimants perceived to be infringements of their rights.

As a result, in 2011, ASEAN states proposed creating a *binding* Code of Conduct. China was resistant and did not begin talks until 2014. Furthermore, the progress of negotiation has been glacial. As of 2020, there finally existed a single draft of the code that was agreed by all parties. However, the pandemic slowed down further negotiations and it remained to be seen when all parties would finalize and implement the code. Still, the fundamental issue cannot be resolved by any amount of negotiation: in an anarchic international system, when strong states such as China violate rules, who can punish them? The UN would be of no aid as China is part of the Security Council. And no Southeast Asian state would want to take any action that might escalate to an armed showdown. So how would any enforcement take place? Without enforcement, the code of conduct will at best be an expression of aspirations, as opposed to a mechanism that weaker states can rely on for security and stability.

The South China Sea conflict has, so far, been a negative case in alliance formation. The regional cooperation that ASEAN facilitated has not been on pooling members' military capabilities. No alliance has been created to deal with this specific conflict. To be sure, there are a number of alliances involving extra-regional great powers built during the Cold War, such as the US-Philippine mutual defense treaty as well as the Manila Pact. But the extent to which existing alliances have been repurposed for this new conflict has been inconsistent. The annual US-Philippine joint military exercise in 2015 did feature live-fire trainings close to the South China Sea, and the 2016 one included an amphibious operation on a hypothetical South China Sea island.¹ But the exercise was scaled down in 2017 and reverted back to focusing on humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

Against China, which has grown much stronger in the post-Cold War period, the only state that can serve as the anchor is the US. However, during most of the post-Cold War period, US attention has, for the most part, not been on containing China. In the 1990s, its focus was humanitarian interventions. Since 9/11, the War on Terror took center stage. What has been the impact of uncertain US commitment to Asia on Southeast Asian states' response to the South China Sea conflict? I argue that, without an anchor, concerted external balancing was slow to emerge. Southeast Asian claimants by and large chose hedging to be their strategy toward China. Even states that did, at least for a time, attempt to balance against China – such as the Philippines during the Aquino administration – resorted back to hedging.

¹ Parameswaran, Prashanth. "How Significant Is the 2017 US-Philippines Balikatan Military Exercise? – The Diplomat." *The Diplomat*, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/how-significant-is-the-2017-us-philippines-balikatan-military-exercise/>.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. I will first discuss the growth of the Chinese threat in the South China Sea conflict. Then, I will evaluate the sufficiency of joint Southeast Asian capabilities. Afterwards, I discuss US ability and willingness to serve as an anchor. Following that, I discuss how Southeast Asian claimants responded to the conflict and why they picked the strategies. Moreover, I analyze the dynamics of negotiation at ASEAN, and how, without an anchor and its capabilities, ASEAN efforts are unlikely to result in an effective mechanism to regulate the conflict. Finally, I will evaluate the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) as an alternative platform for organizing regional military response and its limitations.

Section I. Rising Chinese Threat

If China in 1954 was already a threat Southeast Asian states could not hope to match, the gap has grown manifold in the past decades. China's population in 1954 was 600 million, and its GDP \$33 billion. Today, despite decades of "one-child policy," the population more than doubled to 1.4 billion, and Chinese GDP surged to \$14.7 trillion in 2020.²

Its power projection capabilities also expanded substantially. In 1954, the part of Southeast Asia that was under the most threat from China was Indochina, which was continental. China's navy and air forces at the time were nascent, and did not pose serious threats to littoral Southeast Asia. Today, China has the resources, technology, and industrial capacity to maintain a modern navy. In 2012, then-President Hu Jintao called for China to become a "maritime power." In 2019, in terms of the number of vessels, China has the largest navy in the world at 335 ships.³

² World Bank. "China | Data." Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/china>.

³ CSIS ChinaPower Project. "How Is China Modernizing Its Navy?" Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-naval-modernization/>.

China's ambition in the South China Sea grew in tandem. To be sure, the dispute started before the Cold War. But until the 2000s, the dispute could be best characterized as periods of inaction followed by bursts of small-scale violence, such as the Battle of the Paracel Islands between China and South Vietnam in 1974, Chinese occupation of the Spratly Islands and Johnson Reef in 1988, and then the Mischief Reef in 1995.

The dispute escalated during the recent decade. In 2009, China submitted the "nine-dash line" map to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, claiming sovereignty over most of the South China Sea. Then, in 2012, China occupied Scarborough Shoal, which was also claimed by the Philippines. In subsequent years, China expanded the maritime features it controlled into artificial islands through land reclamation and built facilities for force projection, including air strips, hangars, large communications/sensor array, and hardened shelters for missile platforms. The militarization was unambiguous.

Section II. Inadequate Regional Capabilities

China's CINC (2016): 23.1%

Joint Southeast Asian CINC (2016): 5.6%

Against China, is Southeast Asia strong enough to resist without outside help? In terms of military expenditure, in 2020 the whole of Southeast Asia spent \$45 billion. By contrast, China spent \$252 billion.⁴ While military expenditure of Southeast Asian countries has been rising by 10% annually since 2009, most of their budgets went to routine expenditures, especially

⁴ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database." Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

personnel, operation and maintenance costs.⁵ Less than 20% went to new capability development, which includes both research and development as well as procurement of new weapons. As Laksmana (2018) assesses, other than Vietnam, most Southeast Asian countries have not been basing their war fighting and weapons acquisition plans on meeting the threat from China. Their priorities were more on routine operations, such as maritime patrol, dealing with trafficking, piracy, unauthorized fishing rather than preparing to fight naval battles.

Regional military collaboration was also limited. ASEAN established in 2006 a Defense Minister's Meeting (ADMM) in order to coordinate a peacekeeping force to deal with the violence between Indonesia and East Timor. ADMM has since become an annual gathering for member countries to discuss regional security matters. However, ADMM generally focuses on “non-traditional” security issues.⁶ The recurrent Expert Working Groups are on Cyber Security, Maritime Security (in the sense of countering piracy and smuggling), Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Military Medicine and Counterterrorism, Humanitarian Mine Action, and Peacekeeping Operation.⁷

The defense cooperation among ASEAN members that most resembled a joint force was the trilateral effort between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to patrol the Malacca Straits to combat piracy. The cooperation entailed intelligence sharing, coordinated (though not joint)

⁵ Laksmana, Evan. “Is Southeast Asia’s Military Modernization Driven by China? It’s Not That Simple.” *Global Asia*. Accessed October 20, 2021. https://www.globalasia.org/v13no1/cover/is-southeast-asias-military-modernization-driven-by-china-its-not-that-simple_evan-a-laksmana.

⁶ Teo, Sarah. “The Strengths and Weaknesses of Asia’s 2 Major Defense Meetings – The Diplomat.” *The Diplomat*. Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/the-strengths-and-weaknesses-of-asias-2-major-defense-meetings/>.

⁷ Wu, Shang-su. “ADMM-Plus Exercises: A Platform for Power Competition?” *Australian Institute of International Affairs*. Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/admm-plus-exercises-a-platform-for-power-competition/>.

maritime patrol, and joint aerial patrol. The last type of cooperation – named “Eyes in the Sky” initiative – was most significant because the teams that carried out the patrol comprised military personnel from all three states, with Thailand joining later in 2008.⁸ Still, against the Chinese navy, Southeast Asian militaries lack not just the material capabilities, but also the institutional framework to enable joint military operations.

Section III. Anchor Availability

Subsection A. US Ability

Against China, only the US naval force – at 296 battle-force ships – is comparable.⁹ In terms of deployment, as of June 2021, 216 active-duty military personnel are stationed in the Philippines. In Japan and South Korea, the US deploys 80,000 active-duty military personnel in total.¹⁰

While the US no longer maintains its own military bases in the Philippines, it has agreements with the Philippines and Singapore to access certain facilities and receive logistical support. The 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the Philippines allows the US to construct facilities, preposition (non-nuclear) defense assets, and rotate forces on five Philippine bases.¹¹ With Singapore, the US signed agreements to access and receive

⁸ Kim, Suk Kyoon. *The History of Piracy and Navigation*. 2020; Tarling, Nicholas, and Xin Chen. *Maritime Security in East and Southeast Asia: Political Challenges in Asian Waters*. Springer, 2017.

⁹ CSIS ChinaPower Project. “How Is China Modernizing Its Navy?”

¹⁰ Defense Manpower Data Center. “Number of Military and DoD Appropriated Fund (APF) Civilian Personnel Permanently Assigned by Duty Location and Service/Component as of June 30, 2021.” Accessed October 20, 2021. https://dwp.dmdc.osd.mil/dwp/api/download?fileName=DMDC_Website_Location_Report_2106.xlsx.

