THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE RISKS AND REWARDS OF ARMS AND INFLUENCE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2026

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Dedication

For John D. Wueger, who was there,
and Elaine Wueger, who was also there,
always.

Epigraph

Wolsey always said that the making of a treaty is the treaty. It doesn't matter what the terms are, just that there are terms. It's the goodwill that matters. When that runs out, the treaty is broken, whatever the terms say.

– Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*

Thousands of years ago the old empire had enforced the Pax Morporkia, which had said to the world: "Do not fight, or we will kill you." The Pax had arisen again, but this time it said: "If you fight, we'll call in your mortgages. And incidentally, that's my pike you're pointing at me. I paid for that shield you're holding. And take my helmet off when you speak to me, you horrible little debtor.

– Terry Pratchett, *Feet of Clay*

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Acknowledgments

To fully express my gratitude to the many people who contributed to this project would require an acknowledgments section as long as the dissertation itself. No set of acknowledgments can fully capture the web of relationships, conversations, and acts of generosity that sustain a project of this kind; to those I have inadvertently omitted, I offer my sincere apologies and no less sincere gratitude.

First and foremost, I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to study at the University of Chicago, where I found an enthusiastic, collaborative intellectual community that encouraged me to think harder and more creatively in pursuit of new knowledge. I will always be in awe of my committee members as scholars, teachers, and mentors. Paul Poast's encouragement and enthusiasm bordered on the superhuman; from this work's earliest incarnation as a half-formed proposal, through at least five different variations, and finally to this, Paul helped me to ask bigger questions and find connections that created new and exciting avenues for inquiry. In the face of my red-string approach to theory development, Austin Carson offered guidance and feedback that was both generous and exacting. Whatever analytical clarity this work possesses owes a great deal to his mentorship. I am equally indebted to John Mearsheimer, who offered immense scholarly freedom even as he challenged my assumptions and pushed this work to a higher standard than I could have achieved alone.

The stunningly brilliant, endlessly kind graduate students in the Political Science department made my time in Chicago an experience to treasure. They are the colleagues and friends that we all want but do not always deserve. Saturday mornings spent sweating over statistics were only bearable because I spent them with Joshua Byun, Andres Uribe, Bianca DiGiovanni, and Scott Cooley, who became lifelong friends. It all might have ended prematurely

without my Poli Psi sisters—Elsy Gonzalez, Jenna Gibson, and Hope Dancy—who hauled me past the wickets with humor, hugs, and snacks. I am also grateful to Genevieve Bates, Alexandra Chinchilla, Geneva Cole, Maura Cremin, Silvia Fedi, Mariya Grinberg, Meghan Iverson, Megan Maxwell, Evgenia Olimpieva, Adam Saxton, and Burak Tan for their feedback and friendship. And to all the participants in the Workshop in International Politics, near and far: it was a privilege to think with and learn from you all.

My time at Chicago would not have been possible without the academic foundations and personal friendships I developed at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, California. Above all, S. Paul Kapur has been by turns—and often simultaneously—a teacher, a mentor, a colleague, a champion, and, best of all, a true friend. Over the past decade and a half, he has challenged and cheered for me, academically and professionally; believed I could and should reach higher than I thought possible; trusted my judgment while always having my back; advocated for me in rooms I had not yet been invited into; made me laugh when I could have cried from frustration; and sustained me with a friendship whose warmth and constancy I treasure. I could never have expected any of this.

Though neither of us knew it at the time, the seeds of this dissertation were sown through collaboration with Brig (ret) Feroz Hassan Khan on a series of projects that, in retrospect, were astonishing in their scope and ambition. The experiences and insights I gained were nothing short of life-changing, and they shaped this effort in ways both visible and profound. No less significant was the joy of working with Feroz himself, whose kind and generous heart is equaled only by his selfless devotion to public service. I am honored to be a part of your extended family. Any errors of fact or interpretation in Chapter Four are mine alone.

To the entire faculty and staff of NPS's National Security Affairs department, now the Institute for Regional and International Security (IRIS), I cannot thank you enough for the education I received, both inside and outside the classroom. Academic conferences, a source of anxiety for most graduate students, became an opportunity to catch up with old colleagues and friends like Naazneen Barma, Emily Meierding, and Jessica Piombo. My projects were challenging and rewarding, and I am grateful to those who welcomed me onto their teams: Clay Moltz, whose high standards in all things set the bar I strive to reach; James Russell, who gave me free rein to wander the halls of power asking nosy questions; Zachary Shore, from whom I learned the joys of primary source research, even if it required carrying Gandhi's collected works across campus; Misha Tsypkin, who taught me to navigate Kafkaesque bureaucratic tangles as easily as Rip Van Winkle Park; Christopher Twomey, whose feedback on my master's thesis and advice about PhD programs were equally spot on; James Wirtz, problem-solver extraordinaire; and David Yost, whose graciousness as a friend and a scholar are beyond measure. I am particularly thankful for Michael Malley, who has been a font of advice, ideas, commiseration, and, most importantly, good humor even when chaos reigned. Christopher Ketponglard and Anna Devari, I am forever in your debt.

Research and writing can be lonely activities, but the kindness, encouragement, and outside perspectives of a number of scholars, practitioners, colleagues, and friends made it just about bearable. Many thanks to Patrick Becker, Jonathan Caverley, Christopher Clary, Dan Drezner, Jennifer Erickson, Dave Fishman, Joshua Foust, Hannah Haegeland, Sameer Lalwani, Hunter Lutinski, John Masten, Vivek Mishra, Vipin Narang, Harsh Pant, Robert Pope, Rajeswari (Raji) Rajagopalan, Steve Saideman, Scott Sagan, Jennifer Spindel, Paul Staniland, Joshua White, and Andrew Winner.

Beyond the walls of the University of Chicago, I benefited tremendously from seminars and workshops designed to encourage the next generation of scholars seeking to understand how power and security work in international politics. These included the Hans J. Morgenthau Fellowship, led by Michael Desch, Eugene Gholtz, Joseph Parent, and Alex Lin; the Summer Bootcamp on Nuclear Forces and Emerging Technologies, led by Kier Lieber and Daryl Press; the Clements Center Summer Seminar in History and Statecraft, led by Mark Lawrence and Aaron O'Connell; the SAIS-Carnegie India Security Workshop, led by Milan Vaishnav and Devesh Kapur; and the Cato Junior Scholars Symposium, led by Justin Logan and Eric Gomez.

To the friends who gave advice and sympathy, sent cupcakes and cards, empathized and argued, visited and hosted, bought drinks and provided much-needed distractions: this is all your fault. I would have given up years ago without Erin Simpson, the Louise to my Thelma, the Grace to my Frankie, in whose footsteps I would follow if only her feet weren't so tiny; Ellie Bartels, Meg Guliford, and Theo Milonopoulos, my favorite overachieving trash pandas; Sarah Brew and Paula Quiroz Velasquez; Skylar Gerrond and Jonathan Rue; Laura Seay, Stephanie Carvin, and all the rest; Katie Short, Caitlin Cima and Scott Beggs, and Orlando Perez; Joanna and James Grooms; and Eric and Leah Hirschhorn. The indomitable Eve Sandberg has been advising and inspiring me since time immemorial (well, since 2002). Surrogate parents and steadfast cheerleaders Richard and Susan Lahne have always provided a home away from home, though I might have expected them to learn their lessons by now. Jacob Lahne, Alycia Perez, Alexander Hirschhorn, Sophia Potter, and Ethan Baldwin—what did I ever do to deserve friends like you? Tell me, so I make sure (never) to do it again.

Finally, my family: you have always meant everything to me. Evie, Danny, and Charlie: I love you fiercely and forever, and I cherish every game we have played, every book we have read, every snuggle we have shared, and every time we have made each other laugh. Tilly… let's be honest, you skipped all the hard parts of this project, which was pretty cheeky of you, but I love you and I am glad you are here now. Alex, thank you for your quiet goofiness, for making me feel at home wherever you are, and for everything that you do to make familyness happen. You are the sister I would have chosen if I had been the one choosing. And to my not-so-little brother Adam: there is no world in which I could have done any of this without you. We are, now and forever, the Just Us (+ Alex) League.

To my parents, Dan and Elaine: you gave me permission to be whoever I was, when and wherever I was, and (mostly) never minded standing in the rain. Thank you for loving me and liking me. Thank you for teaching me the difference between respect and awe, and how to talk to people, and how not to take the world for granted. I hope I will always make you proud.

1. Introduction

What happens when a patron stops supplying arms to a client? Until the 2013 coup that ended Egypt's brief moment of democracy, the United States was Egypt's primary supplier of military and economic assistance. The relationship that had grown out of the 1979 Camp David Accords had flourished, and Egypt was consistently in the top three countries receiving U.S. military aid. Even more notably, Egypt had access to cash-flow financing, a preferential financial arrangement that allowed Egypt to place large orders for military equipment that would be produced and delivered in future fiscal years, on the assumption that they would continue to receive the same amount of grant aid indefinitely. Thus, while their $1.3 billion annual credit line had remained the same since 1987, Egypt had been able to purchase American tanks, fighter jets, and missiles well above their annual budget.[1]

The forced resignation of former President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 strained U.S.-Egyptian relations, however, and in response to the coup led by former military officer and then-Defense Secretary Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the United States suspended deliveries of four F-16 fighter jets in July 2013. Over the subsequent months, the United States halted the transfer of almost all military equipment, including aircraft that were in the United States for maintenance, in hopes of encouraging Egypt to conduct elections or, at minimum, moderating the military's violent repression of pro-democracy activists.[2]

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[1] Jeremy M. Sharp, *Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations*, CRS Report for Congress no. RL33003 (Congressional Research Service, 2022), 31–32, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33003.

[2] Ernesto Londoño, "U.S. Halts Delivery of F-16s to Egypt," *Washington Post*, July 24, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-halts-delivery-of-f-16s-to-egypt/2013/07/24/f227ac7a-f495-11e2-aa2e-4088616498b4_story.html; Mark Landler and Thom Shanker, "Leaving Military Aid Intact, U.S. Takes Steps to Halt Economic Help to Egypt," World, *The New York Times*, August 19, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/19/world/middleeast/leaving-military-aid-intact-us-takes-steps-to-halt-economic-help-to-egypt.html; Elise Labott, "U.S. Suspends Significant Military Aid to Egypt," CNN, October 9, 2013, https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/09/world/meast/us-egypt-aid/index.html; Ramy Aziz, "Russia's Alarming Attempts

In response, Egypt turned to Russia for arms for the first time since 1972, when Anwar Sadat had expelled 20,000 Soviet military advisers on short notice.[3] Within the year, Egypt announced that it had inked a $3.5 billion deal for Russian arms.[4] Egyptian politicians argued that diversification was critical to protect Egyptian sovereignty. “We must not only depend on the United States,” one official stated, because “the Americans keep threatening with the aid.”[5] With much of its army and air force reliant on American equipment, however, Egypt was sensitive to the necessity of regaining access to the American arms market. "Independence is having choices. So the objective of this foreign policy is to provide Egypt with choices, more choices. So I'm not going to substitute. I'm going to add," Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy said.[6] “Cooperation with Russia or China does not mean that we will cut relations with America,” another official said. “We are opening relationships with other countries so as to create a balance in the region and regain our leadership of it.”[7] Recognizing the futility of its quasi-embargo in pushing Egypt toward democratization, the Obama administration reinstated Egyptian access to military aid in March 2015. Obama called al-Sisi and told him that 12 F-16s, 20 missiles, and 125 M1A1 tank kits for assembly in Egypt would soon be released for delivery. In the end, the United States backed away from its demands, but the damage to the United States’ position as Egypt’s preferred arms supplier had been done. Al-Sisi and the Egyptian

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to Establish Influence in Egypt,” The Washington Institute, May 24, 2018, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/russias-alarming-attempts-establish-influence-egypt.

[3] Fred Weir, “Russia Opens Its Arms to Cairo as US-Egypt Ties Fray,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 14, 2013, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/1114/Russia-opens-its-arms-to-Cairo-as-US-Egypt-ties-fray.

[4] “Russia, Egypt Seal Preliminary Arms Deal Worth $3.5 Billion: Agency,” World, *Reuters*, September 17, 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/world/russia-egypt-seal-preliminary-arms-deal-worth-35-billion-agency-idUSKBN0HC19S/.

[5] Al-Masry Al-Youm, “Egypt Sends Delegation to Russia, Rejects US Pressure: Politicians,” *Egypt Independent*, October 24, 2013, https://www.egyptindependent.com/egypt-sends-delegation-russia-rejects-us-pressure-politicians/.

[6] Weir, “Russia Opens Its Arms to Cairo as US-Egypt Ties Fray.”

[7] Al-Youm, “Egypt Sends Delegation to Russia, Rejects US Pressure.”

military remained in charge of the country, and by the end of the decade, Egyptian spending on weapons was split approximately evenly between Russia, the United States, and France.

Egypt's decision to acquire significant quantities of Russian equipment highlight the complex strategic dilemma faced by arms-dependent client states when their patron halts weapons transfers. By turning to Russia, Egypt lost the privilege of cash-flow financing. Going forward, Egypt would have to set aside sufficient funds from the current year account to pay for the full cost of multi-year programs.[8] The loss of preferential financing, combined with skyrocketing costs of military hardware, meant that the Egypt's $1.3 billion annual allotment from Congress would not stretch as far. Operationally, introducing Russian-origin systems into a military that had long been trained and equipped on American systems meant a period of retraining and retooling. The Egyptians found they had to develop homegrown solutions for cross-platform communications, such as between Russian aircraft and American anti-aircraft systems, with mixed results.

Egypt also found itself the target of American pressure when it purchased Russia's fifth-generation fighter, the Su-35, in 2018.[9] Unlike its 2013 purchases, through which Egypt sought to demonstrate its independence, its purchase of the Su-35 appeared to be a calculated move to convince the United States to permit Egypt to purchase better American aircraft. Egypt had long sought to buy F-15s, which the United States had denied on the grounds that it could pose a threat to Israel. While a more capable aircraft, the Su-35 would not be able to communicate directly with the American-origin aircraft that were the mainstay of Egypt's air force, which would have complicated future military operations. Egypt's gamble on the use of an outside

[8] Sharp, *Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations*.
[9] Under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), the United States threatened to levy economic sanctions against entities doing business with Russian military agents.

option to induce a change in U.S. policy paid off: following the delivery of the first Su-35s, the United States relented and assisted Egypt with purchasing American and French fighters instead. Egypt's Su-35s were never inducted into the air force and were later resold to Iran.

1.1. The Puzzle

This dissertation analyzes the strategies that client states use to meet their security needs when their primary patron curtails transfers of major conventional weapons. It is a commonly held belief among policymakers and scholars alike that the provision of arms generates leverage for patrons: if a client steps out of line, the patron can withhold weapons to gain compliance. Yet patrons are often reluctant to exercise that leverage, citing concerns that the client will simply go elsewhere for the weapons they need. Following the murder of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi, for example, President Trump argued against canceling Saudi Arabia's contracts for American military equipment, saying, "Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries – and very happy to acquire all of this newfound business."[10] Arms sales become a case of Schrodinger's leverage: policymakers can claim arms provide influence as long as they never have to test the claim empirically.

Nevertheless, sometimes a patron opens the box and attempts to pressure or punish a client by curtailing arms transfers. Agreeing to sell arms may not signify much, but as Lawrence Freedman noted in the mid-1970s, "*refusing* to sell arms is a major political act. It appears as a calculated insult, reflecting on the stability, trust, and credit-worthiness, or technical competence of the would-be recipient."[11] How is the client likely to react to such an insult? When does a

[10] "Statement from President Donald J. Trump on Standing with Saudi Arabia," The White House, November 20, 2018, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-donald-j-trump-standing-saudi-arabia/.
[11] Lawrence Freedman, "British Foreign Policy to 1985. IV: Britain and the Arms Trade," *International Affairs* 54, no. 3 (1978): 377–92.

client choose to accede to their patron's demands, and when do they seek out a new supplier? When do client states use outside options as leverage against their patron, and when do they truly mean to gain their independence through diversification?

1.2. The Client's Dilemma: The Risks and Rewards of Dependence

These questions are intimately connected to the broader issue of dependency in asymmetrical bilateral relationships. Before outlining the client's dilemma, a few definitions are in order. This dissertation is concerned primarily with *patron-client relationships*, which are similar to, but not synonymous with, asymmetric alliances.[12] I adopt Biermann's four fundamental properties for identifying this form of bilateral relationship: "cooperative resource exchange, asymmetric power dependence, diffuse obligation, and durability," which are "individually necessary and all together sufficient to constitute such a relationship."[13] *Arms curtailment* refers to a spectrum of intentional actions taken by a supplier to forestall the transfer of arms to an existing buyer. A curtailment episode can involve formal, publicized actions, such as multilateral arms embargoes mandated under the auspices of the United Nations or unilateral embargoes levied in response to violations of domestic or international laws. Arms curtailment can also refer to the less formal and less public ways that suppliers prevents arms transfers from occurring, such as slow-walking decisions, refusing permission or licenses for sales of weapons previously allowed, suspending shipments of contracted-for equipment, rejecting requests by third parties to resell weapons, or even turning a deaf ear to a client's desperate request for consultations about arms supplies.

[12] In chapter 2 I draw clearer distinctions between these types of relationships. For now, I merely note that concentrating on the dynamics of PCRs allows me to emphasize the asymmetry, informality, and two-way dependence of the relationship.
[13] Rafael Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 13, no. 1 (2025): 13.

In this dissertation, I am concerned with curtailment of major conventional weapons. 'Major conventional weapons' is an umbrella term that includes systems such as main battle tanks and armored combat vehicles; large-caliber artillery systems; combat aircraft, including fighter jets, bombers, and attack helicopters; warships; and missiles and missile launchers.[14] These are complex systems that require skilled labor and sophisticated manufacturing capabilities to design and produce. I focus on major conventional weapons for three reasons. First, these weapons draw our attention to the bilateral politics inherent in arms transfers. For many systems, there are a limited number of potential suppliers, and producing states carefully control the export of these weapons. These weapons have ongoing sustainment needs, either in the form of specialized ammunition or replacement parts. Second, investments in major weapons programs have implications for international politics more broadly. Weapons can act as a costly signal to adversaries and allies alike, so states must consider what messages they are sending in their choice of partners and systems.[15] Suppliers must consider potential sales in light of their existing commitments to allies and partners. Finally, the expense and durability of major conventional weapons systems means that purchasers try to optimize acquisitions by keeping financial costs down while meeting their political, military, and geostrategic goals. Advanced weapons systems tend to have long service lives, creating path dependence and lock-in.

[14] This definition follows the Arms Trade Treaty in its designation of 'conventional arms;' it varies only by exempting small arms and light weapons (SALW) from consideration. UN General Assembly, Draft Decision, Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, A/CONF.217/2013/L.3 (March 27, 2013), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N13/272/17/PDF/N1327217.pdf. Another commonly-accepted understanding of major conventional weapons comes from SIPRI's Arms Transfer Database, though this list includes systems outside my project's area of interest (e.g. MANPADs, which are often classed with small arms and light weapons). I am intentionally scoping both small arms and light weapons (SALW) and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) out of my theory. The former are widely manufactured, easily substituted, and do not carry the political and strategic implications that MCW do. At the other extreme, WMD are hard to acquire and rarely transferred legally, and transfers of these weapons are of international concern and control.