¹¹ Fonbuena, Carmela. “Duterte Reaffirms EDCA, U.S. Ties in Meeting with Trump.” *Rappler*, November 14, 2017. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-trump-edca-military-ties-asean-summit-2017-philippines>.

logistical support at the Sembawang and Changi bases since 1990 and 1998 respectively; in 2019, the agreements have been renewed until 2035.¹²

Given the location of the disputed islands, access to Philippine bases is logistically preferable. Nevertheless, the status of US-Philippine military agreements has at times been tenuous, especially during the Duterte administration. For instance, Duterte announced in February 2020 that the Philippines would cancel the 1998 Visiting Force Agreement, which would in turn make the EDCA inoperable.¹³ In July 2021, however, Duterte reversed course and kept the agreement.¹⁴ While the US has the material power to sustain a potentially drawn-out conflict with China, it also needs the cooperation of Southeast Asian allies to project force in the South China Sea at scale.

Subsection B. US Willingness

US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era could be divided – in admittedly simplified terms – into two eras: the 1990s, and 2000s-present. During the 90s, the focus was on humanitarian intervention in civil wars around the world, including Yugoslavia, Kosovo and Somalia. 9/11 demarcated a new era. During the 2000s and 2010s, US attention and resources concentrated on the War on Terror, with the Middle East as the main theater. After two decades,

¹² Sim, Dewey. “Singapore Renews Military Bases Pact with US amid Deepening Defence Ties with China.” *South China Morning Post*, September 24, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3030111/china-will-be-wary-us-singapore-deal-military-bases>.

¹³ De Castro, Renato Cruz. “Philippine-U.S. Security Relations.” *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective*, no. 42 (May 11, 2020). https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_42.pdf.

¹⁴ Acosta, Rene. “Philippines Reverses Course and Commits to U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement.” *U.S. Naval Institute News*, July 30, 2021. <https://news.usni.org/2021/07/30/philippines-reverses-course-and-commits-to-u-s-visiting-forces-agreement>.

the war appears to be winding down. US forces left Afghanistan in 2021, and the 2,500 US troops in Iraq (as of September 2021) are expected to leave by the end of the year.¹⁵

With the Middle East being the region of concern, Asia was put on a back burner. Beginning from the second term of the Bush administration, however, there has been gradual increase in attention. In 2005, the Pentagon announced that it would allocate 60% of all submarines as well as an additional aircraft carrier to the Pacific Command. In 2011, President Obama declared that the US would “pivot to Asia.” Concretely, the pivot entailed re-posturing US naval forces from a 50-50 split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to a 60-40 split.¹⁶ The US also committed to deploying up to 2,500 Marines to Darwin, Australia.¹⁷ In Southeast Asia, the pivot involved a US-Vietnam comprehensive partnership in 2013 as well as the EDCA with the Philippines in 2014. The “signature” component of the pivot remained the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade agreement that would comprise 12 nations and had the potential of reducing member countries’ susceptibility to Chinese economic coercion.

The pivot has been criticized to “[lack] teeth” (Nelson 2015) and under-resourced (Cha 2016b). Most critically, due to US domestic politics (both then-presidential candidates Trump and Clinton opposed the TPP), the US withdrew from the TPP in 2017. Furthermore, US reaction to China gaining control over Scarborough Shoal, as well as steady artificial island construction and militarization in the South China Sea was also limited. US official position was it did not

¹⁵ BBC News. “US Combat Forces to Leave Iraq by End of Year.” July 27, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57970464>.

¹⁶ BBC News. “Leon Panetta: US to Deploy 60% of Navy Fleet to Pacific.” June 2, 2012. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-18305750>.

¹⁷ ABC News. “Gillard, Obama Detail US Troop Deployment.” November 16, 2011. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-11-16/gillard2c-obama-announce-darwin-troop-deployment/3675596>.

take sides in these territorial disputes, though it encouraged the claimants to resolve their differences peacefully in accordance with international law and with respect to freedom of navigation.¹⁸ On multiple occasions, when President Obama, Secretary Clinton or Secretary Mattis was asked whether the US would defend the Philippines in the South China Sea conflict, all of them sidestepped the question.¹⁹

During the Trump administration, the foreign policy toward China hardened. The 2017 National Defense Strategy named China and Russia to be challengers of US security interest.²⁰ In the same year, the “free and open Indo-Pacific” concept emerged to be an important element of the administration’s foreign policy.²¹ Most relevant to the South China Sea conflict, in March 2019, Secretary of State Pompeo stated that the US-Philippine mutual defense treaty *would* cover the South China Sea conflict.²² The US also launched the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) in 2018 to reassure “U.S. allies, strategic partners, and other nations of the United States’ continued commitment to [Asia].”²³ Annually, ARIA will allocate \$1.5 billion to security programs. As Thayer (2020) analyzed, ARIA’s significance lay in the congressional approval; it could serve as a long-term framework for the US’ Indo-Pacific strategy.

¹⁸ Bonnet, François-Xavier. “Geopolitics of Scarborough Shoal.” Institut de recherche sur l’Asie du Sud-Est contemporaine, 2012.

¹⁹ Roughneen, Simon. “How Beijing Is Winning Control of the South China Sea.” *Nikkei Asian Review*, June 13, 2018. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Cover-Story/How-Beijing-is-winning-control-of-the-South-China-Sea>.

²⁰ The White House. “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” December 2017. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

²¹ The White House. “Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit | Da Nang, Vietnam,” November 10, 2017. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/>.

²² Lema, Karen, and Neil Jerome Morales. “Pompeo Assures Philippines of U.S. Protection in Event of Sea Conflict.” *Reuters*, March 1, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-idUSKCN1QI3NM>.

²³ Congressional Research Service. “The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) of 2018,” April 4, 2019. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11148.pdf>.

Nonetheless, there were mixed signals as to how much the administration prioritized Asia. For instance, in 2019 neither President Trump nor Secretary of State Pompeo attended the annual US-ASEAN summit.²⁴ In 2018 and 2019, President Trump also skipped attending the East Asia Summit.²⁵ The administration also eschewed multilateral arrangements. In 2017, President Trump stated “what we will no longer do is enter into large agreements that tie our hands, surrender our sovereignty, and make meaningful enforcement practically impossible.”²⁶ Together with the withdrawals from the TPP and the Iran nuclear deal, US willingness to join, let alone lead, any multilateral security arrangement was unclear.

The Biden administration has shown greater consistency in demonstrating US interest in the Asia-Pacific. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reaffirmed Pompeo’s statement that the US-Philippine mutual defense treaty could be invoked in the South China Sea conflict.²⁷ In August 2021, Vice President Kamala Harris visited Singapore and Vietnam, during which she urged Vietnam to join the US in challenging China’s “bullying” in the South China Sea.²⁸ Also significantly, in September 2021, the US, Britain and Australia announced a military partnership that would share nuclear-powered submarine technology.²⁹ Australia’s envoy to ASEAN stated

²⁴ Thayer (2020).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Saha, Premesha. “From ‘Pivot to Asia’ to Trump’s ARIA: What Drives the US’ Current Asia Policy?” Observer Research Foundation, February 19, 2020. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/from-pivot-to-asia-to-trumps-aria-what-drives-the-us-current-asia-policy-61556/>.

²⁷ United States Department of State. “Secretary Blinken’s Call with Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Locsin,” April 8, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-call-with-philippine-secretary-of-foreign-affairs-locsin-2/>.

²⁸ Jaffe, Alexander. “Harris Urges Vietnam to Join US in Opposing China ‘Bullying.’” Associated Press, August 25, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/health-pandemics-coronavirus-pandemic-vietnam-1fcdf1dbb2fc2a7e1259a02b3ed58b2b>.

²⁹ Erickson, Andrew S. “Australia Badly Needs Nuclear Submarines.” Foreign Policy. Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/20/australia-aucus-nuclear-submarines-china/>.

that AUKUS (acronym of the three states) was “not a defense alliance or pact.”³⁰ Nonetheless, it was significant that the US shared nuclear technology in maritime defense with an Asia-Pacific state whose main adversary is China. It remains to be seen if AUKUS will grow to include more regional states.

To sum up, in the post-Cold War period, US national security priority has not been in Asia. With the “pivot to Asia,” there were more signs of US interest in Asian security, but significant resource devotion did not come until ARIA in 2018. Nonetheless, this demonstration of commitment was undermined by the unpredictability of the Trump administration. Arguably, it was not until the Biden administration that there is a uniform message from the US government about the importance of the Asia-Pacific in American foreign policy.

Section IV. Regional States’ Perception of Balancing Viability

Among the Southeast Asian claimants in the South China Sea conflict – the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia – only Vietnam made an unambiguous and consistent effort to balance against China. All other states either wavered in their foreign policy (the Philippines) or have been cooperating with China (Malaysia and Brunei). Nevertheless, absent solid external support, even the most vociferous claimants like Vietnam limited their confrontation in some way.

Subsection A. The Philippines

Of all the Southeast Asian claimants, the Philippines was in the best position to obtain external support. It signed a mutual defense treaty with the US in 1951, and then the Manila Pact

³⁰ Jaipragas, Bhavan. “‘Not a Defence Alliance’: Australia Looks to Assuage Asean’s Concerns over Aukus.” South China Morning Post, September 20, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3149451/not-defence-alliance-australia-looks-assuage-aseans-concerns>.

in 1954. That said, there was ambiguity in the applicability of these treaties to Scarborough Shoal, since the shoal was not formally incorporated by the Philippines until 1978, over two decades after the creation of the treaties.³¹ The US did not affirm the applicability of the MDT until 2019.

The Scarborough Shoal standoff in 2012 was a catalyst for Philippine policy change. During the standoff, US officials privately mediated between the Philippines and China. The officials brokered a deal for withdrawal by both sides, but only the Philippines actually withdrew, leading to China obtaining de facto control over the shoal.³²

Philippine President Aquino compared Chinese actions to Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939.³³ On the one hand, China's takeover had the immediate effect of prompting more military cooperation between the Philippines and the US, as evidenced by the 2014 EDCA. On the other hand, the lack of US action to sanction China or aid the Philippines to gain back control over the shoal led other Philippine politicians to view the US as an undependable ally, including Rodrigo Duterte, who would become the Philippine president in 2016.

As presidential candidate, Duterte expressed that he did not have confidence that the US would honor its mutual defense treaty obligation and rescue the Philippines should a conflict

³¹ Strangio, Sebastian. "Affirming Trump-Era Policy, US Warns China Over South China Sea." *The Diplomat*, July 12, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/affirming-trump-era-policy-us-warns-china-over-south-china-sea/>.

³² Ratner, Ely. "Learning the Lessons of Scarborough Reef." Text. *The National Interest*. November 21, 2013. <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/learning-the-lessons-scarborough-reef-9442>.

³³ Bradsher, Keith. "Philippine Leader Sounds Alarm on China." *The New York Times*, February 4, 2014, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/05/world/asia/philippine-leader-urges-international-help-in-resisting-chinas-sea-claims.html>.

with China erupt.³⁴ In 2017, Duterte stated that the US was bound by the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty to protect the Philippines, yet it did nothing when China was building artificial islands in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.³⁵ The US should, in his opinion, have “[reprimanded]” China in “the first instance.”

Duterte repeatedly conveyed the futility of trying to fight China. He said, “why in hell, America, the only one who can act there, why did it want my navy to go there? It will be a massacre for my soldiers.”³⁶ On other occasions, Duterte declared that he would not go to war over the shoal and “waste the lives of Filipinos.”³⁷ On possible Chinese military build-up on the occupied shoal, Duterte was exasperated, saying “we cannot stop China from doing this thing. So what do you want me to do...declare war on China? I can, but we’ll all lose our military and policemen tomorrow.”³⁸ This view endured throughout his presidency. In his 2020 State of the Nation address, he remarked, “China is claiming it; we are claiming it. China has the arms; we do not have it. So, it’s simple as that.”³⁹

To preliminarily reduce the risk of escalation, President Duterte ordered in 2016 the Philippine Navy to not conduct joint patrols in the South China Sea with the US Navy to avoid antagonizing China.⁴⁰ Duterte also stated that only the coast guard – not the navy – would assert

³⁴ Feith, David. “The New Political Risk in the South China Sea.” *The Wall Street Journal Asia* 18 (2016): 1.

³⁵ “Philippines’ Duterte Derides U.S. for Past Inaction in South China Sea.” *Reuters*. March 23, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-idUSKBN16U28X>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ ABS-CBN News. “Duterte Willing to Back down on Sea Dispute with China,” April 11, 2016. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/halalan2016/nation/04/11/16/duterte-willing-to-back-down-on-sea-dispute-with-china>.

³⁸ The American Interest. “Duterte: We Can’t Stop China at Scarborough Shoal,” March 20, 2017. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/03/20/duterte-we-cant-stop-china-at-scarborough-shoal/>.

³⁹ Tomacruz, Sofia. “Duterte Repeats Threat of War with China, Refuses to Assert West PH Sea Rights.” *Rappler*, July 27, 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-repeats-threat-war-china-refuses-assert-west-philippine-sea-rights>.

⁴⁰ Katigbak, Jose. “Philippines Eyes Talks with China Sans Preconditions.” *The Philippine Star*, 2016.

Philippine rights at the shoal. Furthermore, Duterte said he regarded the conflict as one about rights to special economic zones, not territory. This categorization called into question the applicability of the mutual defense treaty. In sum, uncertain of US willingness to aid, and overwhelmed by Chinese maritime capabilities, even the Philippines, which had a formal security guarantee from the US, was wary to provoke China.

Subsection B. Vietnam

Vietnam is the only country among all Southeast Asian claimants that has unambiguously and consistently balanced against China, mainly through internal balancing. In 2007, the ruling party adopted a resolution called “Maritime Strategy toward the Year 2020,” which outlined plans to modernize Vietnam’s air and maritime assets. The associated program proposed transforming the Vietnam People’s Army from the traditionally ground-centric force to one in which the navy, the air force and the coast guard would be main actors.⁴¹ The size of Vietnam’s Coast Guard is now larger than those of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia combined.⁴² In terms of tonnage, the Vietnam Coast Guard grew twice as large from 2013 to 2016; the buildup was widely seen to be a response to the 2014 standoff against China over a mega-oil drilling rig China deployed to Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone.⁴³

In addition to adapting its military force, Vietnam’s defense acquisition also revealed the importance it was placing on maritime defense. Key purchases included six Russian-built Kilo-class submarines, six Canadian-built DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 amphibious aircraft, six

⁴¹ Grossman, Derek. “Can Vietnam’s Military Stand Up to China in the South China Sea?” *Asia Policy* 25, no. 1 (2018): 113–34.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Thayer, Carl “Vietnam’s Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-US Competition and Increasing Domestic Political Influence.” *Asian Security* 13, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 183–99, 11.

Japanese-built maritime surveillance ships, and a Japanese-constructed ASNARO-2 satellite, which permitted surveillance in all weather conditions at any time.⁴⁴ Despite these investments, China's maritime military capabilities still dwarf Vietnam's. Vietnam was estimated to have spent \$6 billion on its military in 2020, whereas China spent \$252 billion. Grossman (2018) assessed that Vietnamese military capabilities would not be enough to sustain an "extended, large-scale, or high-intensity conventional conflict in the region" should deterrence fail.⁴⁵

Countries often pursue external balancing to substitute for internal balancing, but Vietnam's approach to defense cooperation with other countries has been diversification and deliberate limitation, often forgoing opportunities that could significantly strengthen its defensive capacities but might antagonize China too much.

Officially, Vietnam has a "Four Noes" policy: no alliances with foreign powers, no foreign military bases on Vietnamese soil, no allying with one country to counter another, and no use of force or threat to use force in international relations. Its 2019 defense white paper did add a qualification, stating "depending on circumstances and specific conditions, Viet Nam will consider developing necessary, appropriate defense and military relations with other countries on the basis of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity as well as fundamental principles of international law, cooperation for mutual benefits and common interests of the region and international community."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Grossman (2018).

⁴⁵ Grossman, Derek. "Can Vietnam's Military Stand Up to China in the South China Sea?" *Asia Policy* 13 (February 22, 2018). https://www.rand.org/pubs/external_publications/EP67504.html.

⁴⁶ Ministry of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. "Viet Nam National Defence." National Political Publishing House, 2019. <http://www.mod.gov.vn/wps/wcm/connect/08963129-c9cf-4c86-9b5c-81a9e2b14455/2019VietnamNationalDefence.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=08963129-c9cf-4c86-9b5c-81a9e2b14455>.

Vietnam maintains military cooperation with multiple countries. Russia, which was Vietnam's patron during later Cold War, is currently the largest provider of military equipment and technology. The two states elevated their partnership from "strategic" to "comprehensive strategic" (the second-highest level) since 2012. Vietnam also raised its partnership with Japan from "strategic" to "extensive strategic," with an emphasis on Japanese assistance in building up the Vietnam Coast Guard's capacity. Moreover, Japan committed to funding Vietnam's long-term satellite plan. As for India, Vietnam gave India the approval to build a satellite imaging and tracking center in Vietnam in exchange for accessing images captured by Indian satellites. India also offered training to Vietnamese submarine operators and pilots. This was especially useful given that India's arsenal consisted of primarily Soviet weapon systems, just like Vietnam's. Additionally, Prime Minister Modi extended two lines of defense credit totaling in \$600 million during a visit to Hanoi in September 2016. Lastly, with the US, while the partnership between the two states has not reached the "strategic" level – meaning that military affairs are not among areas of bilateral cooperation – President Obama lifted the ban on weapon sales to Vietnam when he visited Hanoi in May 2016.⁴⁷

Vietnam's "friends everywhere" approach can in part be explained by its experience at the end of the Cold War.⁴⁸ The USSR was Vietnam's sole patron after Sino-Vietnamese relations deteriorated in the 1970s. Vietnam was highly dependent on Soviet aid for its economy and its military, and this dependency proved to be catastrophic when the USSR dissolved. The fall of the USSR and Russia's economic woes in the 1990s plunged Vietnam into poverty. To improve

⁴⁷ Thayer (2017).