[15] James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 68–90; Jennifer Spindel, "Beyond Military Power: The Symbolic Politics of Conventional Weapons Transfer" (Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2018).

Gaining access to major conventional weapons is one of the key benefits of developing a partnership with a stronger state. Most states are not capable of autarkically providing for their own security, in no small part because building and maintaining a domestic defense industrial base is expensive and technically challenging. Indeed, for most countries in the international system, some degree of dependence is a foregone conclusion. The real question, therefore, is not whether or not to be dependent, but how to maximize the benefits of dependence while minimizing its costs. Close alignment with a stronger state can generate numerous additional benefits, such as preferential trade arrangements, economic development assistance, and diplomatic support.

The client's dilemma, then, is how to minimize the risks associated with dependence without forgoing its rewards. The international relations literature offers two main perspectives on dependency in asymmetric bilateral relationships. The "risks outweigh rewards" view, drawing on realist logics and developed most fully in the security studies literature, argues that dependence on a single patron is unacceptably risky. The client could be abandoned by its patron in a moment of need or find itself coerced by its patron to act against its own interests. The "rewards outweigh risks" view suggests that there are definite benefits to be gained from being seen as a loyal client. This perspective, found primarily in the alliance management, arms trade, and economic statecraft literatures, argues that the risks of abandonment and coercion are not as serious as neorealists believe. The real risk, in fact, may be in trying to play both sides: a patron may punish a client seen as cozying up to the enemy to force them back into line, and a client that regularly fails to cooperate with their patron is likely to see its benefits reduced.

In the remainder of this section, I lay out the strengths and weaknesses of these perspectives with regards to arms acquisitions. I then outline a reputational theory that accounts

for the risks and the rewards of dependence through an opportunity/willingness framework. From there, I lay out the implications for how we should expect clients to conduct themselves when they are at odds with their patron.

1.2.1. Risks Outweigh Rewards

Summary: Dependence poses unacceptable political and military risks. Clients should prefer to diversify arms suppliers in order to maintain strategic autonomy and forestall coercion.

Dependence on another state for security can be fraught with peril. To paraphrase Lord Palmerston, states have no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies; it is only a state's interests that are "eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is [their] duty to follow."[16] When interests diverge, weaker powers face two potentially existential threats from their stronger partners: abandonment and coercion. The risk of abandonment is perhaps *the* central concern for weaker powers in asymmetric alliances, and has been extensively explored in the international relations literature.[17] The use of coercive or punitive statecraft by stronger parties against their dependent partners has attracted comparatively less scholarly attention.[18]

This perspective sees the twin risks of abandonment and coercion as sufficiently dangerous that arms-importing clients should avoid dependence on a single patron for conventional weapons. Clients should instead hedge their bets by diversifying their suppliers. Any military operational inefficiency this creates is an unfortunate but necessary evil to avoid a

[16] "Lord Palmerston." In *Oxford Essential Quotations*, edited by Ratcliffe, Susan: Oxford University Press, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00008130.
[17] Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 461–95; James D. Morrow, "Arms Versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search for Security," *International Organization* 47, no. 2 (1993): 207–33; James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (2000): 63–83.
[18] What work has been done in this direction has largely focused on the use of economic sanctions to prevent nuclear proliferation, e.g., Nicholas L. Miller, "The Secret Success of Nonproliferation Sanctions," *International Organization* 68, no. 4 (2014): 913–44; Francis J. Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation," *International Security* 40, no. 1 (2015): 9–46.

single point of failure. And as noted above, diversification can provide weaker powers with economic and political leverage: knowing the client is likely to turn elsewhere, patrons will be less likely to attempt to use arms transfers coercively.

The empirical record supports the "risks outweigh rewards" school, with some important caveats. For one, this line of argument fails to explain why patron-client relationships sometimes persist even after the dangers of dependency have been actualized. Clients do not always abandon their patrons at the first sign of trouble; as LeVeck and Narang show, not all alliance violations are treated as equally problematic.[19] Furthermore, it is unclear how this body of thought would adjudicate between the risks posed by dependence and the risks posed by military inefficiency.

1.2.2. Rewards Outweigh Risks

Summary: The risks of dependence can be managed and are not insurmountable. Clients should prefer to gain the operational efficiencies and economic benefits associated with patronage.

Scholars of economic sanctions and of arms trade dynamics are more sanguine about the risks posed by dependence for structural, economic reasons, while scholars of asymmetric alliance management propose political and reputational rationales to explain why dependence is relatively low-risk. Scholars of sanctions generally, and arms embargoes in particular, find that market dynamics often undercut the utility and effectiveness of sanctions, especially unilateral sanctions, suggesting that clients need not fear arms cut-offs. For example, Early argues that third parties have strong commercial incentives *not* to support a sanctions regime; indeed, the sanctioning state's allies are in the best position to take advantage of the market opening.[20] The

[19] Brad L. LeVeck and Neil Narang, "How International Reputation Matters: Revisiting Alliance Violations in Context," *International Interactions* (Abingdon) 43, no. 5 (2017): 797–821.
[20] Bryan R. Early, *Busted Sanctions: Explaining Why Economic Sanctions Fail* (Stanford University Press, 2015).

arms embargo literature finds that embargoes are not especially effective at preventing states from obtaining weapons, nor do they typically succeed in getting targets to change their policies.[21] Erickson finds that formal, multilateral embargoes are somewhat effective at suppressing outgoing transfers from major suppliers to the targeted state,[22] but multilateral sanctions are difficult to impose and sustain because of enforcement problems and the potential gains from cheating.[23] These arguments are supported by research into the structural dynamics of the international arms trade, where the prevalence of alternative options suggests that clients will rarely be left in the lurch if their preferred supplier declines to sell. Because patrons need to export arms in order to sustain their domestic defense industrial base, the market is heavily biased in favor of clients.

Thus, when clients are faced with an arms cut-off, another supplier is likely to be able to meet the demand. In the meantime, there are military benefits to having a primary supplier that meets the majority of the client's requirements for major weapons. In this theoretical world, diversifying can create needless military inefficiencies; since the client can always find a new supplier, they might as well wait until it becomes necessary to do so. Demonstrating loyalty to a patron can also carry political benefits, while disloyalty can introduce political risk and the prospect of punishment by the patron.

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[21] Michael Brzoska, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Arms Embargoes," *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 14, no. 2 (2008); Michael Brzoska, ed., *Putting Teeth in the Tiger: Improving the Effectiveness of Arms Embargoes* (Emerald Publishing Ltd, 2009); Matthew Moore, "Arming the Embargoed: A Supply-Side Understanding of Arms Embargo Violations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 4 (2010): 593–615; Christian Schulze et al., "Economic Incentives and the Effectiveness of Nonproliferation Norms: German Major Conventional Arms Transfers 1953–2013," *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2017): 529–43; Raymond C Kuo and Jennifer Spindel, "The Unintended Consequences of Arms Embargoes," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 19, no. 1 (2023).
[22] Jennifer L Erickson, "Stopping the Legal Flow of Weapons: Compliance with Arms Embargoes, 1981–2004," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 2 (2013): 159–74.
[23] Daniel W. Drezner, "The Trouble with Carrots: Transaction Costs, Conflict Expectations, and Economic Inducements," *Security Studies* 9, nos. 1–2 (1999): 188–218; Bryan R. Early and Robert Spice, "Economic Sanctions, International Institutions, and Sanctions Busters: When Does Institutionalized Cooperation Help Sanctioning Efforts?," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 11, no. 3 (2015): 339–60; Robert A. Pape, "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (1997): 90–136.

Finally, the literature on asymmetric alliances provides evidence that abandonment, the main fear of the dependent state, is empirically rare. Allies typically fulfill their obligations, minimizing the likelihood that clients will be put in the position to require diversification at all.[24] Indeed, major powers seem to go out of their way to reassure their allies of the seriousness of their commitments, and scholars have identified numerous ways that patrons attempt to signal their credibility, resolve, and trustworthiness to adversaries and allies.[25]

There are some notable limitations among these disparate intellectual traditions. In particular, the ease of switching suppliers is likely overstated. It takes time to induct and train on new equipment, which can be problematic in the middle of a conflict. It is also expensive to change over a military, or even a single service, especially if the patron is holding up transfers of weapons the client has already paid for. It is resource-intensive to maintain multiple systems, but many states can't afford to retire platforms early simply to resolve their logistical challenges. And empirically, we see clients diversify at extremely high political, military, and economic costs, suggesting that clients are responding to something other than a simple present-oriented cost-benefit analysis.

1.3. Rethinking the Client's Dilemma

Among the assortment of intellectual approaches to the risks and rewards of dependence, few scholars have explicitly sought to develop predictions for client behavior when abandonment or coercion by a patron actually occurs. Common wisdom would suggest that the actualization of harm by the patron will lead the client to reduce their dependence by diversification. But

[24] Brett Ashley Leeds et al., "Reevaluating Alliance Reliability," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 5 (2000): 686–99; Brett Ashley Leeds, "Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties," *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (2003): 801–27.
[25] Robert F. Trager, "The Diplomacy of War and Peace," *Annual Review of Political Science* 19, no. 1 (2016): 205–28.

common wisdom may not be sufficient. Empirically, not all clients diversify in the wake of arms curtailment. Kuo and Spindel find that embargoes are "one of the few events that push states to undertake the costly step of switching their supplier base," but their study focuses on explicitly-imposed embargoes and does not account for non-public, unilateral curtailments.[26] And LeVeck and Narang find that patrons' failures vis-à-vis clients do not necessarily lead the client to reject the patron.[27] Finally, Johnson finds that new security threats are, by themselves, insufficient to induce arms recipients to change suppliers.[28] As Johnson notes, "dependency may be a sign of a mutually beneficial relationship, rather than one that is potentially dangerous."[29]

In *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, Hirschman argues that an actor in a deteriorating relationship with an organization has two options for seeking redress: exit the relationship or speak up and push for change. Loyalty conditions how plausible or desirable these options may be; higher loyalty makes exit less appealing, especially if voice seems likely to succeed. Castillo and Downes use a similar construct to investigate how junior members of alliances react when new security threats emerge. They substitute "hedging" for "voice" and argue that weaker states will hedge when they are not sure whether their stronger ally will continue to provide security. But this does not answer the central question: when the risks of dependence become real – when arms are used to influence and potential harms become actualized – under what circumstances will clients diversify? And when do clients deviate from the expectation of diversification?

To resolve the puzzle of the client's dilemma, I build on Johnson's opportunity-willingness approach and draw together insights from the divergent approaches discussed above

[26] Kuo and Spindel, "The Unintended Consequences of Arms Embargoes."
[27] LeVeck and Narang, "How International Reputation Matters."
[28] Richard A. I. Johnson, "Decision-Making in the Arms of a Dependent Relationship: Explaining Shifts in Importer Acquisition Patterns of Major Weapon Systems, 1955–2007," *Defence and Peace Economics* 31, no. 7 (2020): 851–68.
[29] Johnson, "Decision-Making in the Arms of a Dependent Relationship," 851.

to develop a generalized theory of client response strategies. This theory allows me to generate expectations for clients' responses when faced with an arms cut-off. I argue that the client's choice of strategy is conditioned on two variables. First, the availability of a *viable outside option*—a third party able and willing to meet the client's demand for security—represents the client's opportunity for exit. Second, the *client's belief about their patron's type*—whether the client believes their patron to be a staunch supporter or a fair-weather friend—represents the client's willingness to exit. These conditions generate four potential response options: acquiesce, bargain, endure, and diversify, displayed in Table 1.1.

		Client's perception of patron's type	
		Staunch Supporter	**Fair-weather Friend**
Viable outside option?	**No**	**Acquiesce** Client concedes to patron's demands.	**Endure** Client plays for time and awaits change in negotiating environment.
	Yes	**Bargain** Client pursues third party supplier while continuing to engage patron.	**Diversify** Client strikes a deal with a third-party supplier.

Table 1.1 Theorizing Client Strategies of Response

This theory generates important insights into underappreciated dynamics of patron-client relationships, and moves forward the study of dependence in bilateral relationships. The "risk outweighs reward" perspective implicitly assumes that a client is always willing to exit dependence, and the variance is whether or not the opportunity (outside option) exists. The "reward outweighs risk" perspective assumes the inverse: there is always an outside option, and the variance is whether the client desires diversification. My theory highlights the reality that for

many clients, the prospect of finding a new supplier is unappealing or impractical for all but the most limited requirements. It is only when a client views its patron as a fair-weather friend that the client will accept the added costs associated with diversification: if the patron cannot be trusted, the client must prioritize cultivating relations with outside options as a hedge against the risks associated with continued dependence.

I also show that bargaining and diversification are distinct forms of hedging behavior with different desired outcomes and therefore separate behavioral expectations. Whether the client seeks to use a third party as leverage in ongoing negotiations with the patron or as a genuine exit from dependence depends on whether the client sees the patron as a staunch supporter or as a fair-weather friend. If the client believes the patron to be a staunch supporter, with strategic goals that are not at odds with those of the client, the client is likely to court an outside option to provoke the patron into changing their policies out of fear that they could lose the client. If the client lacks faith in the patron's reliability more broadly, the risk associated with remaining dependent on such a fair-weather friend will motivate the client to hedge through true diversification.

Differentiating the behavior of engaging with third parties by intended objective has implications for observable expectations about client behavior. To prevent the patron from imposing additional punishments, a client seeking to reduce its dependence by diversifying will engage with third parties without discussing its actions and intentions with the patron. Even if the patron is aware of increased diplomatic engagement between the client and the third party, the client has no reason to reveal details to the patron lest the patron find a way to scuttle the deal. If the client wants to continue to get its arms supplies from its current patron, however, it must

disclose details about its negotiations with the third party to give the patron time and incentive to roll back their curtailment policy.

1.4. Broader Contributions

In this dissertation, I make four moves that further our understanding of IR theory generally. First, I explicitly center the agency and theorize the behavior of weaker powers vis-à-vis their stronger partners. This allows me to disaggregate hedging behavior by intended outcome, rather than as an end in itself, which is my second contribution. Third, I introduce the concept of *arms curtailment*, expanding our knowledge of the conventional arms trade. Finally, I draw a theoretically significant distinction between patron-client relations and other forms of asymmetric bilateral relationships, which enhances our ability to think about international politics in more nuanced ways.

1.4.1. Centering Client Agency

In this work, I center the agency of the client rather than that of the patron. Existing work on asymmetric bilateral relationships tends to focus on the patron's goals, strategies, and interests. The limitations associated with patron-centrism is further compounded by a tendency to over-rely on the United States as the empirical exemplar. Many scholars have considered how patrons get what they want from clients. Research on whether and when to offer alliances or arms, for example, takes the security provider's offer as the phenomenon of interests, without much consideration of whether and when a recipient would choose to accept such an offer.[30] Implicitly or explicitly, much of the existing literature assumes that great powers have sufficient

[30] Keren Yarhi-Milo et al., "To Arm or to Ally? The Patron's Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances," *International Security* 41, no. 2 (2016): 90–139; Tongfi Kim, *The Supply Side of Security: A Market Theory of Military Alliances* (Stanford University Press, 2016); Brian D. Blankenship, *The Burden-Sharing Dilemma: Coercive Diplomacy in US Alliance Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2023).

leverage over their weaker partners to "win" in bilateral disagreements. Finally, there has been minimal research on how clients make decisions about their patrons when the patron's actions may be contrary to the client's interests. Indeed, Castillo and Downes, Crawford, and Lim and Cooper have all remarked on the limited analysis of weaker powers' behavior beyond the balancing-bandwagoning-hedging trichotomy.[31]

In my account, clients are strategic, agentic actors with goals and interests distinct from those of the patron. Their behavior is not a mechanistic reaction to the patron's decisions. Rather, clients reach their own judgments about the quality of the patron and whether the relationship continues to serve the client's interests. Naturally, they are more constrained than the patron in their exit options; they must find an alternative to the patron, since they cannot meet their own security needs independently. But starting from the assumption the client has no choice about the relationship and whether to remain enmeshed is to overlook the client's ability to influence the course of the relationship.

1.4.2. Hedging for Leverage versus Hedging for Exit

Centering client goals and strategies brings into focus the weakness of the dominant conceptualization of "hedging." For patrons, successful alliance management means keeping allies loyal; failure means losing the client to a competitor or to neutrality. But what to make of the spectrum of ways clients might respond when dissatisfied with the patron's security provision? This middle ground is often captured by the label "hedging," but without taking into

[31] Jasen J. Castillo and Alexander B. Downes, "Loyalty, Hedging, or Exit: How Weaker Alliance Partners Respond to the Rise of New Threats," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 46, no. 2 (2020): 227–68; Timothy W. Crawford, "Dark Corners of Alliance Politics: Alliance Theory Concepts and Great Power Competition," *International Politics*, November 2024; Darren J. Lim and Zack Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia," *Security Studies* 24, no. 4 (2015): 696–727.

account what the client wants to achieve, almost any behavior other than lockstep cooperation could be described as "hedging" from the patron's perspective.[32]

By contextualizing client behavior with reference to the client's intended outcome, this dissertation thus contributes to our understanding of behavior that falls between the extremes of loyalty and exit. I disaggregate hedging behavior by its objective: does the client want leverage within the existing relationship, or does it seek to reduce its dependence? Hedging as a source of leverage or a tool to induce jealousy operates on a different logic than hedging as a method of acquiring capabilities and reducing dependence. The former engages the logic of relational jealousy: the client seeks to remind the patron of their value as a partner by stimulating interest and engagement from third parties, with the goal of prompting the patron to change the policy that is negatively affecting the client (e.g., resume arms transfers). The latter is a way of moving toward greater independence, becoming an agentic customer rather than a dependent client. To achieve this, however, client must lay the groundwork and develop a secure exit strategy before it can make the move lest it be punished for seeking freedom. To be sure, an outside option cultivated for jealousy induction purposes can become an exit if and when the client decides to diversify their portfolio of relationships, but the primary target of the client's relationship-building efforts is the patron, not the outside option.

1.4.3. Conventional Arms Transfers and Arms Curtailment

I introduce the curtailment of conventional arms transfers as a phenomenon of interest. Conventional arms transfers cut to the heart of two overarching concerns in international relations—war and trade—but it is only in recent years that efforts to theorize the dynamics and

[32] I credit Peksen's discussion of the sender bias in sanctions effectiveness literature for the genesis of this idea. Dursun Peksen, "When Do Imposed Economic Sanctions Work? A Critical Review of the Sanctions Effectiveness Literature," *Defence and Peace Economics* 30, no. 6 (2019): 635–47.

implications of the conventional arms trade have begun to catch up with the reams of econometric data and in-depth descriptive studies that characterized the field during the Cold War years. Yet the military, political, economic, and humanitarian implications of weapons transfers are immense by any measure. Indeed, Pierre describes arms sales as "major strands in the warp and woof of world politics. Arms sales are far more than an economic occurrence, a military relationship, or an arms control challenge - arms sales are foreign policy writ large."[33]

My key innovation is the concept of "arms curtailments," which takes us beyond publicly declared arms embargoes, with all of their political and legal implications. Arms embargoes of this sort have been studied extensively, both as a phenomenon in their own right and as a form of economic sanction. This literature, however, has not historically accounted for informal, unilateral decisions at the lowest end of the spectrum, such as internal decisions to postpone delivery. Nor have scholars traditionally focused on systematically understanding how states respond when faced with an arms cut-off. We can glean from histories and case studies some sense of how states facing multilateral embargoes tend to respond, but few scholars have addressed how states experiencing unilateral arms embargoes or suspensions of transfers respond.