⁴⁸ Ciorciari, John D. *The Limits of Alignment: Southeast Asia and the Great Powers since 1975*. Georgetown University Press, 2010.

relations with non-Communist countries, Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia, embedded itself in regional organizations such as ASEAN, and sought to diversify its defense partners.

Even as US-Vietnam relations thawed, Vietnam always maintained certain distance and did not accept all the military cooperation offers the US provided. For instance, since 2010, the US broached upgrading the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership (which could entail military cooperation), but Vietnam preferred to stay on the lower level.⁴⁹ When President Trump offered to sell missiles to Vietnam during a state visit, Vietnamese leaders did not comment.⁵⁰ And even after the US lifted a ban on weapons sales to Vietnam in 2016, no sales have taken place.⁵¹ In 2018, Vietnam quietly cancelled 15 defense engagements with the US involving army, navy, and air force exchanges.⁵²

The active avoidance of reliance on a particular country is understandable. But moderate commitments from many meant firm commitments from none. In the event of military confrontation with China, it would be unlikely that any of Vietnam's security partners would come to its rescue.

Overall, it cannot be said that Vietnam is completely free-riding, as it invested a great deal to balance internally. But if China restrained its plans to expand in the South China Sea due to possible US reaction and not due to Vietnamese internal balancing, and the US wanted

⁴⁹ Nguyen, Hong Kong. "US-Vietnam Relations in 2021: 'Comprehensive,' But Short of 'Strategic.'" *The Diplomat*, August 20, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/us-vietnam-relations-in-2021-comprehensive-but-short-of-strategic/>.

⁵⁰ Al Jazeera. "Trump Urges Vietnam to Buy US Missiles," November 12, 2017. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2017/11/12/trump-urges-vietnam-to-buy-us-missiles>.

⁵¹ Pham, Bac. "Pentagon Chief Austin Heads to Vietnam for Defence, Security Talks." *South China Morning Post*, July 28, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3142868/us-defence-secretary-lloyd-austins-vietnam-visit-focus-security>.

⁵² Le, Hong Hiep. *The Vietnam-US Security Partnership and the Rules-Based International Order in the Age of Trump*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020.

Vietnam to be a part in its plan to counter China in the Indo-Pacific, yet Vietnam refused to take the risk, then Vietnam's actions at least constituted "easy-riding."

Subsection C. Malaysia

Like Vietnam, Malaysia also had experience with anchor abandonment during the Cold War. In 1967, to deal with economic overstretch, Britain announced its "East of Suez" policy.⁵³ By withdrawing its troops from military bases in the Arabian Peninsula and Southeast Asia, Britain sought to cut defense spending. Malaysia, which only gained independence a few years prior amidst a conflict with Indonesia, had to scramble to fend for itself. Although Malaysia entered into the Five Power Defense Arrangements with Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore later, the arrangement obligated only consultation when any member came under attack, not necessarily military assistance.⁵⁴ From the beginning of the federation's history, Malaysia understood the hazard of relying on a single external power.

In the South China Conflict, Malaysia mostly pursued its interest bilaterally and quietly with China. When it did take the multilateral route, it was limited to international legal institutions. In 2009, Malaysia and Vietnam submitted a joint claim on a section of their extended continental shelves to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.⁵⁵ In 2019, Malaysia made a new submission to the Commission to reassert its claims. Both

⁵³ Omar, Marsita, and Fook Weng Chan. "British Withdrawal from Singapore." Singapore Infopedia, National Library Board, October 2020. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1001_2009-02-10.html.

⁵⁴ Chin, Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The Transformation of a Security System 1957-1971*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

⁵⁵ Parameswaran, Prashanth. "Playing It Safe: Malaysia's Approach to the South China Sea and Implications for the United States." Center for a New American Security, March 4, 2015. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/playing-it-safe-malysias-approach-to-the-south-china-sea-and-implications-for-the-united-states>.

submissions rejected China's claim that the features in the Spratlys and Paracels generated a continental shelf.⁵⁶

Otherwise, Malaysia's policy toward China has been accommodative. Kuik (2008) described Malaysia's posture as "limited bandwagoning" – it was "limited" because Malaysia's and China's policies were not completely aligned in all domains; nevertheless, the relationship has been one of political partnership.

In fact, both parties mutually and tacitly enabled each other's actions in the South China Sea. Compared to the Philippines and Vietnam, Malaysia extracted the most amount of oil and natural gas from the South China Sea. But China generally refrained from acknowledging Malaysian activities, whereas when the Philippines or Vietnam carried out large-scale resource extraction, China would actively interfere with their operations. Even when Malaysia built structures on Investigator Shoal and Erica Reef in 1999, China's response was mild. Malaysia's foreign minister paid a visit to Beijing before the construction commenced, and analysts conjectured that the purpose of the visit was to explain the plans, if not to seek approval.⁵⁷ Furthermore, China was one of the biggest customers of Malaysian LNG, the largest liquefied natural gas manufacturer in Malaysia, even though Malaysian LNG pumped most of its resources from territories over which China claimed sovereignty.⁵⁸

The collaborative relationship was affirmed diplomatically. In 1999, China and Malaysia put forward a joint statement saying that the two states would "promote the settlement of

⁵⁶ Nguyen, Hong Thao. "Malaysia's New Game in the South China Sea." *The Diplomat*, December 21, 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/12/malaysias-new-game-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

⁵⁷ Kuik (2008).

⁵⁸ Kreuzer, Peter. "A Comparison of Malaysian and Philippine Responses to China in the South China Sea." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 9, no. 3 (September 2016): 239–76.

disputes through bilateral friendly consultations and negotiations.”⁵⁹ In 2014, President Xi “acknowledged that the quiet diplomacy approach adopted by Malaysia was the best method,” because “it stressed on discussion rather than confrontation.”

Malaysian officials in turn played down the significance of Chinese expansionist activities. In 2015, General Zulkifeli bin Mohd Zin, the chief of the Malaysian Armed Forces, suggested that Chinese “assertive” activities in the Spratlys were merely a reaction to “[rebalance]” the US’ pivot to Asia.⁶⁰ Domestically, the Malaysian government prevented surges of nationalist sentiments by withholding information about Chinese activities in waters claimed by Malaysia to the public.⁶¹ The Malaysian media also showed remarkable “restraint” when covering the territorial dispute.⁶² In response to the announcement of AUKUS in 2021, Malaysian defense minister Hishammuddin Hussein proposed a trip to China to “get the views from the leadership of China, especially China’s defense.”⁶³

What explained Malaysia’s cooperative attitude? Kuik (2008) argued that progress in economic development was critical for the ruling party to legitimize its control, and economic partnership with China was indispensable to advancing the Malaysian economy. Specifically, after the 2008 global financial crisis, Malaysian elites intensified their effort to attract investments from China. Among all ASEAN states, Malaysia has the most wide-ranging portfolio of Belt and Road Initiative projects to increase connectivity with China.⁶⁴ It

⁵⁹ Kuik (2008).

⁶⁰ Kreuzer.

⁶¹ Ibid, 268.

⁶² Ibid, 273.

⁶³ Strangio, Sebastian. “Malaysia to Seek Chinese ‘Views’ on New AUKUS Security Pact.” *The Diplomat*, September 24, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/malaysia-to-seek-chinese-views-on-new-aucus-security-pact/>.

⁶⁴ Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. “‘A Tempting Torch? Malaysia Embraces (and Leverages on) BRI Despite Domestic Discontent’, in ‘Praxis: A Review of Policy Practice.’” *Asian Politics & Policy* 9 (January 2017): 652–54.

encompasses rail and port construction, port network, industrial parks, and a digital free trade zone. Adding to that, China is the biggest buyer of Malaysian exports.⁶⁵

Malaysia's stance toward China could also be explained by its leaders' view that China's dominance in Asia would only strengthen in the future. In an opinion piece, then-Prime Minister Najib Razak wrote that "in the 2050s, we will be in the middle of the 'Asian Century' [and] China will undoubtedly be the world's biggest economic power."⁶⁶ In another keynote address, Najib expressed that accepting the reality of China's rise "is by no means a reflection of our fatalism or adopting a subservient position towards China."⁶⁷ The perception of inevitable Chinese dominance led Malaysia to work with, not against, Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Subsection D. Brunei

In the South China Sea conflict, Brunei has been called a "silent claimant."⁶⁸ As a microstate with a population of 459,000 and a territory the size of Delaware, Brunei has not attempted to carry out hard balancing against China. Moreover, Brunei did not leverage international institutions, such as UNCLOS, to pursue its claims like other claimants in the conflict did.