My research also contributes substantively to the literature on the use and effectiveness of arms as a source of influence in international politics.[34] Theory-building literature on the arms trade and its political and military effects has long been split between a normative, more human rights-oriented camp, which tends to take as a starting point that weapons are antithetical to human security, and a more traditionally realist camp, which views increasing military power as

[33] Andrew J. Pierre, *The Global Politics of Arms Sales* (Princeton University Press, 1982), 3.
[34] Jennifer Spindel, "Arms for Influence? The Limits of Great Power Leverage," *European Journal of International Security*, February 2023, 1–18.

a central objective of states. The former views normative and legal commitments as important tools to constrain the arms trade and, at least implicitly, assumes that arms sales stem from corporate greed or state immorality. Weapons are morally wrong, in this literature, not objects of legitimate trade or tools of foreign policy that could be used to increase security or stability, and supplier states should actively use arms transfers as a point of leverage against bad actors. Scholars in the realist tradition, on the other hand, tend to underestimate the challenges of arms development and production. This camp also underplays the ways that norms, laws, and domestic and international political pressure can constrain a state's ability to acquire weapons the way it might otherwise prefer. There is an implicit assumption that there's always another option for states that want weapons, but that is not uniformly true for all buyers and all weapons.

1.4.4. Arms as Influence in Patron-Client Relationships

Finally, this dissertation explicitly focuses on patron-client relationships (PCRs) as the form of asymmetric bilateral relationship of interest. PCRs have historically been overlooked in efforts to theorize relations between stronger and weaker states, but I argue that this is a theoretically useful concept to describe the relationships that fall between "alignment" and "alliance." It draws our focus to informal, reciprocal, ongoing obligations rather than formal or unidirectional obligations. This research answers the call for more theoretical and qualitative research into what Crawford terms "the 'dark corners' in alliance politics—areas that are thinly theorized and which involve expectations, objectives, and strategic behavior that are not easy to uncover with advanced social science methods."[35] The concept of PCR offers a lens into bilateral relationships that may fall outside the realm of formal alliances, allowing the field to move

[35] Crawford, "Dark Corners of Alliance Politics," 1.

beyond what Crawford calls "treaty-anchored analysis" to investigate how states influence one another outside of alliances.

My research picks up on the perpetually-debated question of the value of arms as a source of influence by adding insight from the client's decision-making process. When do clients accede to coercive attempts? When do they resist most strongly? While I do not purport to answer these questions directly, this dissertation highlights the Schrodinger's Leverage problem: leverage only exists *in potentia*. If an arms recipient is already dissatisfied with its primary supplier, attempts to influence the recipient through arms curtailment is likely to backfire and cause the recipient to find a new supplier. But for patrons seen as staunch supporters, threats of defection may not be real attempts to exit the relationship. Switching suppliers entirely is uncommon and (militarily) undesirable.

1.5. Empirical Strategy

In my empirical analysis, I rely on qualitative causal inference and comparative case methods to examine whether the patterns of behavior in historical instances of arms curtailment are consistent with my theory's expectations. Qualitative analysis allows me to shine a light on how clients evaluate the risks and rewards of dependence, the strategies they use to mitigate the downsides, and how these judgments change over time.

My cases follow the evolution of two important bilateral relationships—the Soviet Union and Iraq (1958–1982), and the United States and Pakistan (1947–1970)—that have exhibited variation on both of my independent variables. Naturally, it can be difficult to capture data about transfer delays and denials short of formal embargoes because of the secrecy around the negotiations of arms deals, but both Pakistan and Iraq have experienced private and public arms curtailments on multiple occasions for a variety of reasons. Because arms transfers are complex

processes with long tails, I trace these cases across several decades. This creates additional variation that allows me to compare between and within these cases to illustrate the causal mechanisms in my theory.

Iraq's relationship with the Soviet Union in particular is an underutilized case in international relations research. It is particularly valuable for evaluating my theory, as Iraq consciously uses different strategies at different times in its attempt to pursue a foreign policy that was not always concordant with that of the Soviet Union. It is also an intrinsically important case: Iraq's struggles with Iran for regional influence and control over resources has been one of the key drivers of events in the Middle East for over half a century. There is a direct line running from the Shatt-al-Arab dispute of the 1960s through the present, passing through three important wars: the Iran-Iraq War, the largest land war since World War II; the Gulf War, the first post-Cold War conflict involving the United States; and the U.S.-led war in Iraq, which lasted over a decade and reshaped Middle Eastern and, arguably, American domestic politics.

1.6. Plan of Dissertation

In this introductory chapter, I have sought to lay the contextual and conceptual foundations for the remainder of this dissertation. I introduced the client's dilemma—balancing the risks and rewards of dependence—and I defined key terms and concepts I am engaging with in this dissertation, including a discussion of what arms curtailment is and why it is important in international bilateral relationships. I presented four key contributions this dissertation makes to international relations scholarship, and offered a brief summary of my empirical strategy and the cases I will be investigating.

In the next chapter, I expand these foundations further and lay out my theory of client response strategies. I begin with a focused discussion of asymmetric bilateral relationships in

theory and in practice to establish the conceptual ground I am building on. I review the key dynamics of arms transfers in patron-client relationships. I then take a deeper dive into arms curtailment—what it entails, why it happens, what we know about its dynamics—and elaborate the four primary strategies clients could pursue in response: acquiescence, bargaining, diversification, and endurance. The second half of the chapter defines and explains my two independent variables—the presence of an outside option and the client's judgment of the patron's type—before drawing the pieces together to explain the causal processes that lead clients to one of the four strategies mentioned. I conclude with an explanation of the observable implications of my theory and a summary of my research design.

The subsequent two chapters evaluate my theory against the empirical record. Chapter three focuses on Iraq's experiences with the Soviet Union between 1958 and 1982. This chapter illustrates the principle that states may not be willing to diversify, even if an opportunity to do so exists, but only so long as the patron remains a staunch supporter. Across four sub-cases of separate episodes when the Soviet Union curtailed arms to Iraq, this chapter illustrates how Iraq used different strategies to resist Soviet pressure and obtain the arms it needed to pursue its own strategic objectives. Importantly, this chapter shows how Iraq's increased access to viable outside options predated its opinion of the Soviets as a fair-weather friend, which let Iraq use the prospect of purchasing French weapons to induce the Soviets to rescind their embargo.

Chapter four, which explores Pakistan's experience with the United States from 1947 to 1970, provides a clear illustration of the circumstances under which a strategy of loyalty and acquiescence may be pursued, and the potential limits of such a strategy. It underscores the importance of viable outside options for a strategy of true diversification, even as it shows how a minimally viable outside option can be used to extract concessions from a patron seeking to buy

back the client's favor after a particularly harmful arms curtailment episode. Finally, chapter five offers a summary of the main theoretical and empirical findings and establishes some directions for future research.

2. Theorizing the Client's Dilemma

In order to provide context and grounding for my theory, this chapter begins with a discussion of patron-client relationships (PCRs): what they are; how they differ from other forms of asymmetric bilateral relationships, such alignments, alliances, and economic dependencies; and what can be imputed about PCRs from those literatures. I then provide an overview of the key substantive issues of arms transfers: I discuss some general features of the international arms trade, then lay out the client's imperatives and constraints when making decisions about arms acquisitions. This is followed by a summary of the patron's incentives for supplying arms to clients and some reasons a patron might choose to curtail arms supplies.

The stage is thus set for the introduction of my theory of client response strategies. I first specify the client's full set of possible objectives following curtailment, then discuss the three goals and four response strategies that clients most commonly pursue. I then introduce the two independent variables that underpin my opportunity-willingness framework: the *outside option*, which represents the client's opportunities, and the *client's belief about the patron's type*, which determines how willing the client is to downgrade its relationship with the patron. With these variables in mind, I then present my model and discuss the causal pathways that determine the client's response strategy. I conclude with a summary of my research design and how I selected cases for analysis and comparison.

2.1. Conceptualizing Patron-Client Relationships

There are a range of terms and concepts to describe benign or cooperative relationships between states with significant resource asymmetries, such as alignment, alliance, dependency, and patron-cliency. These may seem at first blush like distinctions without a difference, but in

practice and in scholarship, conceptual clarity is key to determining the applicability of a theoretical model to a given relationship at a given time. Within the field of international relations, our understanding of asymmetric relationships has at times been hampered by conceptual confusion and semantic ambiguity, particularly within the literature on alliances. In descriptions of asymmetric alliances, terms like "junior partner," "weaker power," and "smaller state," are used interchangeably with "client," while a "senior partner" or "great power" may be called a "patron." Theories of alliance formation and management will sometimes add properties like diffuse obligation and reciprocal resource exchange to scope their population of interest that are neither necessary nor sufficient to classify a relationship as an alliance, but that are key elements in identifying patron-client relationships. This conceptual creep complicates the attempt to understand alliance behavior as well as to understand patron-client relationships as a distinct phenomenon.

At the other extreme, in the practice of diplomacy and foreign relations, the language of patron-cliency is rarely used even when a bilateral relationship might otherwise meet the criteria. In a diplomatic context, the term "client" carries demeaning or contemptuous connotations, perhaps raising uncomfortable questions about the weaker party's sovereignty or independence or, for some, evoking painful memories of exploitation by distant imperial powers. Instead, broadly cooperative bilateral relationships are described using terms like "alliances," "partnerships," and even "friendships," with little concern for definitional precision. This creates diplomatic oddities such as the United States's use of the term "major non-NATO ally" (MNNA) to refer to countries that have a working relationship with the United States Armed Forces. Of the 19 countries deemed MNNAs, the United States' relationships with members of the Rio Pact (e.g. Brazil, Argentina, or Colombia) are quite different than its relationships with the states that

form the backbone of the U.S.'s partnership network in East Asia (e.g. Japan, South Korea, and Australia).[36]

It is therefore worth detailing the distinctions between patron-client relations and other forms of asymmetric bilateral relationships commonly encountered. The notion of patronage as a formalized, socio-political institution for structuring interpersonal relations initially arose in ancient Rome. Under the patronage system ("*clientela*"), a patron ("*patronus*") acted as protector and benefactor to one or more clients ("*cliens*"). Clients were expected to show deference to their patron in public and in private, and to assist them with any personal or professional requests. Similar practices arose later in other realms of social interaction, most notably in artistic and literary pursuits and in ecclesiastical settings. As a political practice, patronage and patron-client relations have primarily been studied in comparative politics, sociology, and anthropology in the context of domestic politics. A rich literature has developed on clientelism and party patronage, with a profusion of theorizing about environments where electoral support is sought in exchange for jobs or other favors.[37]

In conceptualizing patron-client relationships in an international relations or foreign policy context, I adopt Biermann's four fundamental properties: asymmetric power dependence, cooperative resource exchange, diffuse obligation, and durability, which are "individually necessary and all together sufficient to constitute such a relationship."[38] *Asymmetry of political,*

[36] As of January 20, 2025, there are 19 states designated MNNAs: Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Thailand, and Tunisia. "Major Non-NATO Ally Status," United States Department of State, accessed January 23, 2025, https://www.state.gov/major-non-nato-ally-status/.
[37] S. N. Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 1 (1980): 42–77; Allen Hicken, "Clientelism," *Annual Review of Political Science* 14, no. Volume 14, 2011 (2011): 289–310; Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda."
[38] I have transposed the first two properties. Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda," 13.

military, and economic power is the first and perhaps most fundamental property of patron-client relationships. The simplistic account of this asymmetry suggests that patrons provide some of their copious resources to needy clients, who offer less important or less valuable resources in return. Patrons, therefore, have greater bargaining power in the relationship, as they can more easily do without the client than the client can do without them. The inequality of the partnership sets up an inescapable tension in these relationships: client dependence creates vulnerabilities that patrons could exploit to gain the client's compliance.[39]

A more nuanced understanding of PCRs incorporates the second property, *cooperative resource exchange*, which emphasizes the voluntary and reciprocal nature of the patron-client relationship. Both parties have tangible or intangible resources that the other values. For the client, the resources needed are tangible and security oriented. Shoemaker and Spanier argue that a client "cannot, by itself, become a major military power in the international community; nor can it, by itself, guarantee its own security."[40] They further note that "although there are other aspects of [PCRs], security transactions are the most evident and pervasive."[41] As a result of the asymmetry in military power noted above, "'security transfers' between patron and client are unidirectional in nature, flowing from the patron to the client."[42]

The patron, however, also derives benefits from the client, which is a key distinction between patron-client relationships and relationships of economic dependency.[43] Writing in a Cold War context, Shoemaker and Spanier identified three main benefits that patrons tend to seek: ideological convergence, which demonstrates the superiority of the patron's socio-political

[39] Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda," 12.
[40] Christopher C. Shoemaker and John Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships: Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age* (Praeger, 1984), 13.
[41] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 14.
[42] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 13.
[43] Wouter P. Veenendaal, "Analyzing the Foreign Policy of Microstates: The Relevance of the International Patron-Client Model," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 13, no. 3 (2017): 561–77.

system to that of its competitors; international solidarity, which provides the patron with support in international fora and bolsters the impression of the patron's bloc as powerful and popular; and strategic advantage, which offers the patron direct or indirect access to geographic terrain or resources that offer military advantages.[44] As Radchenko notes, "Superpower equality, from the Soviet perspective, required a clientele. Clients were what made the Soviet Union a superpower."[45]

The third property Biermann highlights is *diffuse obligation*. These relationships are inherently private and particularistic, and the reciprocity inherent in PCRs is "anchored only loosely in public law or community norms;"[46] the relationship is instead based largely on informal, unwritten agreements that defy third-party enforcement. This creates significant flexibility in how the parties might react to one another's appeals. As Biermann notes, "patrons can withhold critical resources and clients can draw red lines beyond which they do not accept patron interference."[47] While these relationships may come to incorporate formal agreements, such as treaties of friendship or alliance, or contractual obligations, the parties nevertheless seek to retain significant freedom of action for themselves. "Instead of rigid interaction between two states, patron-client state relationships are in reality fuzzy, fluid, fluctuating partnerships, subject to constant change and only becoming sharply defined in the context of a crisis," according to Shoemaker and Spanier.[48]

Finally, patron-client relationships are characterized by a degree of *durability* that sets them apart from short-term or time-delimited cooperative efforts between states. The term

[44] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 18–20.
[45] Sergey Radchenko, *To Run the World: The Kremlin's Cold War Bid for Global Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), Loc. 10241.
[46] Robert R. Kaufman, "The Patron-Client Concept and Macro-Politics: Prospects and Problems," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 3 (1974): 285.
[47] Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda," 12.
[48] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 16.

"relationship" itself implies an enduring, ongoing interaction. Stated in game theoretic terms, the iterated nature of the engagement creates a shadow of the future that incentivizes cooperation. This iteration solves the problem of exchange simultaneity that adheres in strictly transactional relationships. Biermann describes this durability as "a deferred payment aspect—a kind of 'promissory note'" wherein debts and credits accumulate over time in a loosely maintained ledger.[49]

So how does this concept of patron-client relations differ from alignments, alliances, and economic dependencies? Snyder defines alignments as "expectations of states about whether they will be supported or opposed by other states in future interactions,"[50] which Crawford picks up in his description of alignments as "patterns of 'expectations'."[51] Crawford suggests thinking about the international system in terms of competition between alignments. He notes, "The messy political reality of relations and expectations in alignment competition often escapes the picture of carefully graduated commitments, signals, and risks, titrated through formal and less formal means." [52] In this view, the concept of alignments acts as an umbrella for a whole range of cooperative and semi-cooperative behaviors that create expectations of future support and cooperation, which can generate a deterrent effect.

Within the realm of alignment, alliances are one potential subset of specific relational behaviors that foreground the issue of cooperatively managing the use of military force for political ends. Snyder defines alliances as "formal associations of states for the use (or nonuse) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership."[53]

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[49] Biermann, "Conceptualising Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflict. A Research Agenda," 13.
[50] Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 6.
[51] Crawford, "Dark Corners of Alliance Politics."
[52] Crawford, "Dark Corners of Alliance Politics."
[53] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 7.

Poast argues that alliances are, at heart, a mechanism for solving the problem of coordinating war plans between two or more states that share a common threat.[54] For alliances thus understood, formalization is a necessary foundational assumption: formalization clarifies state expectations and raises the cost of failing to meet voluntary obligations, and thus is the mechanism through which cooperation can be achieved.[55] The written pact delineates the parties' obligation to cooperate in responding to a non-signatory's aggression with military force, and any relationship that meets this minimum threshold is an alliance. The main benefit for both parties is enhanced military power. PCRs include a military or security dimension, but it may not be a formal, legalistic commitment of support beyond specific contracts for arms transfers and related services. There is a lower likelihood that the parties will pre-commit to providing their own forces to support the other; any expectations to that effect will be tacitly understood.

Patron-client relationships also share some attributes with economic dependency relationships, but these concepts diverge in scope and degree of reciprocity. "Patron-client relationships differ from pure dependency relationships in that they involve not only socio-economic factors, but also ideological, cultural, military, and diplomatic/strategic ones as well."[56] In economic dependencies, the benefits and resources flow unidirectionally from the more powerful state to the weaker state. In exchange for this largesse, sending states expect a high degree of cooperation from recipients around international economic and, to a lesser extent, political and military issues.

[54] Paul Poast, *Arguing about Alliances: The Art of Agreement in Military-Pact Negotiations* (Cornell University Press, 2019).
[55] Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 8.
[56] Christopher P. Carney, "International Patron-Client Relationships: A Conceptual Framework," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 24, no. 2 (1989): 43.

	Types of Asymmetric Relationships		
	Patron-Client	**Alliance**	**Economic Dependency**
Area(s) of cooperation	Strategy, military/security, political, ideological	Military/security, strategy	Socio-economic
Formality of obligations	Informal; obligations are tacitly understood by both parties	Formal; obligations are negotiated in written alliance agreement	Formal; obligations exist in contracts and public pledges
Resource flow (net)	Reciprocal	Unidirectional	Unidirectional
Duration	Open-ended and durable	Varies according to terms of alliance agreement	Varies according to patron priorities and funding needs

Table 2.1 Delineating Bilateral Relationship Concepts

Like alliances and economic dependencies, then, patron-client relationships can be conceptualized as a distinct subset of alignments, with their own set of constitutive properties (Table 2.1). It is worth reiterating that these concepts are not mutually exclusive. The reciprocity, resource exchange, and diffuse and ongoing obligation that characterizes patron-client relations can be present in other forms of state-to-state interaction. I posit instead that they co-exist independently of one another, with no fixed logical relationship between or among them. In other words, the existence of an alliance is not a sufficient or necessary condition for the existence of a patron-client relationship, nor does patronage definitively indicate an alliance. Similarly, dependency implies a weaker state that is reliant on a stronger state for security or economic support, but a dependency relationship does not by definition implicate a patron-client relationship. These concepts simply highlight and foreground different aspects of international relationships.