⁶⁵ International Trade Centre. "Trade Map - Trade Statistics for International Business Development." Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx>.

⁶⁶ Rajoo, D. Arul. "Najib Meets Chinese President." *BERNAMA – Malaysian National News Agency*, May 30, 2014. http://lib.perdana.org.my/PLF/News_Online/2014/00077/Bernama%5B30%20May%202014%5DNajib%20Meets%20Chinese%20President.pdf.

⁶⁷ Kuik (2008).

⁶⁸ Hunt, Luke. "Has China Bought Brunei's South China Sea Silence?" *The Diplomat*, February 14, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/has-china-bought-bruneis-south-china-sea-silence/>.

As a former British protectorate, Brunei still maintains security ties with Britain. Britain operates a garrison in Brunei and deploys one infantry battalion of Gurkhas, which comprises recruits from Nepal.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, there is not a formal security guarantee. Since Brunei does not assert sovereignty over the maritime features in its exclusive economic zone,⁷⁰ a clash with Chinese vessels has not occurred. Britain has not yet made any statement as to whether it would provide assistance should a Brunei-China standoff take place. Other than Britain, Brunei has also signed agreements with countries including the US, Australia, Japan, Singapore and China to receive naval visits, military official visits, as well as to participate in joint military exercises.

China has been playing an increasingly important role in the Bruneian economy. It is at present Brunei's largest foreign investor. China funded the largest foreign investment project in Brunei's history – the Muara Besar refinery and petrochemical complex – and it is operating the Muara Container Terminal, which is Brunei's largest port.⁷¹ In addition, since 2014, China and Brunei established the Brunei-Guangxi Economic Corridor, which would involve half a billion dollars' worth of further investment.⁷²

China's investments are crucial to Brunei's economic future. Brunei is reliant on oil and natural gas extraction for 90% of its economy.⁷³ Yet, its oil reserve is projected to run out in 20 to 30 years, and the Bruneian government has been working to diversify the economy.⁷⁴ Access

⁶⁹ British Ministry of Defence. "The British Army in Brunei." Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/brunei/>.

⁷⁰ Espeña, Joshua, and Anne Uy. "Brunei, ASEAN and the South China Sea." The Interpreter, Lowy Institute, August 3, 2020. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/brunei-asean-and-south-china-sea>.

⁷¹ Bowie, Nile. "China Throws Sinking Brunei a Lifeline." Asia Times, March 18, 2018. <https://asiatimes.com/2018/03/china-throws-sinking-brunei-lifeline/>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Kumar, Pranav. "Brunei in India's Foreign Policy." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, May 19, 2008. http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=2569.

⁷⁴ Bowie.

to the Chinese market is therefore vital. In addition, China Fortune Land Development International, alongside Singapore's CFLD and Darussalam Assets, is developing a special economic zone in Jerudong to facilitate Brunei's long-term transition to an economy less dependent on oil and gas.⁷⁵ With regard to such massive infrastructural projects, the options of partners for Brunei appear to be limited. Bill Hayton noted that while Brunei would be happy to take investments from other states, presently only Chinese businesspeople are looking at opportunities in Brunei.⁷⁶

Chinese investments are not without strings. China has been placing pressure on Brunei to concede its rights to joint development in its exclusive economic zone. Sino-Bruneian joint declarations also emphasized "self-restraint" and the importance of "resolving territorial and jurisdictional disputes through peaceful dialogue and consultations by sovereign states *directly concerned*,"⁷⁷ i.e., to not bring in extra-regional powers such as the US or to leverage international institutions. Brunei's rare official statement on the South China Sea conflict in 2020 reflected its consideration of Chinese preferences. While the statement mentioned that negotiations on the South China Sea should be in accordance with the international law, and stressed the importance of the ASEAN Code of Conduct, it also emphasized that "specific issues should be addressed *bilaterally* by the countries *directly concerned*."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Thambipillai, Pushpa. "Brunei Darussalam: The 'Feel-Good Year' Despite Economic Woes." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2018, no. 1 (2018): 77–94.

⁷⁶ Bowie.

⁷⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Joint Press Release on the Second Meeting of the Joint Steering Committee Between the People's Republic of China and Brunei Darussalam," January 16, 2021. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/kjgzbdffyq/t1846764.shtml.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam. "Statement on the South China Sea," July 20, 2020. <http://www.mfa.gov.bn/Lists/Press%20Room/news.aspx?id=841&source=http://www.mfa.gov.bn/site/home.aspx>.

As one of the smallest countries in the world whose traditional security patron had retrenched in the region with the “East of Suez” policy, there are very limited choices for Brunei to balance either internally or externally. Thus, its non-pursuit of territorial claims in the South China Sea conflict might well be the most strategic option.

To sum up, among the four Southeast Asian claimants in the South China Sea dispute, two (Malaysia and Brunei) are accommodative toward China. Both Vietnam and the Philippines made an effort to balance. Vietnam did so mainly through internal balancing, and the Philippines stepped up its defense cooperation with the US toward the end of Aquino’s presidency. Nonetheless, Vietnam keeps external powers at arm’s length and did not utilize the full range of external assistance available. The prospect of Vietnam serving Thailand’s role for the US during the Cold War – i.e., enable the US to project power from its territory – is not optimistic. As for the Philippines, which is the only claimant that has a mutual defense treaty with the US, it backtracked from actively balancing against China to hedging and accommodating China after 2016, even as Chinese actions continued to be assertive.

Both the Philippines and Vietnam might welcome the US or other states taking a firmer stance on further Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea. On the establishment of AUKUS, Philippines foreign minister Teodoro Locsin stated that “the enhancement of [Australia’s] ability to project power should restore and keep the balance rather than destabilize it.”⁷⁹ Without naming China, Locsin added “proximity breeds brevity in response time; thereby enhancing an ASEAN near friend and ally’s military capacity to respond to a threat to the region

⁷⁹ Reuters. “Philippines Supports Australia Nuclear Sub Pact to Counter China.” *Reuters*, September 21, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-supports-australia-nuclear-sub-pact-counter-china-2021-09-21/>.

or challenge the status quo.” Vietnamese reaction was harder to gauge; its Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that “peace, stability, cooperation, and development in the region and the world is the common goal of all countries, to which countries have the responsibility to contribute.”⁸⁰ Notwithstanding, supporting other countries’ effort is different from taking a risk themselves, and to achieve the latter, the anchor would have to shape incentives so that free-riding would be minimized.

Section V. Unanchored Multilateral Negotiation at ASEAN

In this section, I will discuss ASEAN’s attempt to negotiate a regional solution to the South China Sea conflict, and how the absence of an anchor impeded the process and the outcome. To be sure, what ASEAN has been trying to do is not to form a defensive military alliance against China. In fact, China was involved in some of ASEAN’s negotiations. Nevertheless, there were some similarities. Successful ASEAN negotiations would set red lines on what states could do in the South China Sea, and would include repercussions if any party crossed those lines.

When a negotiation is anchored, the advantage is that there are more solutions to deal with divergent preferences. The anchor can provide side payment to dissenting states. Alternatively, the group can drop the dissenting state. If that state is indispensable in some way, like France for defending the Central Front, then other states – including the anchor – could decide on concession. One country’s dissent – as long as it is not the anchor – needs not stall the whole endeavor.

⁸⁰ Strangio (2021).

In ASEAN negotiations, one country's dissent – Cambodia – did hamper the entire organization's ability to respond to the South China Sea dispute. China had been increasing its engagement with Cambodia since the late 2000s through more trade, foreign investment and aid.⁸¹ As the two countries improved relations, Cambodia consistently supported positions that aligned with Chinese interests in ASEAN deliberations. Most notably, after China gained control over Scarborough Shoal in 2012, both Vietnam and the Philippines wanted the joint statement of the annual ASEAN meeting to reference the conflicts.⁸² However, Cambodia held the view that those were bilateral conflicts and therefore they should not be mentioned in the ASEAN joint statement.⁸³ There were even reports that Cambodian representatives shared the drafts with Chinese interlocutors during negotiation.⁸⁴ In any case, Cambodia stood firm in its opposition. As a result, for the first time in ASEAN's history since 1967, its annual meeting did not end with a joint statement. The joint statement was more than a document. It represented the unity of the region. Specifically, this disagreement showed that some ASEAN countries (the Philippines and Vietnam) thought that the regional organization should be involved in their disputes with China, while other countries such as Cambodia thought that those disputes were not within the scope of the organization. A similar incident took place in 2016. Cambodia pushed to remove any use of the word "militarization" in the joint statement and blocked any references to the Permanent

⁸¹ Chen, Shihlun Allen. "The Development of Cambodia–China Relation and Its Transition Under the OBOR Initiative." *The Chinese Economy* 51, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 370–82.