Theory development requires the clarification of assumptions, but relaxing conceptual boundaries leads to analytical confusion and under-specification. This is a particular problem within the alliance management literature, which explores how alliance partners influence one another in pursuit of their shared goals. Pressman, for example, argues that states may form alliances in order to influence the military policies of other states and prevent them from going to war. He defines an alliance as "a relationship between two or more states based on shared interest, an exchange of benefits, security cooperation, specific written agreements, and/or an expectation of continuing ties."[57] He notes that not all alliances must have all five components, and that there is no *a priori* combination that determines a relationship is an alliance.[58] The looseness of this definition makes it hard to know whether a relationship is an alliance and thus whether Pressman's expectations about alliance restraint should adhere in any given relationship. In fact, this definition comes closer to the concept of patron-client relationships than the concept of alliances as used by most scholars.

Greater conceptual clarity also helps us make better sense of the roles that arms transfers play in bilateral relationships. There is a strain of thought that sees alliances and arms as the two main offers that greater powers can make to smaller states in order to bolster their security. Existing work in IR treats arms provision on concessionary terms, a common practice in patron-client relationships, as an alternative to a formal alliance.[59] For example, Yarhi-Milo, Lanoszka, and Cooper describe the "patron's dilemma" as the challenge patrons face in providing security without becoming entrapped in unwanted conflicts.[60] The authors argue that the decision to

[57] Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2008), 18.
[58] Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics*, 18.
[59] Morrow, "Arms Versus Allies"; Yarhi-Milo et al., "To Arm or to Ally?"
[60] Yarhi-Milo et al., "To Arm or to Ally?"

provide arms, an alliance, or both is a function of the degree of shared interests and the local balance of capabilities. This raises the question of why a client would rely on arms from a state that is disinterested in its strategic concerns; logically, a state supplying arms to a conflict it declines to involve itself in is unlikely to be a reliable patron. A patron might decline to provide an alliance out of fears of entrapment, but it should not then expect the same degree of loyalty or support from the client. Placing these arms transfers within the rubric of diffuse obligations and durability of patron-client relationships explains how and why these transfers operate on a logic different from that of commercial transactions.

2.2. Arms Transfers in Patron-Client Relationships

Access to major conventional weapons, often at a discount, is one of the most critical resources that patrons provide to their clients. According to Shoemaker and Spanier, "Arms transfers and security guarantees are the most efficacious indicators of the nature and extent of a patron-client state relationship."[61] Not all arms transfers indicate a patron-client relationship, of course, but practically all patron-client relationships involve transfers of arms.[62] Transfers of major conventional weapons offer concrete evidence of the four properties of a patron-client relationship—asymmetric power dependence, cooperative resource exchange, diffuse obligation, and durability—and are thus an ideal lens for theorizing PCRs.

It is worth noting some practical, underappreciated dynamics of arms transfers before discussing how arms transfers affect patron-client relations. First, arms transfers are processes, not discrete events, and they must begin long before the buyer hopes to have the weapons in

[61] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 15.
[62] Throughout the remainder of this section, I use the terms *client*, *customer*, *recipient*, and *buyer* interchangeably. The terms *patron*, *supplier*, *seller*, and *producer* are also used interchangeably. These are not perfect synonyms; a supplier may sell weapons that they did not produce, and a recipient may be leasing a system rather than buying it.

hand. The process begins with the buyer's identification of their needs. Identification of requirements may be formal or informal and may occur internally or in consultation with the expected supplier, as through the United States' Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs) of the 1940s–1970s. Depending on the transfer, buyers may need to solicit and evaluate bids from potential suppliers. They must then negotiate contract terms, including types and numbers of weapons, delivery schedules, and methods of payment. The weapons may need to be designed and manufactured if purchased new; if systems are purchased second-hand, they likely will need to be refurbished before delivery. Delivery often occurs in multiple tranches over a period of months or even years.

Second, arms transfers are leader-level decisions for both the buyer and the supplier, though there are many actors involved throughout the process providing advice and inputs. In addition to political leaders and foreign policy executors, government actors may include bureaucrats, military officials, and legislators. Commercial actors can include industry (manufacturers and transporters), financiers, and private brokers. Nevertheless, the final decision about the transfer of major conventional weapons is made by the state's top leadership. A 1977 Central Intelligence Agency memo summarizing the policies and practices of top arms suppliers stated: "In all cases, decisions on major arms transfers are approved at top levels of government—Brezhnev, Callaghan, Giscard, and Schmidt not only set policies but participate in decisions on significant transactions."[63]

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the global arms trade operates simultaneously in economic and political marketplaces. The global arms market does not operate like the

[63] "Policies and Practices of Arms Suppliers," Memorandum from George W. Allen, CIA Center for Policy Support, July 8, 1977. See also "Organization of Soviet Foreign Military and Economic Aid," CIA Study, May 1, 1976, CIA Records Search Tool (hereafter CREST), Doc. 0000498599.

classical economic model of a competitive market. Instead, "arms industries operate in *political* markets where [governments are] the only or major buyer[s] and where there are often monopoly or oligopoly suppliers with barriers to new entry."[64] Even without the added layer of political considerations, these limitations would inherently create market distortions. Furthermore, not all weapon types are equally sensitive, either politically or militarily. Weapons within a given category may have very different capabilities depending on the supplier. Costs vary significantly; Western-produced weapons are considered more capable than their Soviet/Russian or Chinese counterparts, but the prices are often much higher.

Within this complex structure, actors must try to optimize their purchases across capabilities and costs, and competition for contracts can be fierce among suppliers. With that in mind, I turn now to a short synopsis of the recipient's calculus when deciding their arms acquisition strategy. I then discuss suppliers' incentives for exporting arms, define "arms curtailment," and offer some reasons why a patron might curtail arms transfers to a client.

2.2.1. Buyer Beware

States facing intense security threats must acquire weapons almost continuously. Even absent immediate threats, states require sufficient military power to deter external actors from adventurism while establishing and maintaining internal security. The force posture and alliances needed to deter external actors is not necessarily the force posture needed to suppress internal threats. Because arms transfers can take a long time to come to fruition, especially for new, customized high-end systems, states try to avoid major gaps in procurement. The attrition rate for weapons fluctuates depending on their initial quality, the availability of spare parts, the skill and frequency of maintenance, and whether they are being used in battle. On top of the natural

[64] Keith Hartley, *The Economics of Arms* (Agenda Publishing, 2017), 133.

attrition rate, there is a persistent demand for better, higher-technology weapons. This demand stems from security dilemma dynamics and a desire to increase military effectiveness; a state's concern for its prestige and status; and/or as a side payment to military or other interested domestic actors.

Whether by choice or by necessity, almost all states import some weapons, which generates political, economic, and military benefits and costs for these recipients. The client's imperatives on these disparate axes operate in tension with one another—what may be desirable for military operational reasons might be politically sub-optimal—so clients must carefully consider tradeoffs. As Johnson wryly noted, the relationship between arms imports and dependency and how it affects state behavior seems to be "more complex than previously argued."[65]

The primary, immediate benefit of imports is, naturally, an increase in military capabilities for the client. Equally important for many clients is the perception that the supplier is supportive of, or even committed to, the client's security and, by extension, its leadership and polity. The former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, eloquently described this dynamic:

> For the selling of arms is something which a country does only when it wants to support and strengthen the regime or the group to whom the sale is made. Whatever restrictions or limits are placed on that sale, the sale is a declaration of support - an implied alliance of a kind. [You] do not sell arms without saying, in effect: "In the light of the receiving country's known policies, friends, and enemies, we anticipate that, in the last resort, we will be on their side in the case of any conflict. We shall want them to defeat their enemies."[66]

[65] Johnson, "Decision-Making in the Arms of a Dependent Relationship," 851.
[66] Quoted in Christian Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence* (UNIDIR, 1988), 26.

This perception of support and status is further enhanced when the client is provided with sophisticated weapons systems to which few other countries have access.[67] Arms transfers may also be accompanied by broader transfers of technology through licensed production or industrial offsets, generating domestic economic and political rewards.[68]

In exchange, clients risk a loss of control over their political and military policies and commitments. As Husbands and Cahn note, "Suppliers may make transfers conditional on the fulfillment of certain conditions. Moreover, through arms transfers, outside actors are given the capability to manipulate the supply of spare parts, ammunition and technical services in support of their objectives, which may not be the same as those of the recipient."[69] Arms recipients may find themselves identified with the supplier's policies more generally, which can have repercussions for international and/or domestic politics.

Finally, major conventional weapons are expensive if not offered as grants or military assistance. Suppliers do not give away major conventional systems for free, unless they are truly obsolete and there is a reasonable expectation they can and will be replaced.[70] Even if the weapons themselves are provided on concessionary terms, the lifecycle costs—infrastructure and maintenance, plus associated skilled labor—can be substantial. For many clients, arms imports represent a substantial contribution to the state's balance of payments with its patron.

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[67] Spindel, "Beyond Military Power."
[68] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 74; see also Jurgen Brauer and Paul Dunne, eds., *Arms Trade and Economic Development: Theory, Policy and Cases in Arms Trade Offsets* (Routledge, 2004).
[69] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 87.
[70] The United States and the Soviet Union in the first two decades of the Cold War were notable exceptions; "in this period, approximately three-quarters of all US arms exports were in the form of grants, mostly from large stocks of surplus (and lower quality) equipment. Russian exports followed the same pattern, though to a lesser degree." Jo Husbands and Anne Hessing Cahn, "The Conventional Arms Transfer Talks: An Experiment in Mutual Arms Trade Restraint" in Thomas Ohlson, ed., *Arms Transfer Limitations and Third World Security* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), 111–113."

With these tradeoffs in mind, diversification of arms suppliers will be preferred for political and economic reasons, while consolidation will be preferred for military operational reasons. Diversification provides importers with greater bargaining leverage; more competition among suppliers should result in better equipment, better pricing, and/or fewer outside political demands for the client. Militarily, however, it is more efficient to buy within an arms ecosystem, ideally from same producer(s). This streamlines and simplifies numerous aspects of military power generation: access to spare and interchangeable parts; maintenance; training; development and execution of procedures, doctrines, and strategies.

Furthermore, the costs of diversification are knowable and concrete, while the costs of dependence are diffuse and abstract. Diversification is likely to result in decreased military efficiency, especially in the short run. But "dependence is more in the nature of a potential and need not necessarily result in political consequences."[71] As a result, "the costs of dependence will often not be given the same attention as the more unambiguous and fixed benefit and cost elements."[72] For this reason, states may prefer to optimize for military effectiveness.

2.2.2. Seeing Like a Supplier State

Early in his first administration, President Reagan released a Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) policy directive stating that, when "applied judiciously, arms transfers can:

> help deter aggression by enhancing the states of preparedness of allies and friends;
>
> increase our own armed forces effectiveness by improving the ability of the United States, in concert with its friends and allies, to project power in response to threats posed by mutual adversaries;

[71] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 168.
[72] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 168.

> support efforts to foster the ability of our forces to deploy and operate with those of our friends and allies, thereby strengthening and revitalizing our mutual security relationships;
>
> demonstrate that the United States has an enduring interest in the security of its friends and partners, and that it will not allow them to be at a military disadvantage;
>
> foster regional and internal stability, thus encouraging peaceful resolution of disputes and evolutionary change; and
>
> help to enhance United States defense production capabilities and efficiency."[73]

As can be seen in this directive, states have numerous economic, political, and military motivations for exporting weapons. Recognizing the multiplicity of incentives is key to understanding both the behavior of patrons and that of potential third parties that clients may see as outside options. These benefits underpin the argument that curtailment imposes costs on suppliers, suggesting that clients, even highly dependent clients, have some room to bargain for policy change if they so choose.

Arms exporters derive both economic-financial and politico-military benefits from transfers. Depending on the financial arrangements, arms transfers can benefit the national economy in multiple ways. As with other exports, they can contribute to a favorable balance of payments, or at least redress negative balances. For some suppliers, most notably the Soviet Union (and later, Russia) and China, arms transfers have long been a critical source of hard

[73] Ronald Reagan, "Conventional Arms Transfer Policy," The White House, July 8, 1981, 1–2, https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-005.htm.

currency.[74] Arms have also been used to secure access to natural resources: "Barter agreements or highly specified offset arrangements may provide to the arms supplier additional security in the supply of resources, in particular raw materials… not available from domestic sources."[75]

For many arms-producing states, exports are critical for the health and sustainability of their defense industrial base (DIB), which provides politico-military benefits as well as economic benefits. Catrina notes that arms exports "help to smooth production rates [and] keep production lines open and companies in business in times of low domestic demand. Longer production runs… reduce unit costs [through] economies of scale, learning effects, [and] spread of fixed costs."[76] Just as few states can autarkically produce their own weapons, few could consume their entire output without raising unit costs to unsustainable levels. In short, exports keep arms production economically viable.

Because of their political sensitivity, arms transfers may strengthen political and military relations between patrons and clients. Ideally, arms transfers improve the client's ability to defend itself, thereby reducing the need for the patron to provide security through its own military forces. Patrons may also derive security benefits from the relationship if they are allowed to use bases, ports, or other key facilities or infrastructure located in clients' territory for their own military needs.

Finally, as noted above, states use arms transfers as a way to influence recipients' policies and generate leverage over clients and customers.[77] "[Arms transfers] are undertaken for the

[74] "The Soviets in the Persian Gulf Arabian Peninsula - Assets and Prospects," CIA Research Study, December 1976, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP79T00889A000900070001-3; "Chinese Military and Economic Programs in the Third World," CIA Intelligence Assessment, May 1984, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP85T00283R000600020004-6.
[75] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 71.
[76] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 71.
[77] Catrina draws an interesting distinction between "influence" and "leverage." Both grant the supplier a voice in the recipient's policy-making process, but the former is based on "day-to-day access in a friendly cooperative setting," while the latter "works on the basis of cost-benefit evaluations, and the setting is less cooperative." Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 71 and 157-58.

purpose of enhancing the military capability of the receiving state, but they may also afford the supplier some degree of political influence over the recipient (although frequently less than expected) and signal to third parties that the supplier has some interest in the military security of the recipient."[78] Shoemaker and Spanier identify two important sources of continuing leverage that arms transfers provide to patrons: training and spare parts. Training "provides the patron with the opportunity to station advisers in the client's country and to attempt to politicize the client's officer corps in military schools run by the patron," while control over the spare parts pipeline provides the patron with an imperfect mechanism for limiting the client's ability to use the weapons.[79] Not all suppliers use arms exports for political ends; smaller suppliers typically have a more commercial orientation. For these states, arms exports guidelines may take political factors into account, but they are formulated as conditions under which arms will *not* be transferred, e.g. to states engaged in human rights abuses.[80]

2.2.3. Arms and Influence and Curtailment

2.2.3.1. Defining Arms Curtailment

What does it mean to curtail arms? I define *arms curtailment* as an intentional action taken by a supplier to forestall or prevent the transfer of arms to a buyer with whom they have an existing relationship. This could take the form of a publicly announced blanket arms embargo, but an arms curtailment episode need not be explicit or public. There are a range of less formal and less public ways that suppliers prevents arms transfers from occurring, such as declining to finalize decisions; refusing to issue licenses for sales of specific weapons or spare parts for existing inventories; suspending deliveries of contracted-for equipment; rejecting requests by

[78] David Kinsella and Alexander H. Montgomery, "Arms Supply and Proliferation Networks," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Networks*, ed. Jennifer Nicoll Victor et al. (Oxford University Press, 2018), 762–63.
[79] Shoemaker and Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 15.
[80] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 27.

third parties to resell patron-originated weapons; or even turning a deaf ear to a client's request for consultations about the matter.

2.2.3.2. Motivations for Arms Curtailment

There are three primary motivations for a patron to curtail arms. The first and most basic is simple feasibility: the patron may not have sufficient stocks or manufacturing capacity to meet the client's needs, or it may be unable or unwilling to develop the necessary legal and financial processes to facilitate the transfer. Second, patrons may be concerned about how third-party states might react. For example, Afghanistan requested arms from the United States in 1954, but the United States declined lest such a transfer provoke the Soviet Union. Patrons may also be concerned about how a transfer will affect the balance of power between the client and its neighbors. This is especially salient in conflict-prone areas. The United States, United Kingdom, and France established the top-secret Near East Arms Coordinating Committee in 1952 to fulfill the mandate of the Tripartite Declaration. Through the NEACC, these patron states sought to ensure that neither Israel nor the Arab states would gain a significant military advantage over one another, while still enabling the clients to meet their domestic defense needs and "resist Soviet aggression."[81]

Finally, a patron might use arms curtailment as leverage to induce the client to change a policy or practice the patron finds objectionable. These objections may stem from the patron's international legal or normative commitments, such as preventing human rights abuses or punishing a state for aggressive behavior against a neighbor.[82] In such instances, patrons might

[81] *Written evidence from Dr Neil Cooper, Peace Studies, University of Bradford: Hearing before the Committees on Arms Exports, Quadripartite Committee*, U.K. House of Commons (2011), https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmquad/419/419we02.htm.
[82] Alan P. Dobson, *US Economic Statecraft for Survival, 1933–1991: Of Sanctions, Embargoes, and Economic Warfare* (Routledge, 2002); Jennifer L. Erickson, *Dangerous Trade: Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation* (Columbia University Press, 2015); Schulze et al., "Economic Incentives and the Effectiveness of Nonproliferation Norms."

be participating in multilateral arms embargoes mandated under the auspices of the United Nations. Patrons might also be pursuing their own particularistic material, geopolitical, or ideological interests, as when the United States embargoed weapons to Egypt in 2013 (described above).

2.2.3.3. Arms Curtailment as Economic Sanction

Arms curtailment can be characterized as a type of economic sanction, particularly when undertaken for purposes of inducing a change in the recipient's behavior. As with other types of sanctions, there are typically multiple stages of strategic interactions between the patron and the client before the sanction is imposed. Figure 2.1 presents a lightly modified version of Drezner's model of economic coercion to illustrate the process leading up to the decision to curtail arms.[83] This model takes as a given that the patron has made a demand and threatened curtailment if the client does not comply. The client can then choose to acquiesce to the demand or stand firm, at which point the patron must then decide whether to follow through on their threat.

The model shown in Figure 2.1 suggests that patrons are unlikely to curtail arms without reason and without warning. Patron-client relationships inherently imply ongoing communications, with an invisible balance sheet of favors owed. These relationships operate as open-ended negotiations, in which the participants prefer to cooperate in pursuit of win-win outcomes. Patrons therefore have many opportunities to air grievances and attempt to influence the client's behavior before reaching the point of threatening arms curtailment. Only if the patron's less punitive influence attempts fail would they decide to curtail arms.

[83] Daniel W. Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion," *International Organization* 57, no. 3 (2003): 643–59.

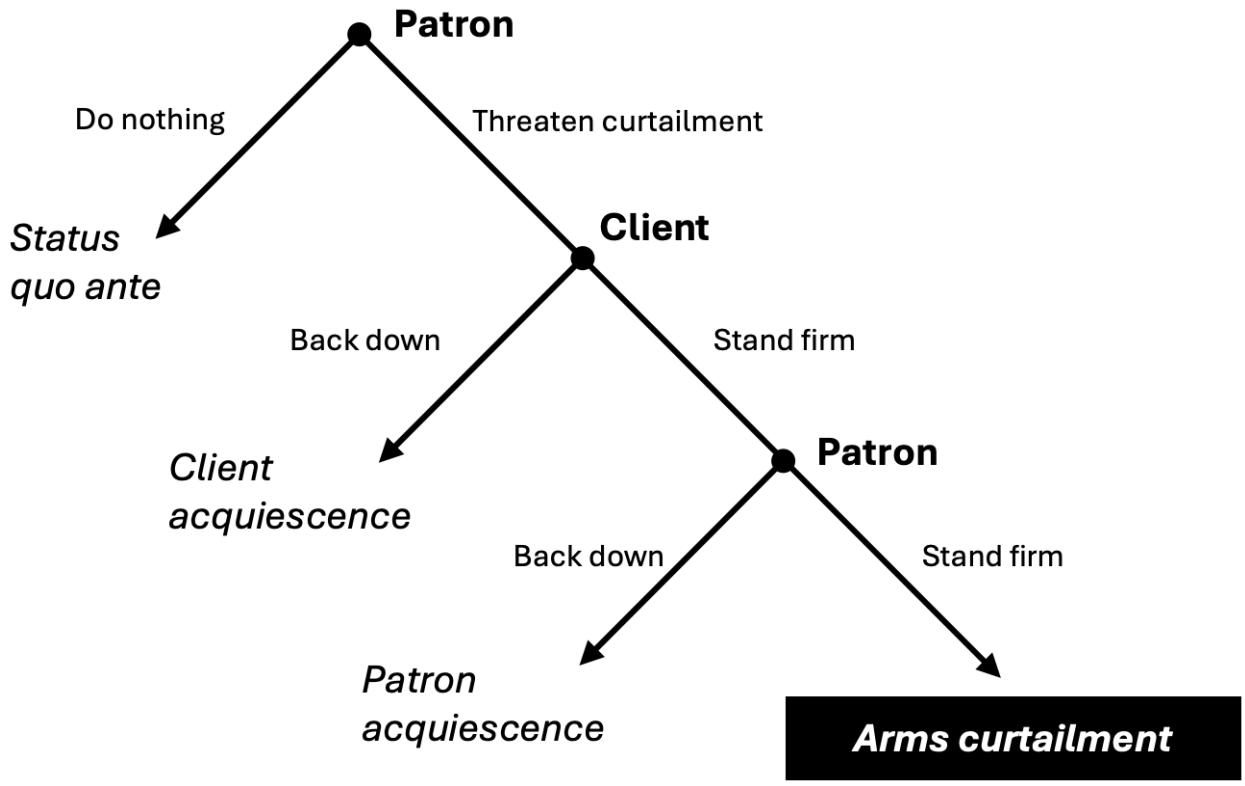


Figure 2.1 A Simplified Model of Economic Coercion

SOURCE: Drezner 2003, with minor modifications

What might lead a patron to back down from the threat of curtailment? Like other types of economic sanctions, arms curtailments impose costs on the patron. The impulse to use arms curtailment as a point of leverage can thus be tempered by the patron's concerns about the material and political costs they expect to bear. The material costs may be compensated if the patron can find an alternate buyer. The political costs, however, are harder to offset. "[T]urning down a request for weapons is not "neutral" behavior; at least as far as the political benefits are concerned. If a request is turned down, it does not leave the political relationship unchanged. A refusal results not only in the nonrealization of potential benefits, but in damage to the existing

relationship as well; it carries a political cost."[84] Patrons know they will bear relational costs as a result of the decision to curtail arms. Explaining the Carter administration's policy of arms transfer restraint, one official said, "Our willingness to sell arms is seen by many, indeed most, friendly governments, as a litmus test of our bilateral relationships. Since national security is a prime concern of all governments, a refusal to sell invariably touches an extremely sensitive nerve, and tends to raise doubts in the minds of the affected country about the assumed strength of the bilateral relationship in security affairs and about the future reliability of the United States as an arms supplier."[85]

2.3. Revisiting the Client's Dilemma

In practice, the patron's specific motivation for curtailing arms—whether infeasibility, concern about third-party reactions, or desire to pressure the client—is not especially important to the client denied weapons, nor is it critical to my theory of client response. Clients do not necessarily care *why* the patron will not be sending the requested weapons; only the fact that the weapons have been denied matters. Suppliers have a sovereign right to sell weapons, and there have historically been few external constraints capable of preventing a state from transferring weapons when it truly wants to do so. Clients quite reasonably believe, therefore, that if a patron is determined enough, it can find a way to make the transfer happen. Curtailing arms is therefore seen by clients as an indicator of disfavor, regardless of the patron's true motivation.

As described earlier, the conventional framework for understanding client behavior vis-à-vis a patron is through the risks and rewards of dependence. Having considered the range of

[84] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 73; citing Geoffrey Kemp and Steven Miller, "The Arms Transfer Phenomenon," in *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrew J. Pierre (New York University Press, 1979).
[85] Lucy Wilson Benson, "Turning the Supertanker: Arms Transfer Restraint," *International Security* 3, no. 4 (1979): 12.

concerns the client will consider in making arms acquisition decisions, the reader will notice there are tensions between the clear operational and logistical benefits of dependence and the uncertain political and economic effects of diversification. Diversification could be politically beneficial if it induces the patron to work harder to retain the client, of course. Equally plausible, however, is that it could reduce the patron's willingness to exert itself for a client that exhibits mixed loyalties. These costs and benefits go some way towards explaining how outside options can be more common than the "dependence is risky" school believes, but perhaps less common than the "dependence is harmless" school purports.

2.3.1. DV: Client Strategies of Response

What is not in question is that the primary risk associated with arms dependence is the potential for a supplier to cut off the flow of weapons. This brings me to the central question of this dissertation: how are clients likely to respond to patron curtailment? Logically, there are four ways this impasse could ultimately be resolved: the client could try to produce the weapons

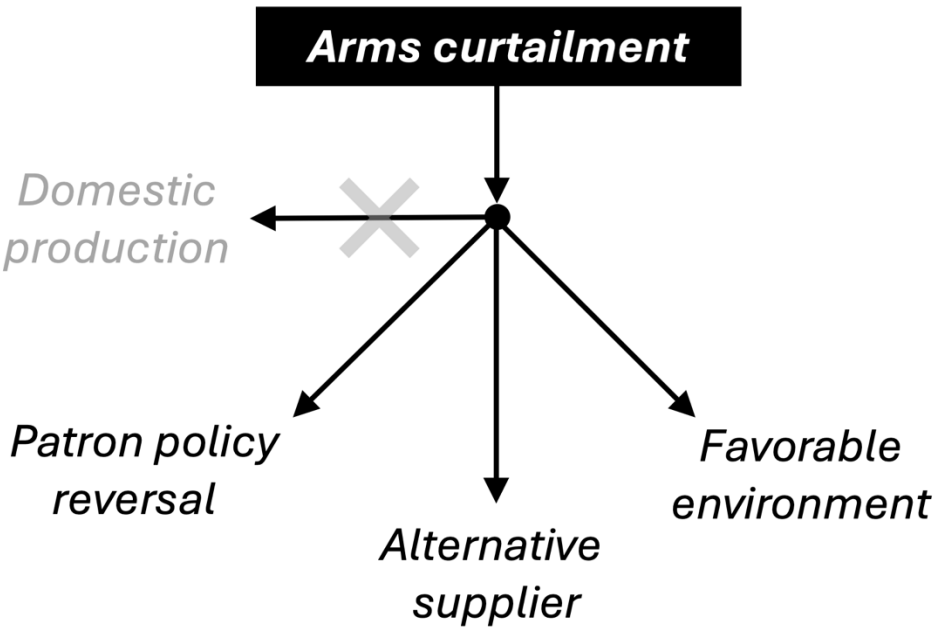


Figure 2.2 Potential Resolutions to Curtailment from Client's Perspective

themselves, the patron could reverse their curtailment policy, the client could acquire arms from another supplier, or the client could abandon or postpone the acquisition (see Figure 2.2).

It is important to note that these are potential resolutions, not themselves strategies of response. A *strategy of response* includes the methods and tactics by which the client intends to achieve their goal in the short to medium-term (e.g. within three years after curtailment begins). When it comes to acquiring major conventional weapons, states are rational actors; they act thoughtfully and strategically to optimize the likelihood of attaining their objectives. It is not enough simply to identify a goal; clients must think carefully about the actions and resources through which they believe their goal can be achieved. Thus, in considering how best to achieve their goal, states implicitly or explicitly rely on a theory of change.

The distinction between resolution and response strategy is especially evident when the goal is patron policy reversal, which can be achieved in one of two ways. As noted earlier, patrons usually do not impose curtailments without reason or warning, which means the client is often aware of what policy or behavior the patron finds objectionable. And because patrons benefit from arms transfers directly and, indirectly, from their relationships with their clients, they have real incentives to want to return to the status quo. This suggests that there may be room for the client to negotiate for a resumption of arms transfers. What could spur a patron to reverse their policy of curtailment? A goal of patron policy reversal thus returns the client to the interaction model of economic coercion that existed prior to curtailment (see Figure 2.1). This suggests that they can, in the parlance of sanctions literature, either back down or stand firm.

In practice, of course, not all resolutions or response strategies are equally plausible (or, theoretically speaking, equally interesting). Clients might *want* to be able to design and manufacture weapons domestically, but this is infeasible in the short term. It is difficult and

time-consuming to start a defense industry, even if only to manufacture systems under license; the lack of skilled labor and the absence of an economic or intellectual ecosystem conducive to weapons manufacturing and development are significant barriers to entry. It is implausible that a client will be able to shift to the indigenous development of major conventional weapons quickly enough to be a reasonable substitute for a frozen acquisition. Furthermore, indigenization frequently requires support and inputs from more developed states. A patron's curtailment might spur a client to commit the resources necessary to cultivate a domestic arms industry, but this is invariably a long-term strategy.[86] The establishment of Turkey's defense industry, for example, can be traced to the 1975 embargo the United States enacted following Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. While Turkey decided almost immediately that it wanted to reduce its dependence on the United States, it was several decades before Turkish firms were able to produce weapons independently and economically.[87] For these reasons, clients are unlikely to choose a response strategy designed to maximize the likelihood of achieving indigenous production.

This leaves clients with three feasible end goals: the patron's reversal of the curtailment policy; the conclusion of a new deal with a third-party supplier; or the postponement of the acquisition until circumstances are more advantageous to the client.[88] A client actively pursuing patron policy reversal has two potential response strategies: back down, or ***acquiesce***; or stand firm, or ***bargain.*** If client's desired end state is to find alternative supplier, their response strategy will be to ***diversify***. Finally, if a client simply prefers a more favorable environment, their response strategy will be to ***endure.*** Table 2.2 summarizes the objectives, tactics, and

[86] Kuo and Spindel, "The Unintended Consequences of Arms Embargoes."
[87] Mahmut Durmaz, "The U.S. Arms Embargo of 1975–1978 and Its Effects on the Development of the Turkish Defense Industry" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014).
[88] It is also logically possible, but rather unlikely, that the client could abandon the goal of acquiring weapons entirely. Presumably the client sought weapons for some reason, and it is unlikely that they will give up simply because their patron has declined to supply them.

theories of success underpinning these four strategies. Figure 2.4 displays these response strategies visually. And to re-contextualize these strategies, Figure 2.4 brings the preceding figures together to illustrate the full chain of interactions.

2.3.1.1. ACQUIESCE

A strategy of acquiescence is one in which the client obviates the reason the patron curtailed the weapons in the first place. In this strategy, the client adjusts their policy or behavior to meet the patron's demands or expectations. This strategy may or may not involve an explicit negotiation between the client and the patron over the specific conditions the client must meet to obtain relief. The theories of success underpinning this approach are compliance and relational loyalty. By removing the source of friction, the patron no longer needs to maintain the curtailment. Furthermore, a demonstration of fealty may be rewarded with the resumption of arms transfers.

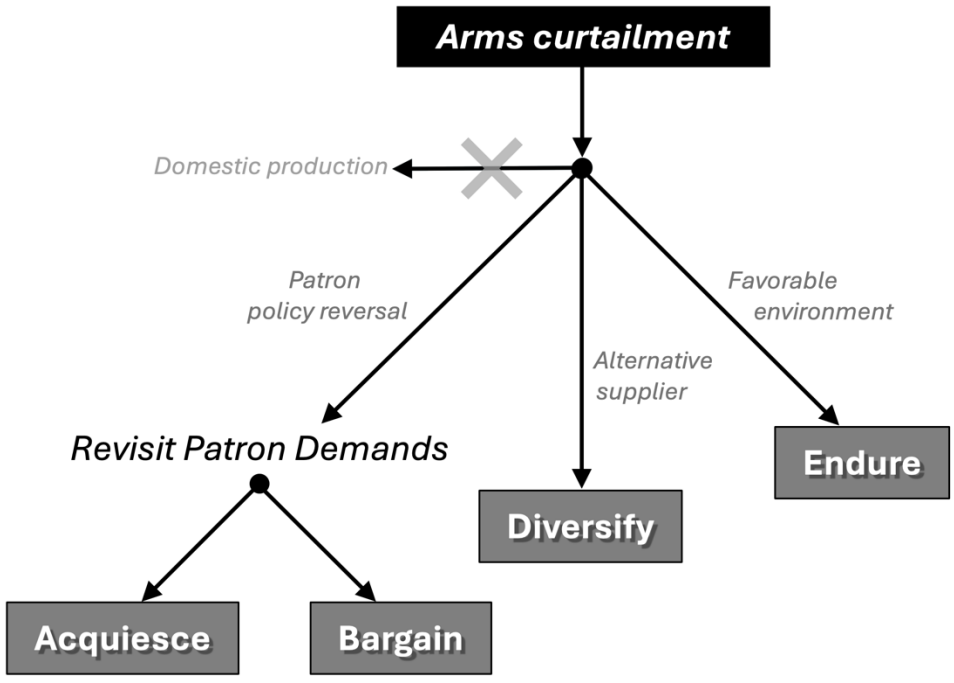


Figure 2.3 Visualizing Client Response Strategies

2.3.1.2. BARGAIN

In this strategy, the client seeks to increase their negotiating power vis-à-vis the patron, with the goal of provoking the patron to reverse course and resume supplying weapons. This requires the client to find a new source of leverage, because any leverage that existed prior to the curtailment decision has already been factored into the patron's calculus and was deemed insufficient. Finding a new supplier is the most common approach to generating this additional leverage. Catrina notes that "major suppliers are interested in preventing that a recipient turns to another supplier and in maintaining a reputation as reliable supplier of effective arms. By threatening to switch to another supplier for future transfers, or to complain in public about the quality of arms or support, a recipient may be able to extract… concessions."[89] The theory of success in this strategy is to increase patron's fear of the potential costs of continuing the curtailment by emphasizing the client's options outside the relationship.

2.3.1.3. DIVERSIFY

A strategy of diversification sees clients engaging with third parties with the short-term goal of acquiring weapons from an alternative supplier. In this strategy, clients seek to strike formal deals with new supplier(s), preferably for more capable or prestigious systems than those denied by the patron. Often, the client's longer-term goal when using this strategy is independence from the need for a patron at all. In the shorter term, the client's theory of success is market competition; third parties will want to compete for new business, which gives the client better options from which to choose.

[89] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 74.

Response Strategy	Objective	Operational Approach	Theory of Success
Acquiesce	Patron policy reversal	Comply with patron's demands	Demonstration of loyalty will be rewarded by patron
Bargain	Patron policy reversal	Engage with third parties	Improved exit options will cause patron to reverse course
Diversify	Alternative supplier	Engage with third parties	Competition among suppliers will increase client's leverage
Endure	More favorable environment	Strategic patience	Exogenous shocks will generate structural or situational change

Table 2.2 Client Response Strategies: Objectives, Approaches, and Theories of Success

2.3.1.4. ENDURE

The strategy of endurance is fundamentally a strategy of intentional passivity. The client recognizes that the immediate negotiating environment is not favorable and is willing to wait for circumstances to change before resuming its pursuit of the denied weapons. The theory of victory is one of strategic patience; eventually, the client reasons, the structure of the situation will change without the client needing to either give in to the patron's demands or to actively motivate the patron to change course.

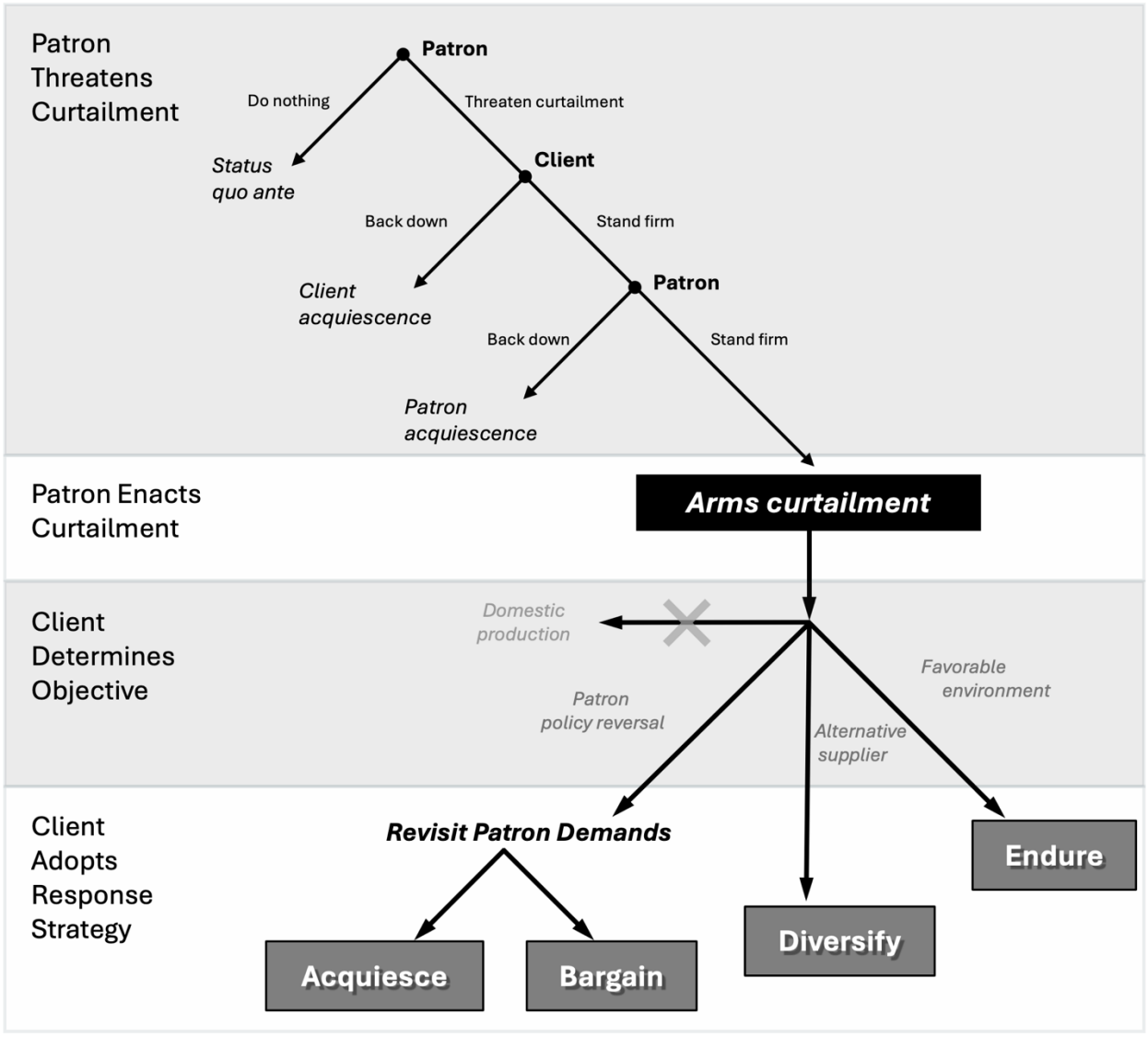


Figure 2.4 Full Strategic Interaction Model Leading to Client Strategy Selection

Several additional points must be noted regarding these response strategies. First, it bears repeating that these are short- to medium-term strategies of response, going out to roughly two to three years. This time frame is important for several reasons. As noted, this is insufficient for ramping up arms production to the level needed to substitute for curtailed arms. Catrina notes that "even in the United States… the ability to increase arms production within a relatively short time (some months, one year) is often viewed as insufficient by U.S. analysts. Presumably, an

expansion of domestic arms production at short notice would pose even greater problems to the smaller arms producers."[90] Over time the need to acquire the weapons will become increasingly acute, and states will therefore be more willing to accept second-best deals from outside suppliers rather than wait out the patron. Even in peace time, acquisition timelines are long, and equipment needs to be recapitalized surprisingly often. States may be able to delay for a couple of years, but the risks associated with waiting will start to increase more rapidly over time. Finally, the client will have had time to become accustomed to any new weapons they bought as stopgaps. They might not want to switch back to the patron as the supplier, since weapons bought from the patron before the curtailment will be getting closer to retirement age and the newer weapons will have been fully integrated. And what may have begun as a substitute to induce the patron to change will have delivered more and more of the order, making the cost of foregoing the rest even higher. Egypt could afford to cancel its Russian Su-35 order in 2018 because it had only taken delivery of a few units. In 1979, however, Iran found itself with a fleet of F-16s it could not afford to replace even as the United States embargoed spare parts, leading Iran to cannibalize some planes to keep the remainder serviceable.