⁸² *BBC News*. "Asean Nations Fail to Reach Agreement on South China Sea." July 13, 2012. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18825148>.

⁸³ Bower, Ernest. "China Reveals Its Hand on ASEAN in Phnom Penh." Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 20, 2012. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-reveals-its-hand-asean-phnom-penh>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

Court of Arbitration's ruling, which invalidated China's territorial claim.⁸⁵ Given that ASEAN operated on consensus decision-making, the position that Cambodia took effectively blocked the whole organization's ability to solve the conflict.

In addition to dealing with divergent preferences, the asymmetry of bargaining power between China and ASEAN countries meant that negotiation outcomes tended to converge around China's preferences. When China and ASEAN negotiated what became the *Framework for the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea* (2016), Southeast Asian claimants in the South China Sea conflict had hoped the framework would pave the way to a legally binding, more comprehensive and effective agreement than the 2002 *ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties*, which was a non-binding political statement.⁸⁶ China was against any legally binding codes so that its freedom of action would not be constrained.⁸⁷ It also opposed the involvement of outside parties, including international courts, in dispute settlement. Instead of specifying arbitration processes as well as methods for enforcement, the framework merely stated that the purpose was to establish a "rule-based framework containing a set of norms to guide the conduct of parties."

This pattern recurred throughout two decades of negotiations: (i) states that were highly impacted by the South China Sea conflict wanted to use ASEAN to "punch above their weight"; (ii) states that were not directly affected, such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, were,

⁸⁵ Willemyns, Alex. "Cambodia Blocks Asean Statement on South China Sea." *The Cambodia Daily*, July 25, 2016. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160726143500/https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/cambodia-blocks-asean-statement-on-south-china-sea-115834/>.

⁸⁶ Storey, Ian. "Assessing the ASEAN-China Framework for the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea." *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective*, no. 62 (August 8, 2017). https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2017_62.pdf.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

as B.A. Hamzah described, “lukewarm at best,”⁸⁸ and may or may not go along with littoral members’ strategies depending on their own economic and security interests with China; and (iii) China’s bottom line became the group’s de facto bottom line, because without China’s agreement, the whole negotiation would collapse. Some Southeast Asian diplomats and researchers assessed that the negotiation for the final *Code of Conduct* would probably take at least another five years.⁸⁹ It is likely that, as the negotiations continue to proceed at a glacial pace, China will strengthen its force projection capabilities in the South China Sea, just like it did in the past decade. In a US congressional testimony in 2018, Admiral Philip Davidson assessed that “China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States.”⁹⁰ When that control consolidates, no Code of Conduct – even a legally binding one – could change that.

Section VI. Other Regional Possibilities

The South China Sea conflict, of course, does not exist in a vacuum. The Taiwan Strait and the East China Sea are adjacent hotspots. While India’s territorial conflict with China is not maritime, the Indian government has professed support for a “free, open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific.”⁹¹ If ASEAN negotiations continue to be an impasse, how likely would Southeast Asian countries pursue their territorial claims through other regional arrangements?

⁸⁸ Hayton, Bill. “After 25 Years, There’s Still No South China Sea Code of Conduct.” *Foreign Policy*. July 21, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/21/south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-asean/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Senate Armed Services Committee. “Advance Policy Questions for Admiral Philip Davidson, USN Expected Nominee for Commander, U.S. Pacific Command,” April 17, 2018. https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Davidson_APQs_04-17-18.pdf.

⁹¹ Hindustan Times. “Rajnath Singh Calls for Free and Open Indo Pacific at Key ASEAN Meet,” June 16, 2021. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rajnath-singh-calls-for-free-and-open-indo-pacific-at-key-asean-meet-101623820514789.html>.

The most salient possibility is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), an informal grouping comprising the US, India, Japan and Australia. The Quad was initiated by Japan in 2007 to enhance military and diplomatic ties,⁹² but divergent interests led Australia to withdraw in 2008, and the group laid dormant until 2017.⁹³ While the group is reviving, the US stated that the Quad is “an informal grouping of democratic states that are all committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific” but “there is not a military dimension to it or security dimension.”⁹⁴ All the same, countries that comprised the Quad held joint military exercises in 2020 and 2021.

Most Southeast Asian claimants have been reticent about the Quad. The Philippines has not articulated specific policies about it. I have also not found Malaysian or Bruneian comments, other than former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad stating in May 2021 that the Quad is “an old strategy of encirclement where you try to encircle the enemy, but when you do that, the enemy will retaliate.”⁹⁵ As for Vietnam, when an ambassador was asked about Vietnam’s position on the Quad in 2018, he stated that Vietnam did not want “any military alliance as it is not conducive to regional security” and it “[welcomes] any initiative which can contribute to peace in the region but if there’s any ganging up or use of force, it will go against Vietnam’s position.”⁹⁶ Vietnam is thus far associated with the Quad as part of what has been

⁹² Kumar, P Prem. “‘Old’ Quad Strategy Risks Provoking China: Malaysia’s Mahathir.” *Nikkei Asia*, May 20, 2021. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Future-of-Asia/The-Future-of-Asia-2021/Old-Quad-strategy-risks-provoking-China-Malaysia-s-Mahathir>.

⁹³ Flitton, Daniel. “Who Really Killed the Quad 1.0?” *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute, June 2, 2020. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/who-really-killed-quad-10>.

⁹⁴ Carvajal, Nikki. “Biden Officials Stress Quad Is an ‘Unofficial Gathering,’ ‘not a Military Alliance,’ Ahead of First in-Person Meeting.” *CNN Politics*, September 24, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/24/politics/the-quad-white-house-meeting/index.html>.

⁹⁵ Kumar (2021).

⁹⁶ Parashar, Sachin. “As Quad Meets, Vietnam Ambivalent about the Group.” *The Times of India*, November 15, 2018. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/as-quad-meets-vietnam-ambivalent-about-the-group/articleshow/66637725.cms>.

called “Quad-Plus,” along with South Korea and New Zealand. Quad-Plus cooperation so far focused on pandemic response.⁹⁷

Both the Quad and “Quad-Plus” are still in their early stages. It is not yet clear if Quad members intend the grouping to expand and serve as a basis for security cooperation. As mentioned, the US, as of September 2021, insisted that the Quad does not contain any security or military dimensions. In the Quad’s first in-person meeting, the heads of state agreed to collaborate on coronavirus vaccine distribution, semiconductors supply chain security enhancements, climate change tracking, and greater cooperation to combat illegal fishing and on maritime domain awareness.⁹⁸ The benefit of focusing on non-security issues is that the group would be more effective in attracting countries that are wary of antagonizing China. The downside – given that the stated goal of the group is to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific – is countries that might be willing to be involved in hard balancing now will view the option to be unavailable, and decide to adopt accommodative policies toward China, which in turn would enable China to solidify its control in the South China Sea.

A second concern about Southeast Asian claimants potentially joining the Quad is the extent to which the Quad adheres to democratic principles.⁹⁹ In a March 2021 statement named “the Spirit of the Quad,” the four states declared that they “strive for a region that is...anchored

⁹⁷ Smith, Jeff M. “How America Is Leading the ‘Quad Plus’ Group of Seven Countries in Fighting the Coronavirus.” *The National Interest*, March 30, 2020. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-america-leading-quad-plus-group-seven-countries-fighting-coronavirus-138937>.

⁹⁸ Holland, Steve, David Brunnstrom, Nandita Bose, and Michael Martina. “Quad Leaders Press for Free Indo-Pacific, with Wary Eye on China.” *Reuters*, September 25, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/quad-leaders-meet-white-house-amid-shared-china-concerns-2021-09-24/>.

⁹⁹ For further discussion about democratic values and the Quad, see Corben, Tom. “The Quad, Vietnam, and the Role of Democratic Values.” *The Diplomat*, May 25, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/the-quad-vietnam-and-the-role-of-democratic-values/>.

by democratic values.”¹⁰⁰ All members in the Quad are democracies. Most claimants in the South China Sea conflict are not. If the Quad conditions membership, financial assistance, or cooperation on democratic governance (similar to what the European Union does), it might discourage the participation of non-democratic regional states.