Second, I would highlight where the response strategies identified here accord with, and diverge from, those commonly encountered in social scientific research. The strategies I describe as acquiescence and diversification can be thought of as akin to Hirschman's loyalty and exit.[91] In an international relations context, I build on Castillo and Downes' use of these concepts. In their investigation of how weaker states in asymmetric alliances respond when new threats emerge, they find that states with lower fears of abandonment will remain loyal to their existing

[90] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 191–92.
[91] Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970).

alliance, while states that do not expect the alliance leader to defend them will exit the alliance, either to declare neutrality or to bandwagon with the rising threat.

Where I part ways with this literature is in my conceptualization of client responses as fully-considered strategies, with comprehensible end goals and tactics chosen to maximize the likelihood of achieving these goals. This becomes especially apparent in the differences between Castillo and Downes' third potential outcome, "hedging," and my outcomes of bargaining and diversification. Within the alliance management literature, hedging is commonly used to describe the behavior of states that are neither balancing nor bandwagoning against a threat. Lim and Cooper define hedging as "signaling that generates ambiguity over the extent of a secondary state's shared security interests with great powers."[92] Castillo and Downes suggest that hedging "entails taking unilateral measures to minimize the risk of partner abandonment while remaining in the alliance." In its "diplomatic form," they argue, hedging may involve "secondary states [cultivating] closer ties with the source of the threat."[93]

I contend that the "hedging" concept has been used to describe a tactic or behavior—what I describe above as engagement with third parties—with insufficient attention paid to what the actor hopes to achieve with this behavior. Negotiations scholar James Sebenius argues that "using one's [leverage] to 'force' a deal *tactically* (but with the expectation of continued relations) is very different from using it for a genuine *strategic* "escape" from the relationship."[94] Framing the client's behavior as an attempt to strengthen their negotiating position vis-à-vis more powerful states by improving their exit options opens up the question of what the weaker state wants to achieve. Is the client's goal to achieve a better deal by demanding the more

[92] Lim and Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging."
[93] Castillo and Downes, "Loyalty, Hedging, or Exit," 230.
[94] James K. Sebenius, "BATNAs in Negotiation: Common Errors and Three Kinds of 'No,'" *Negotiation Journal* 33, no. 2 (2017): 93.

powerful state offer something more attractive than the client's putative alternative? Or is the client attempting to reduce its dependence on any single other state for the foreseeable future? Both bargaining and diversification strategies may look like hedging, as the concept has been described in international relations literature, but the objective in the former is short-term leverage, and in the latter, it is long-term exit.

Finally, as noted earlier, if the client's objective is to *cause* the patron to reverse its policy of curtailment, they will need to seek renewed negotiations, and it is worth clarifying the intellectual framework in which I discuss the negotiation processes. There is a rich literature on bargaining within international relations, but it has been insufficiently attentive to some useful conceptual developments about negotiation from other fields. Actively negotiating for a resumption of arms transfers engages dynamics developed primarily in economics and psychology, where researchers have extensively studied negotiation processes and outcomes, and it is that research agenda I draw on in conceptualizing client behavior. Psychology, for example, divides negotiation research into two main paradigms: distributive negotiation, also called value-claiming negotiation or "bargaining," and integrative, or value-creating, negotiation. The former "focuses on dividing scarce resources and is studied in social dilemma research. Integrative negotiation focuses on finding mutually beneficial agreements and is studied in decision-making negotiation tasks with multiple issues."[95] Steinel and Harinck further sub-categorize negotiation behavior into five types: "distributive negotiation is characterized by *forcing*, *compromising*, or *yielding* behavior in which each party gives and takes; integrative negotiation is characterized by

[95] Wolfgang Steinel and Fieke Harinck, "Negotiation and Bargaining," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology* (2020).

problem-solving behavior in which parties search for mutually beneficial agreements. *Avoiding* is the fifth negotiation style, in which parties do not negotiate."[96]

While scholars disagree on the specific of how power operates in negotiation processes, the most commonly used indicator of a party's leverage is the "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" (BATNA). In the abstract, a party's BATNA is the point at which it is indifferent between making an agreement with its current negotiating partner and pursuing Plan B. An outside option or third party is a common—and powerful—source of negotiating power. Research on negotiations has found a "strong, causal relationship between the attractiveness of a negotiator's BATNA and the negotiator's ability to claim resources in a given negotiation."[97] Importantly, improving one's BATNA does not necessarily require a true exit option capable of providing the exact same benefits as the original or most preferred agreement. Scholars of negotiation have also noted that it's possible for the best alternative to be a rejection of the current deal and continuing to negotiate. This is similar to the Endure strategy, wherein the client hopes for an exogenous or endogenous shock that will alter the negotiating space.

Within a patron-client relationship, negotiations carry a double bottom line of material outcomes and relational outcomes. A party's negotiation style is driven by the intensity of its concerns for its own outcomes and the outcomes of the other party. These concerns can vary independently of one another and should not be thought of as zero-sum.[98] Patron-client relationships exhibit a high degree of durability and asymmetric but ongoing engagement, suggesting that both sides will prefer win-win solutions and will take one another's outcomes into account when negotiating. Negotiators will try to improve their economic outcomes and to

[96] Steinel and Harinck, "Negotiation and Bargaining." Emphasis added.
[97] Leigh L. Thompson et al., "Negotiation," *Annual Review of Psychology* 61, no. Volume 61, 2010 (2010): 495.
[98] Steinel and Harinck, "Negotiation and Bargaining," 5.

capture surplus, but they will also consider the relational consequences of their negotiation strategies and behavior. Attempts by one side to maximize material outcomes in distributive negotiations will result in worse relational outcomes than if the material outcomes were more evenly shared or if both sides engaged in integrative negotiation.

2.3.2. IV1: The Viable Outside Option

My first independent variable captures an intuitive driver of client response: is there a viable third-party supplier that can meet the client's demands? For the sake of parsimony I treat this variable as binary: the client either does or does not have an outside option. In practice, naturally, the viability of a third-party supplier depends largely on the terms the client is willing to accept. A viable outside option will be capable of delivering the quantity and quality of system demanded. They will be able to meet the delivery timetable needed, at a price and on a payment schedule that is acceptable to the recipient.

In the context of an arms curtailment, the value of an outside option rests on its ability to reduce the client's dependence on the patron for the now-unavailable weapons, which creates leverage for the client within its ongoing negotiations with the patron. Crucially, the outside option is the only meaningful source of leverage that can be mobilized after curtailment, because all other significant sources of leverage were factored into the patron's calculus when it decided to halt transfers. In negotiation research terms, "an outside option is one's opportunity cost for bargaining—i.e., the utility one would receive if he terminated negotiations. Better outside options lead to more favorable bargains… because your opponent must give you a larger share of the surplus for you to not want to reject and pursue the outside option."

What does it mean for an outside option to be *viable*? There are two common ways of describing the structure of the arms market that are in tension with one another. One way is that

the arms market is an oligopoly: the market is dominated by two to three producer states, and all other sellers are relatively unimportant subsidiaries of these. As a result, buyers are severely constrained if one of the oligopolists decide not to sell to them. A second perspective is that the arms market is closer to an oligopsony: there are a limited number of prospective buyers, and because seller states must find export markets in order to achieve economies of scale, buyers have many options, and the market is quite competitive.

The idea of viability helps reconcile these perspectives: there can be many outside options in theory, but only a handful of practical possibilities. I use the notion of *viability* of outside options rather than simply the existence of outside options to underscore that while there may be several states that could sell a given weapons system or meet the demand for a given capability, there are multiple reasons why a deal might not be feasible. For example, only some sellers can meet high-intensity, rapid-turnaround demand, such as would be desirable during a war of attrition against a peer competitor. Similarly, only some suppliers can offer advanced technology. Building on Snider, Catrina posits that "the availability to a recipient state of alternative suppliers… depends on:

> the number of alternative producers of a given type of arms
>
> the recipient country's financial resources
>
> the recipient country's ideological flexibility
>
> the recipient country's degree of diplomatic isolation
>
> the ability of the recipient country's forces to convert to new weapon systems."[99]

[99] Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*, 173; Lewis W. Snider, "Arms Transfers and Recipient Cooperation with Supplier Policy References: The Case of the Middle East," *International Interactions* 5, nos. 2–3 (1978): 241–66.

There is a natural tendency to focus on the main *producers* of high-tech, cutting-edge weapons, of which there are relatively few. Since World War II and the rise of industrialized warfare, major conventional weapon development and production has been dominated by a handful of nodal countries: the United States; the Soviet Union/Russia; China; France; and Germany. Some countries have achieved a degree of market share in certain categories of systems, such as Brazil, Italy, and South Korea in shipbuilding; the Nordic countries in aircraft; and, more recently, Iran, Israel, and Turkey in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

There can be many *suppliers* of arms, however, especially older and less sophisticated arms with minimal sustainment needs. In the 1990s, for example, former Soviet states were a source of weapons, and the desperate need for hard currency and for orders to keep factories afloat meant these states remained a viable source for many of the Soviet Union's traditional customers. Major powers are frequently the only viable options for states needing significant quantities of advanced weapons quickly. For states that want less-advanced technology or are willing to wait, however, there are more viable options than just the hegemons.

There are some additional caveats that may condition how viable an outside option is. First, the outside option need not be permanent or offer extensive access to be a valuable or viable outside option. States can still gain useful leverage by threatening to substitute part of their arms portfolio. The outside option can be system-specific; for example, the recipient may only need aircraft from a third party. Therefore, a potential outside option does not necessarily have to be akin to a replacement patron and need not be a hegemon in the system.

Second, an ideal outside option will not themselves be dependent on the same original patron/supplier as the client, because that patron could potentially halt the transfer. The original seller is likely to have leverage over the outside option, particularly if the outside option is itself

economically, politically, or militarily dependent on the patron. For example, the system to be sold may rely on inputs or resupply from the original seller. Alternatively, the weapons the outside option plans to re-sell may come with end-use requirements and re-export controls. Violating these stipulations could jeopardize the third party's relationship with the supplier.

Finally, one of the most important factors in determining whether a viable outside option exists is whether the client has access to hard currency or raw materials that have created or could create a negative balance of payments with potential suppliers. States that require military aid in the form of grants or concessionary lending terms in order to make purchases are less able to attract outside options. For states dependent on patron largesse, only third-party suppliers that see them as intrinsically, strategically valuable are likely to be viable outside options, because the supplier will be required to bear part of the material cost of supplying the recipient.

My theory is agnostic about the third party's motivations in engaging with the client. The third party may be actively trying to undermine the patron, such as by attempting to drive a wedge between the patron and the client.[100] They may be intrinsically interested in something about the client and anticipate gaining tangible or intangible benefits from developing their relationship with the client. Or they may primarily have commercial intentions, which is one of the most common reasons that sanctions, particularly arms embargoes, fail.[101]

2.3.3. IV2: Client Beliefs about Patron's Type

The second independent variable in this study is the client's inferential assessment of the patron's general reliability, which I term *patron type.* Patrons can either be *staunch supporters* or *fair-weather friends.* As noted, the client's dilemma is managing the balance between the risks

[100] Timothy W. Crawford, *The Power to Divide: Wedge Strategies in Great Power Competition*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Cornell University Press, 2021).
[101] Early, *Busted Sanctions*; Erickson, "Stopping the Legal Flow of Weapons"; Moore, "Arming the Embargoed."

and rewards of dependence. This is fundamentally a question of whether the client can trust the patron not to abuse their position of power. A client must always be concerned about to extent to which the patron values them and, therefore, to what extent the patron can be relied on to, at minimum, refrain from undermining the client.

The patron's type is, in effect, the patron's reputation among the members of the client's foreign policy decision-making apparatus. The individual members of this group—political leaders, bureaucrats, embassy officials, etc.—interact with their counterparts on specific issue areas. In so doing, they—and by extension, the client state—form opinions about the patron through observations of patterns of behavior. Does the patron respect the client's strategic interests and objectives, even where they diverge from those of the patron? Does the patron consult with the client before making decisions that will negatively affect the client? If the client is likely to be negatively affected by a patron's actions, does the patron provide side payments or secret assurances to mitigate the adverse effects? Does the patron share sensitive information with the client? In negotiations with the client, how generous is the patron? Does the patron create value or claim value? Table 2.3 provides some key indicators of these two patron types.

Simply put, patron type can be understood as the client's best guess at how they expect the patron to treat them in the future. This guess is derived from two sources: first, the client's understanding of the patron's strategic interests, and second, the client's evaluation of the patron's trustworthiness based on past interactions. I deliberately use the client's beliefs about the patron's *type* to reflect that this is a holistic, impressionistic assessment. Bilateral relations between patrons and clients tend to be noisy, with many avenues of engagement that could be used as a signaling pathways, so clients consider patterns of behavior inferentially and indirectly to develop an idea of the patron's type. Developing such heuristics is a natural tendency in

human psychology and organizational behavior, including at the state level. Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo argue, for example, that states' reputations for resolve form in indirect ways.[102]

	Staunch Supporter	Fairweather Friend
Areas of cooperation / broad engagement	Security, economic, diplomatic, and/or cultural	Security
Congruence of strategic interests	Broadly shared	Particularized and limited
Type of trust	Generalized	Strategic
Compatibility of political ideology	Shared or highly compatible	Divergent or mutually exclusive
Affective relations	Shared sense of goodwill and positive affinity. Personal warmth between leaders	Lack of goodwill; few cultural similarities. No personal relationship between leaders.

Table 2.3 Attributes of Patron Types (IV 2)

When attempting to predict another state's future behavior, leaders do not necessarily make explicit, concrete reference to previous actions. Rather, past actions provide leaders with information about what the state values and what it will defend. In a study of how states interpret alliance violations, Leveck and Narang also find that past actions matter only when they are understood as predictive of future behavior.[103]

[102] Alex Weisiger and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Revisiting Reputation: How Past Actions Matter in International Politics," *International Organization* 69, no. 02 (2015): 473–95.
[103] LeVeck and Narang, "How International Reputation Matters."

2.3.3.1. Compatibility of Strategic Interests

In evaluating the patron's type, the client takes into account the patron's strategic interests and to what extent they "encapsulate" the client's interests.[104] I build on the concept of commonality of security interests developed by Yarhi-Milo, Lanoszka, and Cooper, which "refers to the extent of the threat that the client's primary adversary poses to the patron's core security interests."[105] Where they focus on the patron's assessment of this commonality, however, I am concerned with the client's perspective. To what extent does the client believe its primary adversary is also a security threat to the patron? Clients also consider the nature of their patron's relations with two other actors in the client's immediate orbit: the patron of their main adversary and their primary domestic threat. Figure 2.5 provides a simple schematic of these relationships. Whether the patron is adversarial, neutral, or friendly with these actors has obvious ramifications for how much the client believes it can count on the patron in the future. Table 2.4 summarizes these implications.

[104] Russell Hardin, *Trust* (Polity, 2006).
[105] Yarhi-Milo et al., "To Arm or to Ally?," 99.

	Staunch Supporter	Fairweather Friend
Patron's relationship with:		
A. Client's primary state adversary	Adversarial	Non-adversarial
B. Patron of client's primary adversary	Patrons are one another's primary rival	Non-adversarial, ranging from neutral to allied
C. Client's primary internal threat actor	Patron views actor as threat	Patron sympathizes with or sees actor as potentially useful in another geopolitical context

Table 2.4 Establishing Compatibility of Strategic Interests

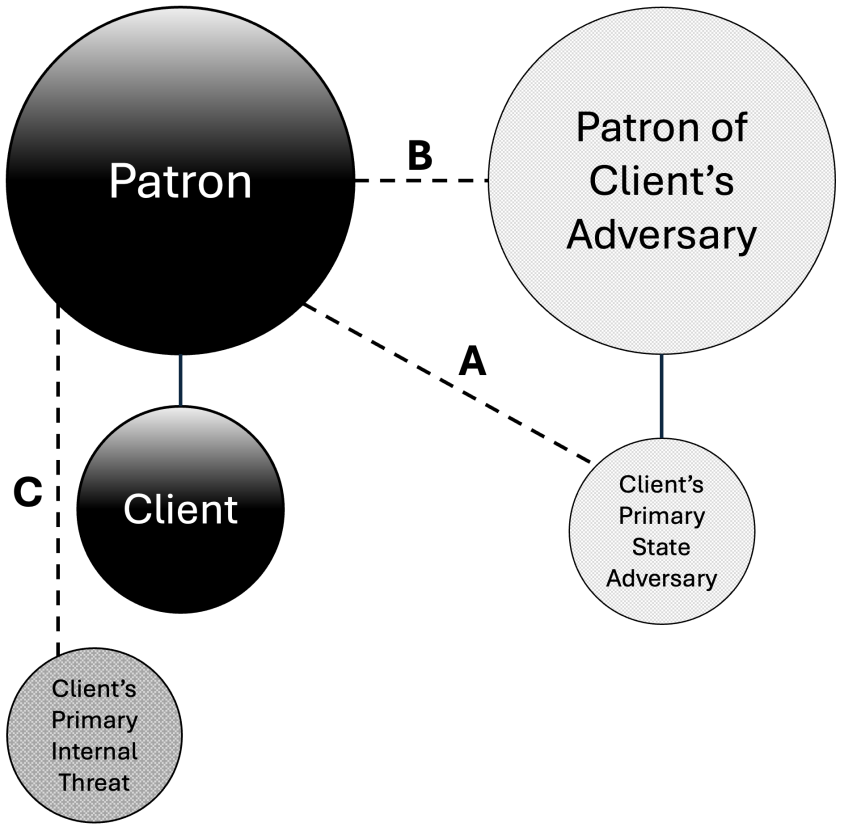


Figure 2.5 Visualizing Patron's Relationships of Interest to Client

2.3.3.2. Patron Trustworthiness

The client's assessment of the commonality of interests between itself and the patron is but one element of their overall evaluation of the patron's type. Over the course of their relationship, the client develops a degree of trust in their patron, which informs their assessment of their patron's type. Sufficient congruence of interests is necessary for the development of *strategic trust*, which aligns with the rationalist account of the conditions under which states might trust one another. In this concept, "actors trust on the basis of beliefs about others' interests, cooperating when they believe that others' interests 'encapsulate' their own."[106] Higher congruence of security threats suggests the patron can be trusted to act to the benefit of the client because it is within the patron's own interests to do so. But strategic trust requires vigilance on the client's part to ensure the patron's interests are still aligned with those of the client. This form of trust is particularistic and calculative. If the client has only strategic trust in their patron, they are likely to view them as a fair-weather friend.

States may also develop *generalized trust*, also known as social trust, in one another, wherein they come to believe the other can be expected to behave benevolently and with integrity beyond the particulars of a given situation—even when strategic interests diverge.[107] "Social trust must be grounded in what the late political scientist Russell Hardin called trustworthiness, which we can understand as a disposition to comply with social norms," according to Vallier.[108] This form of trust is characteristic of relationships with staunch

[106] Brian C Rathbun, "Trust in International Relations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*, ed. Eric M. Uslaner (Oxford University Press, 2018), 689, citing Hardin 2006.
[107] Elsewhere, Rathbun describes generalized trust in moralistic terms and as an individual-level orientation toward being trusting, but for my purposes, I use generalized trust in the relational sense, devoid of moral connotations.
[108] Kevin Vallier, *Social and Political Trust: Concepts, Causes, and Consequences* (Niskanen Center, 2019), 2.

supporters. Greater levels of trust enable dyads to achieve superior joint gains because private information can be shared; as Rathbun notes, "finding an outcome that creates value requires players to reveal private information about which issues are most important to them and how far they can actually compromise without crossing their red lines."[109] Rathbun explains that "generalized trust facilitates the diffuse reciprocity often necessary for cooperation. Where generalized trust is lacking, actors will insist on more specific reciprocity, since they are less certain that others will honor their agreements. … Whereas strategic trust follows from specific

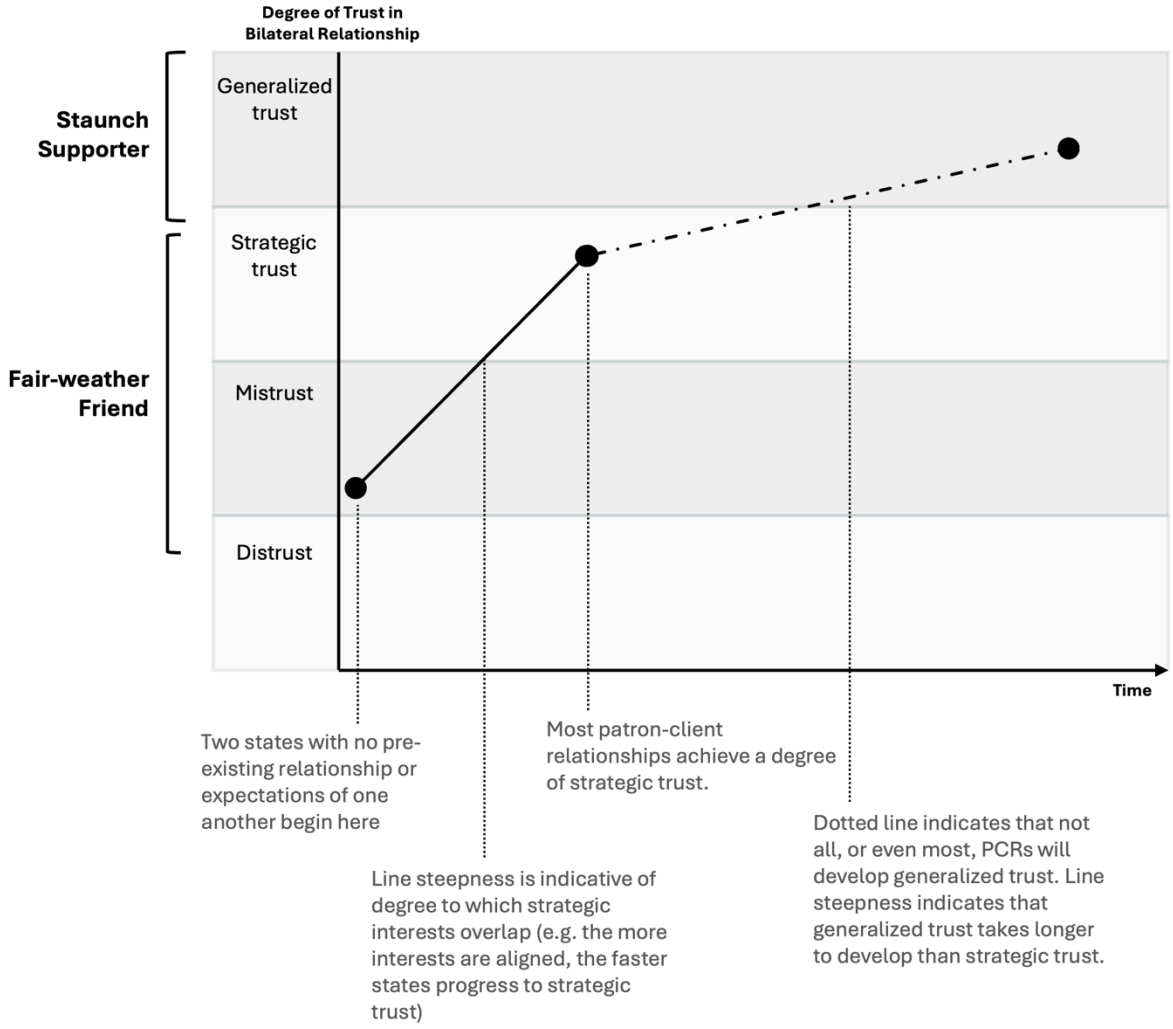


Figure 2.6 Forms of Trust in Bilateral Relationships

[109] Rathbun, "Trust in International Relations," 697.

reciprocity, diffuse reciprocity over time follows from generalized trust."[110] Figure 2.6 illustrates the relationship between degrees of trust and patron type and how it may evolve over time.

Inherent in the patron-client relationship is both parties' interest in the maintenance of the relationship overall. When patrons and clients disagree, there are incentives to minimize the collateral damage and reach a negotiated resolution that offers some value to both sides. As the more powerful state, it is the patron that determines whether the negotiations will be distributive or integrative. In other words, does the patron want to seek a win-win solution, or are they indifferent to the harm they might do to the client? If a patron cannot be trusted to account for the client's needs, a rational client must consider developing an acceptable exit option and foregoing some of the benefits of patronage. The client needs to know whether the patron is genuinely concerned with the client's security and strategic interests or if the patron sees the relationship as merely transactional. Staunch supporters can be relied on to provide assistance even when it is inconvenient or costly to them. Fair-weather friends cannot. Clients may have strategic trust in fair-weather friends, but it is only with staunch supporters that they may develop generalized trust.

2.4. Responding to the Client's Dilemma: Linking Conditions and Outcomes

In this section, I draw my two variables together to establish a model of strategic decision-making for clients responding to weapons cut-offs by their patron. Table 2.5 summarizes the main predictions of my model, and Table 2.6 summarizes the specific behaviors I would expect to observe under different response strategies.

[110] Rathbun, "Trust in International Relations," 695.

It bears repeating that clients consider both their opportunities for exit and their willingness to bear the costs associated with exit. Within this opportunity-willingness framework, the outside option variable determines what outside resources the client can draw on in their effort to regain access to arms (opportunity), while the patron's type determines whether the client is inclined to maintain their relationship with the patron (willingness). Each of the four potential strategies—acquiesce, bargain, endure, or diversify—engages a distinct causal logic.

		Client's perception of patron's type	
		Staunch Supporter	**Fair-weather Friend**
Viable outside option?	**No**	**Acquiesce**: Client renounces its disfavored policies. Client's Theory of Change: Demonstration of loyalty causes patron to reverse course Operational Approach: Comply with patron's demands and renounce disfavored policies	**Endure:** Client stalls and plays for time. Client's Theory of Change: Exogenous change causes patron to reverse course Operational Approach: Strategic patience
	Yes	**Bargain**: Client pursues third party supplier while continuing to engage patron. Client's Theory of Change: Decreased leverage and fear of loss cause patron to reverse course Operational Approach: Engage openly with third party	**Diversify**: Client exits relationship and strikes a new deal with a third-party supplier. Client's Theory of Change: Reduced dependence on patron creates strategic freedom Operational Approach: Engage privately with third party

Table 2.5 Pathways for Client Response Strategies, with Observable Implications

2.4.1. ACQUIESCE

The causal logic underpinning this strategy conjoins the following elements:

- The absence of a viable outside option that could be mobilized to trigger fear of loss in the patron.
- The client's desire to regain the rewards of patronage.

In this scenario, the client places a higher priority on restoring access to weapons and on regaining the patron's favor than on the policy or behavior that first led the patron to curtailment. Acquiescing to the patron's demands serves to demonstrate their loyalty to the patron. In general, clients with staunch supporters for patrons perceive the rewards of dependence as greater than the risks, even when the risks are actualized. And because they view their patron as a staunch supporter, they are likely to perceive this curtailment as an aberration and not indicative of the patron's future trustworthiness. The client therefore believes that backing down will not invite further punishment or additional coercion.

2.4.2. BARGAIN

The causal logic underpinning this strategy conjoins the following elements:

- The client's desire to regain the rewards of patronage.
- The presence of a viable outside option that could be mobilized to trigger fear of loss in the patron.

In this scenario, the client is not willing to exit the relationship, even though the opportunity exists in the viable outside option. The client sees greater value in retaining the patron, who has historically been a staunch supporter. But the client does want the patron to change their policies and resume arms transfers. It will therefore use the threat of diversification to induce jealousy

and fear of abandonment within the patron. The client will maintain open communication with the patron, with whom the client will discuss its negotiations with the third party while indicating that the client's strong preference is to acquire arms from the patron.

2.4.3. DIVERSIFY

The causal logic underpinning this strategy conjoins the following elements:

- The client's dissatisfaction with continued dependence on the patron.
- The presence of a viable outside option that can be mobilized to reduce the client's dependence.

The diversification scenario is akin to the type of exit described by Hirschman and by Castillo and Downes: the client recognizes that continued dependence on its unreliable patron is no longer tenable and that it must either change patrons entirely or reduce its reliance on a single supplier. Diversification is easier during an arms curtailment episode; the high political and material costs associated with diversification are more tolerable when face with the costs being imposed by the patron. However, the client has good reasons to keep its patron from becoming its enemy. The weapons that are already in the client's inventory will need spare parts and maintenance services, which may not be held up under the curtailment policy. And even if the patron refuses to rescind its policy, there is a qualitative difference between a patron that turns a blind eye to other states supplying weapons to the client and a patron that is dedicated to preventing the client from receiving arms.

2.4.4. ENDURE

The causal logic underpinning this strategy conjoins the following elements:

- The client's dissatisfaction with continued dependence on the patron.

- The absence of a viable outside option that could be used to reduce the client's dependence or mobilized to trigger patron's fear of loss of client

Clients with few good options and an unreliable patron are likely to choose a strategy of endurance. The client would prefer to reduce its dependence on the patron, but it lacks a viable outside option that could help offset the political and material costs of diversification. And because the patron has proven itself to be a fair-weather friend, the client cannot trust that the patron would really resume arms transfers if the client were to reverse the policy that led to the arms curtailment in the first place. Absent a source of outside leverage, the client has no choice but to wait and be alert to the prospect of structural or contextual changes that shift the client's negotiating environment.

	Observable Expectations for Client Behavior vis-à-vis:		
	Disfavored Policy	**Negotiation with Patron**	**Negotiation with Third Party**
Acquiesce	Client changes its policy	Client folds	N/A
Bargain	No change	Client continues negotiations	Client negotiates with third party; discusses with patron
Endure	No change	Client continues negotiations	N/A
Diversify	No change	Client exits negotiations	Client negotiates with third party; does not discuss with patron

Table 2.6 Specific Expectations for Client Behavior

2.5. Research Design

2.5.1. Case Selection

My research design conceptualizes the patron-client relationship as a series of linked sub-cases. I sought out cases that could be processed traced over a significant period in order to exploit within-case variation to illustrate how changes in my independent variables affect the client's strategies. I rely on qualitative causal inference and comparative case methods to examine whether the patterns of behavior in historical instances of arms curtailment are consistent with my theory's expectations.

As an initial cut to determine likely cases of patron-client relationships, I made reference to SIPRI's Arms Transfer Database, Catrina's data on arms dependence, and John Sislin's data on instances of the use of arms to influence recipients.[111] I then relied on three additional attributes to identify useful cases. First, I looked for independence on key characteristics among my cases. For example, I selected cases with different patrons to obviate the charge that attributes of the patron itself are driving a client's choice of strategy. I also selected cases where the clients themselves are not directly engaged with one another's concerns in the periods I examine. For most of their modern histories, Iraq and Pakistan have not shared strategic goals or primary adversaries or threats; particularly after 1958, where my Iraq case begins, the events that most affected Iraq did not have strategic implications for Pakistan, and vice versa. Additionally, instances of curtailment are not related or driven by the same geopolitical events between cases.

[111] *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), released March 2025, https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers; John Sislin, "Arms as Influence: The Elusive Link between Military Assistance and Political Compliance" (Dissertation, Indiana University, 1993); Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence*. Sislin's and Catrina's data is based on the U.S. State Department's annual "World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers" (WMEAT) report.

Second, I sought cases that would allow me to hold constant potential confounders. My cases cover broadly the same time period to keep the overall structure of the system, particularly the structure of the arms market, similar and comparable. Finally, because my theory centers the judgment and strategic decision-making of buyers and suppliers, I selected cases where there is primary source material available to provide contemporaneous insight into the actors' thought processes and considerations. I have used primarily qualitative methods to examine thousands of pages of archival material, including declassified state records from the United States, Iraq, and the Soviet Union; material published by firms and other non-governmental actors; memoirs and biographies of state leaders, ambassadors, and other officials. Where possible, I have made reference to quantitative data on arms transfers, with the caveat that much of this data is notoriously noisy and tricky to interpret, with serious selection problems.[112] Existing datasets capture only executed transfers, omitting deals that were agreed but later cancelled as well as deals that were under consideration but ultimately discarded.[113] For many states, there are incentives to obfuscate arms transfers at both the deal-making and delivery stage, creating a potential missing data problem. This is ameliorated by my emphasis on transfers of major conventional weapons, which are more easily and accurately tracked. Weapons deals may be contracted several years before deliveries are scheduled to begin. Delivery timelines vary significantly by complexity of weapon; it is easier and quicker to produce an armored personnel carrier than a nuclear-powered attack submarine. Especially for new, high-end technologies,

[112] Chapter 1 of Jennifer Spindel's dissertation provides an excellent analysis of the difficulties of modeling arms transfers and the limitations of existing datasets. Spindel, "Beyond Military Power."
[113] No dataset of arms transfers claims to be comprehensive or systematically unbiased, and comparison between existing datasets is difficult due to differences in counting and measurement rules. SIPRI is the most-often used, but it relies on the trend-indicator value (TIV), which is SIPRI's proprietary composite estimate. TIV can be used for careful comparisons between countries within the dataset, but should not be interpreted as the true purchase price.

physical transfers may be delayed by unexpected design or production obstacles—assuming the contract is not cancelled.

The cases selected raise two obvious questions of generalizability. First, one might ask whether the patterns I find are a result of Cold War bipolarity. Is this simply a story of states playing superpowers off against one another? I argue that it is not. These cases in fact complicate the simplistic story of clients switching sides, or threatening to switch sides, whenever they were dissatisfied with how they were being treated. Iraq and Pakistan did not pursue the other hegemon when they chose true diversification. Instead, they sought to build relationships with France and China, which themselves had reasons to disdain the bipolar system and the two superpowers. While these clients at various points used the other superpower as leverage against their patron, Iraq did not do so in earnest until the 1980s, long after it had already diversified away from the Soviet Union. Pakistan briefly and tentatively sought out the Soviet Union in the late 1960s, but primarily to goad the United States into action, consistent with a bargaining strategy.

Second, the clients in both cases are former colonies of the United Kingdom, and it is reasonable to expect post-colonial client states to attach to patrons capable of providing the same or similar arms to those of their formal colonizers. However, post-colonial political and military development unfolded very differently in Iraq and Pakistan. Following independence in 1932, Iraq was a British-aligned monarchy, which was overthrown in 1958 and fully replaced with a nationalist, autocratic revolutionary regime. For its part, Pakistan was part of the British Raj until 1947 and chose to remain a member of the British Commonwealth after independence. Pakistan intentionally retained significant political, military, bureaucratic, legal, and cultural aspects of its British history for several decades, until Zia made a conscious move toward Islamization in the

early 1980s. Pakistan and Iraq also broke differently in their post-colonial international alignments. Despite little ideological overlap between Iraq and the Soviet Union, Iraq nevertheless followed the other Arab states into the Soviet orbit. Pakistan, meanwhile, saw communism as antithetical to its secular Islamic national character and aligned itself with Western ideals.

2.5.2. Selection Effects in the Case Universe

Curtailment episodes should be relatively rare, because the threat of curtailment might resolve with no need for curtailment to occur.[114] As Drezner notes, "Significant number of coercion attempts end at the threat stage, before sanctions are imposed. These cases yield significantly larger concessions when compared to instances in which sanctions are imposed."[115] By scoping my question and my empirical evidence to cases where the patron has already decided to curtail arms transfers, I am by definition omitting cases where the dispute ended before curtailment occurred. This introduces two potential sources of selection effects in my case universe: instances where the client backed down before curtailment and those where the patron backed down.

The strategic nature of international relationships means that patrons naturally consider how the client is likely to respond when deciding, first, whether to issue threats, and then whether to follow through on that threat. If the client has an outside option, the patron should be less likely to issue a threat in the first place and more likely to back down if the client threatens to defect. This is concordant with research on decision-making about sending sanctions, which finds that concerns about third parties and alternate markets affect the likelihood of sanctions

[114] Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion"; Miller, "The Secret Success of Nonproliferation Sanctions."
[115] Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion," 164.

being issued, as well as their likely success.[116] Peksen and Peterson argue, for example, that high levels of economic dependence increase the likelihood of attracting sanctions efforts, but only when the target lacks an avenue for mitigation:

> The sender is more likely to threaten or impose sanctions against a potential target with higher trade dependence on the sender, but only under the condition that the target's ability to redirect lost trade to third parties is low. As the target's ability to redirect lost trade increases, the sender is less likely to use sanctions because it expects that the target could mitigate the intended costs of the coercion more easily.[117]

In other words, if the patron believes the client has a viable outside option and is likely to defect, they may opt not to use arms as the tool of coercion.