Whether the Quad would serve as a springboard for collective security action in Southeast Asia will very much depend on US willingness to commit to the extent that regional states are convinced the risk of antagonizing China would be worthwhile. Furthermore, the US will have to shape incentives such that regional states cannot enjoy full security benefits without undertaking some risks themselves. Absent any of these factors, regional states will continue to hedge or accommodate.

Section VII. Chapter Conclusion

The South China Sea conflict has been (as of 2021) a case of alliance non-formation. While there has been an effort to manage the conflict regionally by ASEAN, thus far it is not successful in constraining China’s actions. With limited military power, it is not possible for ASEAN to decide what would constitute a red line, declare unilaterally and impose sanctions when the line is crossed. But working with China, the progress of negotiation has been glacial and the prospect of reaching a Code of Conduct that is binding and enforceable is not optimistic.

Realistically, to balance against China, the only viable ally would be the US. However, during the last two decades, US attention was mostly on the War on Terror. Limited military and economic resources were devoted to Southeast Asia. Furthermore, when China gained control

¹⁰⁰ The White House. “Quad Leaders’ Joint Statement: ‘The Spirit of the Quad.’” March 12, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

over Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and built artificial militarized islands in the South China Sea in subsequent years, there was not much US reaction. This in turn led the Philippines – the only Southeast Asian claimant that had an existing mutual defense treaty with the US – to doubt US willingness to come to its defense. Rather than continuing to balance, the Philippines backtracked its policy and sought *détente* with China. As for Vietnam, whose rapprochement with the US began only in 2016, it was very cautious not to antagonize China. If a US treaty ally like the Philippines could not count on the US to come to its rescue, Vietnam has even less to rely on. For Malaysia and Brunei, they have been for the most part “model claimants” from China’s perspective by pursuing their economic interests bilaterally and quietly. Their accommodative policies are likely to persist.

Is the South China Sea conflict going to follow the NATO path, the SEATO path or the buck-passing and appeasement during interwar Europe? All three were calculated responses to the rise of a regional threat, even if some of these strategies ultimately led to catastrophe. What I hope I have shown in the past three chapters is that the actions of extra-regional great powers are critical to how regional states respond. A growing threat, by itself, is not enough to solve the collective action problem inherent in multilateral alliance formation. The costs and benefits of resistance versus accommodation vary drastically depending on the choices of an extra-regional great power.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this final chapter, I will summarize the findings from the last three empirical chapters. Then, I will address alternative explanations of my cases. Following that, I will elaborate on the broader theoretical implications of my argument, as well as avenues for future research. I will end the chapter with policy implications of my theory.

Section I. Summary of Empirical Findings

My overarching argument is that, during multilateral alliance formation against a large adversary, regional states face a unique collective action problem. In order to solve it, a group of states requires an external great power to “anchor” the alliance formation process.

In early-Cold War Western Europe, I show how, in the face of overwhelming Soviet threat, Western European states recognized that some sort of security cooperation would be necessary. However, the fact that the security cooperation resulted in a multilateral treaty was not a given. Britain and France had preferred separate bilateral arrangements with the Low Countries and had not envisioned deep and comprehensive military integration. However, because Western European states understood that balancing against the Soviet Union would not be viable without US assistance, and the US judged that regional military integration would be crucial to Western Europe’s ability to resist the Soviet threat in the long run, Western European states set aside their differences and negotiated the multilateral Brussels Pact.

US military aid policy was instrumental in reducing free-riding. By deprioritizing aid requests from non-allies, the US dissuaded Scandinavian countries, such as Norway and Denmark, from adopting a neutralist policy. Toward Western European states, US policy to not revive the bilateral Lend-Lease program and requirement that all aid requests must be submitted on a joint basis prompted Western European countries to take concrete steps to pool their defense

assets and integrate arms production. Together with policies that affirmed US commitment to the region, such as continuing to station troops in Germany, the Marshall Plan, and the Vandenberg Resolution, the transatlantic North Atlantic Treaty was created successfully in 1949.

In early-Cold War Southeast Asia, the effect of not having an anchor was evident in the attempt to form a Pacific Pact – conceived to be a counterpart of NATO — by the Philippines, Nationalist China and Korea in 1949 when the Chinese Communist Party prevailed in the Chinese Civil War. With no great power backing, a high level of regional threat did not bind local states together. Instead, they viewed attempting to balance to be futile, and even hazardous. US change of position in 1954 and subsequent effort to lead the creation of a regional security treaty was able to attract more regional states. Asymmetric US bargaining power further contributed to compromises by regional states, leading to the successful establishment of the Manila Pact.

Similar regional response has not yet coalesced in contemporary Southeast Asia. Facing increasing Chinese power and assertiveness in the South China Sea conflict, other claimants have mostly pursued accommodating or hedging in their relations with China. The options to balance have been limited. The US, which is the only country that can rival China, was preoccupied with the Middle East throughout the 2000s and 2010s. There has been a gradual shift in US foreign policy focus to the Asia-Pacific, but the willingness to commit has not yet approached the level in 1954. Without the certainty of rescue, claimants in the South China Sea conflicts are likely to be wary to push back against China's effort to expand.

Together, these cases show the challenges of multilateral alliance formation. Regional states recognize and respond to threat, but *how* they respond depends on other factors, such as the actions of extra-regional great powers. The fact that a rising regional threat exists does not

mean that an anchor is available. There are many reasons why an anchor might not be available. In the cases we have seen, they include being preoccupied with threats from another region, concern about anti-colonialism, etc. The benefits of being extra-regional is that it gives a state more time to respond. But if an extra-regional great power only responds when the threat has become proximate, it would be too late for regional states. To act as an anchor requires the extra-regional great power to act preventatively.

Section II. Alternative Explanations

Before delving into more discussion about the implications of my theory, I will first address some alternative explanations of the three cases. I will cover the three major schools of thoughts in IR theory, although I want to reiterate that not every case has been examined by researchers from each school of thought; SEATO is rather understudied relative to NATO. Where necessary, I would extend the logic of a school of thought.

Subsection A. Realist Explanations

In realist explanations of alliance formation, threat is the overarching driver. Rosato (2010) argues that the level of power of the adversary determines whether a group of state would cooperate with each other to balance. Rosato differentiates between three levels of power -- superior; overwhelming (coalition viable); and overwhelming (coalition not viable). The first level ("superior") could provoke balancing or buck-passing; regional states might decide joining force is not necessary since the force advantage is so slim. The second level -- "overwhelming (coalition viable)" -- is the most likely to provoke interstate cooperation. The form it would take -- integration or unification -- in turn depends on the distribution of power among regional states. Finally, if the adversary's power advantage is so great that a coalition is not viable, regional states would opt for bandwagoning or hiding.

Rosato and I differed in the determination of whether a coalition of Western European countries was viable against the Soviet Union in late 1940s. In my case study, I focused on 1947, which preceded any multilateral formation. Rosato examined a broader period from 1945 to 1950. Rosato argued that "although Britain, France, and West Germany could not deter or defeat the USSR alone, a European coalition would be powerful enough to balance effectively against the Soviet Union." Even excluding Britain, a grouping of France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg "also would have the wherewithal to stand up to Moscow." Rosato based his assessments on ratios of power derived from the Correlates of War's National Material Capabilities dataset as well as another source of European historical statistics. I based my assessment also on the NMC dataset, but I also relied on other assessments of national militaries of Britain and France, such as the state of their national conscription programs, the speed of demobilization, etc. Furthermore, I added British and French officials' assessment of the adequacy of their own troops against the Soviet military. As late as July 1948, British military staff warned that if war broke out imminently, Britain would "suffer a military disaster on the Western Front." French ministers stated in internal deliberations in April 1948 that "if we are alone, the battle will last ten days." Therefore, I concluded that Western Europe in 1947 was no match for the Soviet Union in terms of military power.

Because of our different assessments of the adequacy of European forces, Rosato and I derived different conclusions about what it took to cooperate militarily. My theory said that the alliance would not happen unless there was an external anchor. Rosato did address that "Washington's clear commitment in the short term" (coupled with long-term desire to withdraw from the European continent) contributed to the formation of a west European combination through "[providing] the Europeans with the opportunity to build a coalition – without it any

experiment in unity was unthinkable.” But based on Rosato's theory, US support was not necessary. Because what mattered was the power difference between Western European states (the Big Three, or a coalition of continental European states) and the USSR. But based on my empirical findings, most European officials viewed US military support to be essential. I found statements from a range of European officials (Bevin, Attlee, Bidault, de Gaulle, Spaak, van Kleffens, etc.) that showed they viewed US participation to be indispensable to balancing against the Soviet Union. Bevin did think that maybe Western Europe could become a “third force” in international politics, but even he changed his mind circa 1948. I have not found evidence that Western Europeans thought that they could go it alone, or that they wanted to go it alone.

All this is not to say that the role of Soviet threat was not crucial in the formation of NATO; it is just that the threat was necessary, but not sufficient, for multilateral alliance formation. Where the threat was large and the regional states significantly less powerful, an external anchor would be necessary.

Subsection B. Institutional Explanations

Besides external threat, a number of researchers also examined transaction costs as a causal factor in alliance formation. In the transactional cost literature, the dichotomy is between the “market” (non-hierarchical; transactions are based on price signals) and “firms” (hierarchical). Applying this dichotomy to alliance formation, alliance would be the “firm” and non-hierarchical security arrangements are the “market.” In examining post-WWII European security collaboration, Weber (1997) applied Coase and Williamson's theories on transactional costs to explain why Western European states pursued binding security arrangements. Although Weber focused more on the European Defense Community, the argument was also applicable to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty. When transaction costs (in, for example,

gathering and evaluating information, preparing for, negotiating, and concluding agreements, etc.) are high, Weber argued that states form or join political entities with well developed, cooperative organizational structures.

During my research on the formation process of NATO and SEATO, I have not come across extensive discussions concerning transactional costs by European or Asia-Pacific leaders throughout the negotiating process. If the transactional cost logic operated, leaders would have justified forming/joining the Brussels Pact/North Atlantic Treaty/Manila Pact because it allowed them to do the same tasks with lower transaction costs. Instead, I found the central issue to be by being in a group that also contained the United States, each regional state could produce something they could not achieve (deterring the Soviet Union/China) on its own before. To put it in economic terms, by being in an alliance, it opened up new types of transactions to be carried out. It would be inaccurate to compare the transaction costs of a country operating alone with the transaction costs if that country belonged to an alliance, because the transaction was not even possible if the country operated unilaterally.

More broadly, in the literature of transaction costs and security cooperation, I have found that certain concepts between the security and economic domains do not map onto each other completely. It is unclear, for instance, what alliances-as-firms produce, or what counts as a single transaction. Both are important for nailing down what transaction costs entail, which is in turn crucial for comparing how much transaction cost “savings” states can achieve by joining alliances.

Subsection C. Constructivist Explanations

The formation of SEATO took place at the height of decolonization. It was true that the ultimate alliance included some post-colonial countries, namely, the Philippines and Pakistan.

But it was also true that some post-colonial countries were invited but did not join the negotiation, including Burma, India, Ceylon and Indonesia. Acharya (2005 and 2011) argued that a norm against collective defense emerged in the early-Cold War years. The norm was an interplay of ideas of key local agents, such as India's Nehru, as well as the global norm of non-intervention. This norm portrayed collective defense as a new form of great power dominance and had the effect of holding back the participation of some regional states during SEATO's formation.

Acharya's explanation fitted India's case powerfully. However, for the other neutralist countries – Ceylon, Indonesia, and Burma – whether this norm was the main causal factor in their non-participation in SEATO was questionable. Ceylonese Prime Minister John Kotelawala told Sir Claude Corea that he was personally for SEATO, and although Ceylon would not join in the beginning, he urged that the pact should “[leave] the door open [to Ceylon] against the possibility of joining the pact in the future.” For Burma, the effect of the diplomatic scandal surrounding *Operation Paper* on Burmese-American relations could not be discounted. As for Indonesia, the Communist Party of Indonesia was part of the ruling coalition alongside the nationalist party and the Islamic party. When the government was itself partly communist, rising communist influence in the region was not exactly a threat.

More broadly, the attitude of each post-colonial state toward alliance formation was mediated not just by anti-colonial sentiments, but also the particular history of each country and the specific Western power in question (for instance, the relationship between the Philippines and the US would be different from that with Britain, even though both the US and Britain had been colonial powers). Thus, normative explanations might be best suited for analysis of

individual countries. Their generalizability to a group of states will require very careful treatment.

Section III. Broader Theoretical Implications

What are the theoretical implications of my theory? To situate this dissertation in the broader context, it deals with a specific process (formation) of a specific type of alliance (balancing;¹ multilateral). Alliance itself is one of two ways (along with internal balancing) for states to balance against threats.

In the literature on alliances, to my knowledge, other than Fordham and Poast (2016) and Kuo (2021) there are no other works that focus on multilateral alliance formation. Hopefully, this dissertation has shown that multilateral alliance formation should be an area of study that is related to but distinct from bilateral alliance formation. Some findings about alliance formation are applicable to both bilateral and multilateral alliance formation, but not all are. This work posits that there is a different set of problems that countries seeking to form multilateral alliances face. Further research will be needed to reveal additional ways in which multilateral alliance formation differs from bilateral alliance formation.

In the broader balancing literature, this dissertation demonstrates that a high level of threat alone is not enough to trigger countries to balance externally. The *composition* of a group of countries matters. An anchored group is very different from an unanchored one, even if the aggregate capabilities of the two groups are identical. Thus, this dissertation builds on Morrow's (1991) insight that asymmetry within alliances facilitates alliance formation by elucidating the theoretical mechanisms.

¹ As opposed to war-fighting coalitions, non-aggressive/neutrality pacts, or consultative pacts.

Section IV. Future Research

To understand the three cases in the empirical portion more comprehensively, future iterations of this dissertation can expand to cover more regional states. During the expansion from the Brussels Pact to the North Atlantic Treaty, a range of European states was considered as future members. For some of them, no invitation was extended by Brussels Pact states and the US. Other states indicated in advance that they were not interested. Even for countries that did not become part of the North Atlantic Treaty, such as Austria and Switzerland, their decision-making is worth studying. As for the South China Sea case, ASEAN states that are not claimants in the territorial dispute are the next logical targets for analysis. For some ASEAN states, such as Singapore, although it is not a treaty ally of the US, it does maintain some level of security cooperation. Thailand is also an intriguing case; it is a US treaty ally through the Manila Pact, but the alliance relation between the two countries seemed to have faded in recent decades. Evaluating a broader range of Southeast Asian states will help clarify the dynamics in ASEAN and show its potential as well as limitations to be the major international institution for handling the South China Sea conflict.

Beyond more thorough understanding of the three cases in this dissertation, examining cases of multilateral balancing alliance formation by very different anchors can yield further insights on the anchor-regional state relationship. In all three cases in this dissertation, the anchor was the US. But multilateral alliances have been anchored by countries that are very different from the US as well, such as the USSR in the formation of the Warsaw Pact. Studying alliance formations anchored by difference countries distills the essence of the anchor.

Another avenue for further research is to evaluate the effects of the anchor after the alliance treaty is signed. In this dissertation, a case ends when the treaty is signed, but there is no

reason to think that the effect of intra-alliance power asymmetry would cease to operate. For some alliances, signing the treaty begins the work of concrete military integration. Does the existence of an anchor facilitate efficient collective action during this phase as well because the anchor continues to be in control? Or do regional states gain more influence vis-à-vis the anchor through joint decision-making mechanisms in the multilateral institution? The actual operation of the alliance will entail different kinds of collective action problems, and how much the anchor continues to be the solution awaits further research.

Section V. Policy Implications

What are the policy implications of my empirical findings? In the age of Sino-American security competition, whether a balancing alliance would emerge in Asia the way NATO formed against the Soviet threat is the prominent question. While Southeast Asian and other Asian states are the most exposed to Chinese assertiveness, this dissertation has shown that there exist tremendous disincentives for regional states to coordinate collective security actions because there is not an anchor in Asia. Hedging remains a widely adopted strategy, not because regional states are unaware of the risks, but because viable alternatives are perceived to be unavailable, and the temptation to free-ride remains strong.

If a multilateral balancing alliance were to form, the findings of this dissertation show that the anchor has to move first. Even during the formation of the Brussels Pact, in which the US asked Western European states to demonstrate their determination by forming an alliance on their own first, the US did commit to the region significantly through the Marshall Plan and troop deployment to West Germany. It is one thing for an extra-regional great power to spend significant resources to demonstrate commitment and *then* ask regional states to take the

initiative. It is another thing for that power to invest nothing, ask regional states to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and say it might join later.

In addition, the empirical evidence shows that, while the anchor needs to move first, multilateral alliance formation still comprises several steps. The North Atlantic Treaty was built on the Brussels Pact. The Manila Pact was built on multiple smaller alliances connecting the US to other future SEATO members: the ANZUS Treaty, the US-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty, and the North Atlantic Treaty. However, it is worth noting that, even for these preliminary alliances, each of them was anchored. The agglomeration would not work the same way if the smaller units were unanchored, because they might not form in the first place.

Multilateral balancing alliances are powerful. Against the most determined, most powerful challengers in the international system, the solution often requires states to cooperate with each other. But multilateral alliances are also difficult to form. I hope that this dissertation explained why that is the case, and showed possibilities to overcome the obstacles.

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