Even if the patron believes the client cannot mitigate the effects of curtailment, actual imposition of curtailment should be relatively rare, because the client may have folded at the threat stage. The cases that remain in scope, therefore, are those where a) the patron did not believe the client had a valid outside option; b) the patron was less concerned with losing the client than with achieving changes in the client's behavior; or c) the client was unwilling to fold at the threat stage.

2.6. Moving Forward

Scholars and practitioners have long disagreed about how risky it is for a client to be reliant on a patron for weapons. Realists point to the dangers of dependence and the potential for coercion by the patron, but various other intellectual traditions, within and outside political

[116] Early, *Busted Sanctions*; Taehee Whang et al., "Coercion, Information, and the Success of Sanction Threats," *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 1 (2013): 65–81.
[117] Dursun Peksen and Timothy M. Peterson, "Sanctions and Alternate Markets: How Trade and Alliances Affect the Onset of Economic Coercion," *Political Research Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2016): 1.

science, argue that patron-client relationships can generate rewards that outweigh the risks. These traditions also suggest the problem of dependence may not be as acute as realists would suggest. However, few scholars have gone beyond acknowledging the existence of the client's dilemma—the risks and rewards of patronage must be carefully managed—to theorize how clients respond when the threat of curtailment has been actualized.

This chapter has therefore introduced a new theory of client responses to arms curtailments that accounts for the importance of the client's broader strategic environment in conditioning their choice of strategy. Specifically, I argue that clients consider how willing they are to forego future benefits of patronage as well as what other opportunities are available to them. Client willingness is linked to the client's assessment of their patron's type: is the patron a staunch supporter, or have they previously shown themselves to be a fair-weather friend? Opportunity, naturally, is tied to the existence of a viable outside option. Absent opportunity, the client has few options. Absent willingness, however, the client will seek to find a path forward with their current patron. In the following two chapters, I deepen my investigation of these dynamics and processes through case studies of Iraq-Soviet relations (1958–1982) and Pakistan-U.S. relations (1947–1970).

3. Iraq, 1958–1982: A Rope of Sand

If you do not want to calculate the possibilities of enmity, then do not calculate the possibilities of friendship. – Saddam Hussein[118]

On the day Iraq invaded Iran, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq Tariq Aziz was in Moscow to discuss the situation on the border.[119] Tensions had been rising all year, but Moscow had been busy with Afghanistan, and none of the top leadership had wanted to have a "serious talk" with Saddam to warn him against "[getting] involved in adventures."[120] Soviet military and intelligence reports coming from Baghdad had conveyed the impression of an Iraqi army that was fully mobilized and ready for a major war—Iraq's Prime Minister Saddam Hussein just needed an excuse.[121] But the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Gromyko, had discounted the extent and implications of Iraq's economic reorientation away from the Soviet bloc and had scorned the prospect of an Iraqi-American rapprochement, telling his staff to "be patient."[122]

When, on September 4, Iran shelled two border towns and declared the Shatt al-Arab river closed to Iraqi shipping, Saddam accused Iran of abrogating the 1975 Algiers Accord, the most recent attempt at stabilizing the Iran-Iraq border by clarifying the division of the river. But when Aziz had requested an urgent meeting with Soviet leadership, Gromyko had demurred; he had a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State scheduled for September 25th in New York,

[118] "Saddam and Military Officials Discussing the Iran-Iraq War," 16 September 1980 (SH-SHTP-A-000-835), reproduced in Kevin M. Woods et al., *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978–2001* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 136.
[119] Oles M. Smolansky and Bettie M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Duke University Press, 1991), 230–31.
[120] Oleg Alekseevich Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")* (Vagrius, 2000), 190. Unless otherwise noted, all translations by Google Translate, with confirmation by native speakers.
[121] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 191–94.
[122] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 192.

alongside the United Nations General Assembly. Instead, as a signal of Moscow's irritation, Aziz would meet with Boris Ponomarev, who was an experienced negotiator but was, nevertheless, a relatively junior Politburo member.[123]

On September 22, Iraq launched its invasion with air attacks on Iranian airbases and armored advances across the border.[124] Ponomarev was left in the unenviable position of reacting to a fait accompli, while Aziz "smiled, nodded his head… and uttered general phrases about treachery."[125] Ponomarev emphasized that a war between Iran and Iraq would only benefit American imperial ambitions, but the damage had been done. In a further sign of Soviet displeasure, official state reporting on the meeting ran a mere two sentences.[126] When Gromyko met with Secretary of State Edmund Muskie on September 25, he claimed that the invasion had been "somewhat unexpected" and stated that the Soviet view was that "no country—neither great powers or others—should interfere in the conflict."[127]

In truth, the Soviets had ample warning that a war was coming; they simply did not like the implication that they had no meaningful control over their putative client.[128] Iraq had clearly disregarded the provision in the 1972 Soviet-Iraq Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that enjoined both parties to "hold immediate contacts to co-ordinate their positions" in the event of "a situation… which endangers the peace of either of them."[129] Furthermore, Saddam appeared

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[123] Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988: In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 183.
[124] Steve Coll, *The Achilles Trap: Saddam Hussein, the C.I.A., and the Origins of America's Invasion of Iraq* (Penguin Press, 2024), 25.
[125] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 194.
[126] "Ponomarev, Maltsev Meet with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister." Moscow TASS, September 22, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Soviet Union, FBIS-SOV-80-186, September 23, 1980, Readex: Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Reports (hereafter FBIS); Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 183.
[127] Summary Memorandum of Conversation, September 25, 1980, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), 1977–1980, Volume VI (Soviet Union), Document 302.
[128] E. M. (Evgeniĭ Maksimovich) Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to the Present* (Basic Books, 2009), 309–10.
[129] Appendix 2, "Text of Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation Between the USSR and the Iraqi Republic," in Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 260–61.

to have timed the invasion to coincide with Aziz's meeting, making it look like the Soviet Union had given its blessing to Iraq's plans. In reality there were deep divisions among the Soviet leadership. Some advocated for a pro-Iranian position, while others were "clearly rooting for Iraq."[130]

It took several weeks for the Politburo to decide that the Soviet Union's official policy would be strict neutrality, though at least one more shipload of weapons was delivered before then.[131] Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev wrote to Saddam in late October, expressing his dismay and indicating that the Soviet Union would not be supplying Iraq with weapons or ammunition to fight its war. In his response, Saddam wrote:

> These actions, comrades, leave a bitter residue in one's soul. They remind us of what happened in 1975, when our army fought against the army of the Shah of Iran during the struggle against Barzani's gangs. We received only a very small amount of basic equipment, in particular, long-range artillery equipment and aerial bombs. We have concealed these facts from our people, who are waging a noble struggle against the aggression of the ruling clique in Iran. Our greatest fear is that this bitterness will penetrate the hearts of all Iraqis when they learn of all these unfortunate facts.[132]

Despite his melodramatic words, recordings of meetings between Saddam and his advisors show a regime that was under no illusions about its patron's reliability. Speaking to his inner circle before the invasion, Saddam declared, "Some will say, 'Do you guarantee that the

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[130] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 195.
[131] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 195–96; "Saddam and Senior Iraqi Officials Discussing the Conflict with Iran, Iraqi Targets and Plans, a Recent Attack on the Osirak Reactor, and Various Foreign Countries", October 1, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Conflict Records Research Center, National Defense University, SH-MISC-D-000-827. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116985; "Soviet Military Supplies to Iraq Continue," London Financial Times, October 3, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Soviet Union Annex, FBIS-SOV-80-194-A, October 3, 1980, FBIS.
[132] Letter quoted in part in Sergey Radchenko, *To Run the World: The Kremlin's Cold War Bid for Global Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 497; image of original document found at Sergey Radchenko, *A Russia-Iran Explainer*, June 24, 2025, https://substack.com/home/post/p-166718055. Translation by DeepL.

Soviet Union would continue to supply you with weapons if you were to go through the same condition that you went through in 1975?' The answer is that there is no one who will guarantee this."[133] In another statement made to his biographer, Saddam said, "The states that supply us with arms are friendly, but we cannot guarantee that the present will continue indefinitely. The states that supply us do not agree with us in all of our aims, for the boundaries of our aims and ambitions do not lie in Iraq but extend through the whole Arab homeland."[134]

Indeed, Saddam had expected the Soviets to use arms and ammunition to pressure him, and did not wait for the Soviets to take a firm stand before seeking out alternative sources of war materiel. By 1980, Iraq had a number of arms deals in place with France; as Saddam said to French journalists mere months earlier, "When the Soviets refuse us a certain type of weapon we no longer make a fuss, we simply go elsewhere, especially to France."[135] Immediately after his meeting with Ponomarev, Tariq Aziz paid a quick trip to Jordan and then flew to Paris to meet with French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Raymond Barre.[136] While claiming that "the subject of weapons was not taken up," Aziz explained the Iraqis' actions and objectives to more than 150 journalists to build public support and ensure that France would fulfill the contract for delivery of Mirage fighter-bombers.[137] Before ending the press conference,

[133] "Saddam and His Advisers Discussing Iraq's Decision to Go to War with Iran," September 16, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Conflict Records Research Center, National Defense University, SH-SHTP-A-000-835.
[134] Saïd K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (Bloomsbury, 2000), 147.
[135] Le Monde, July 22, 1980, quoted in Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The Death Lobby: How the West Armed Iraq* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 84.
[136] "Iraq-Iran War to Be Discussed." Paris AFP, September 24, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Western Europe, FBIS-WEU-80-187, September 24, 1980, FBIS; Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 85.
[137] "Giscard, Iraq's Tariq Aziz Confer on Gulf Situation," Paris AFP, September 25, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Western Europe, FBIS-WEU-80-189, September 26, 1980, FBIS; "Tariq 'Aziz Holds Press Conferences in Paris, Amman," Baghdad INA, September 25, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Middle East & Africa, FBIS-MEA-80-189, September 26, 1980, FBIS; Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 85.

he quipped, “We have taken so many weapons from the Iranians that we may be forced to form units equipped with U.S. equipment.”[138]

Bravado aside, over the course of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq came to operate a military composed of weapons from over 20 countries across five continents. The Soviet embargo ended less than a year later, in July 1981, having failed to stop or even slow the war. By the time the war ended in 1988, the Soviet Union was responsible for two-thirds of Iraq’s arms imports.

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How did Iraq go from a country wholly dependent on British weapons, to one wholly dependent on Soviet weapons, to one that, despite an expectation of a Soviet embargo, felt it could successfully wage a war against a larger, equally well-armed neighbor? In this chapter, I trace the history of Iraq’s arms transfer policies and practices vis-a-vis its patrons to illuminate the strategies state used to mitigate the risks associated with dependence. Analyzing this case is useful for theoretical and substantive purposes. Theoretically, Iraq’s history of facing arms curtailments of varying types and varying intensities offers an opportunity to evaluate what drives states’ choices between response strategies. Between 1958 and 1982, Iraq’s demand for arms transfers remained relatively high, though the immediacy of their need varied over time based on whether and with whom they were at war. They used a range of strategies to get the weapons they wanted or needed, often in the face of opposition from their primary supplier. While received wisdom would expect Iraq to play the superpowers against one another, that was never Iraq’s primary strategy; after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, domestic politics precluded Iraq from turning to the United States for arms until well into the 1980s. Instead, Iraq

[138] "Le Monde Reports on Tariq 'Aziz News Conference." Paris Le Monde, September 27, 1980. Translated in Daily Report: Middle East & Africa, FBIS-MEA-80-191, September 30, 1980, FBIS.

used acquiescence, inducements and bargaining, endurance, and diversification depending on the relationship with their patron and the availability of outside options.

This case is also substantively valuable because Iraq's Cold War-era history is intrinsically important but underappreciated. Since 1958, Iraq's behavior and choices have had serious implications for the trajectory of global politics. The dispute between Iran and Iraq over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, a key driver of Iraq's threat perception, eventually led to the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), the largest land war since World War II. It was against this backdrop that Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, kicking off the Gulf War, the first post-Cold War conflict involving the United States. Finally, Iraq's expansionist, pan-Arabist ambitions and its enmity toward Israel led to Iraq's efforts to develop nuclear weapons, which became the casus belli for the 2003 Iraq War that reshaped the Middle East and, arguably, global politics.

Yet despite its geography and its vast oil reserves, Iraq has often been overlooked as an independent actor, both in policy and in academic literature, especially before the 1991 Gulf War. In the mid- to late-20th century, the Western powers (with the eventual exception of France) primarily thought of Iraq as one of several hostile Arab states in the context of Arab-Israeli relations. But Iraq was a Soviet client, one whose political instability and general fractiousness meant there were few opportunities for direct political or economic engagement. And while Iraq was a Soviet client state, it was never the Soviets' most important client—and it was often at odds with their preferred clients, Egypt and Syria, which complicated the Soviets' efforts to align its efforts across the region.

Within the literature on international relations, twentieth century Iraqi history is primarily considered in light of Iraq's nuclear proliferation efforts and the resultant wars. Popular historiography of this period leans toward a simplistic narrative that places the blame for Iraq's

nuclear program squarely on "the West," emphasizing how the Western industrial states (implicitly, at the behest of the United States) "secretly" armed Iraq and "allowed it" to obtain nuclear weapons.[139] Focusing on the West's role in Iraq's military build-up overlooks Iraq's agency and discounts how the Soviet Union's use of arms curtailments to change Iraqi behavior led to Iraq's commitment to diversification. This chapter offers a corrective to this narrative by providing a more thorough understanding of Iraq's conventional arms acquisitions patterns and strategies and its relationships with different arms suppliers over time.

Because I am interested in causality within processes, the remainder of this chapter proceeds chronologically through key instances of denial or delay of weapons transfers to Iraq. Table 3.1 serves as a summary and a roadmap to the remainder of this chapter. For each period, I describe the state of Iraq's relationship with its supplier(s), what led to curtailment and what form that curtailment took. I then describe Iraq's response strategy and provide a short summary of how the curtailment ended. To avoid missing the forest for the makes and models of the trees, I prioritize narrative clarity over details of quantities and costs. I am interested in the politics of the weapons, not the order of battle at any given moment. What do these arms sales and curtailments signal to the actors involved? How do their interpretations of those sales and curtailments lead them to behave?

[139] See, inter alia, Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*; Alan Friedman, *Spider's Web: The Secret History of How the White House Illegally Armed Iraq* (Bantam Books, 1993); Herbert Krosney, *Deadly Business: Legal Deals and Outlaw Weapons: The Arming of Iran and Iraq, 1975 to the Present* (Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993); Bruce W. Jentleson, *With Friends like These: Reagan, Bush, and Saddam, 1982–1990* (Norton, 1994); Steven Hurst, *The United States and Iraq since 1979: Hegemony, Oil and War* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Bryan R. Gibson, *Sold out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). This narrative seems to stem from the experience of the 1991 Gulf War, when the U.S.-led coalition found itself facing weapons that coalition members had sold to Iraq in the previous decade, and received a boost in 2003. In reality, only 22% of Iraq's arms imports between 1981 and 1990 came from members of the 1991 Gulf War coalition, while the Soviet Union was responsible for 60%. A more granular breakdown shows that France alone was responsible for 16.7% of Iraq's imports in this period. The United States, United Kingdom, and other coalition members *collectively* supplied 5.3%—which hardly seems sufficient to warrant accusations of primary responsibility.

I would add a final methodological note before continuing. This chapter draws heavily on declassified archival materials from Iraq, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as memoirs and oral histories by Soviet, Iraqi, American, and British diplomats. Managing biases and omissions within source material is a central challenge for qualitative research, which is further complicated by the non-public nature of most arms transfers and curtailments. There are many ways for inaccurate information about arms transfers to perpetuate, intentionally or not, and ground truth about precisely what happened and when can be hard to determine. The many actors involved—patrons, clients, militaries, firms, journalists, third parties, and so on—may have context-specific reasons for over- or understating the facts. The incentives for misrepresentation rest atop the unavoidable problem that the composition of any given deal or delivery is liable to change without warning, and the likelihood of a factual correction catching up to the original material is low. I have given most credence to contemporaneous governmental sources, such as diplomatic cables and intelligence reporting, because these sources often add caveats when they are uncertain or there are discrepancies among their own information sources. Among the secondary sources I use, there is a subset whose authors, often journalists or activists, have clear biases against arms transfers, particularly those from the Western industrial states. Ignoring the work of these authors would be overly restrictive, as they are often the most motivated to dig up details, but I have been careful to check that their source, e.g. a news report or an archival document, says what the author claims it does. If fact-checking proved impossible, I discarded the information or noted the discrepancy.

Table 3.1 Summary of Arms Curtailments against Iraq

Dates	Reason for Curtailment	Form of Curtailment	Iraq's View of Patron Relationship	Availability of Outside Option(s)	Outcomes
July 1958 onward	Overthrow of monarchy, with which US and UK were aligned	Embargo on new sales; refusal to deliver weapons in transit	Iraq rejected US and UK as patrons for domestic political reasons	Yes: Soviets wanted to move Iraq out of West's sphere of influence	Iraq began to acquire weapons almost exclusively from Soviet Union
Feb. 1963 – Nov. 1963	Ba'ath coup #1; persecution of Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)	Quiet embargo	Staunch supporter of previous regime	No viable options: UK and US wanted to sell, but prices and delivery schedules were unsatisfactory to Iraq	Another coup to resume pattern of relations with Soviets
July 1968 – Jan. 1970	Ba'ath coup #2; Soviets feared reprisal of 1963 and had concerns about regime's intentions and longevity	Major decrease in agreements and deliveries	Ba'athists wanted to reinvigorate arms relationship with Soviets	Yes, but limited: Iraq had a deal for French fighter jets to use as bargaining chip	Iraq received deal for advanced Soviet aircraft and gave up Mirage deal
Jan. 1970 – Oct. 1971	Ongoing uncertainty about regime's intentions and longevity	Continuation of minimal provision of military aid; no new major arms deals	Soviets were staunch supporters of previous regime, and preferred patron for new regime	No viable options	Change in international strategic landscape (death of Nasser) increased Iraq's desirability as a client to Soviets
1974 – 1975	Iraq's diversification of its economy and efforts to gain greater independence	1974: refusal to meet with Iraqi leaders or sign new deals. 1975: embargo on undelivered materiel from past agreements.	Actions of 1974–1975 convince Saddam that Soviets were fair-weather friends.	No viable options for immediate needs. In longer term, France was a viable option.	Iraq signed an accord with Iran, which ended the Kurdish war and reduced immediate need for weapons. Iraq then purchased French weapons
1980 – 1981	Iraq's invasion of Iran	Public embargo	Distance had been growing. Soviets had tried to coerce Iraq into giving up diversification. Disagreements about regional policy.	Yes: Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Italy, Poland, UK, US, Yugoslavia	Iraq acquired weapons from a wide range of suppliers. Soviets maintained the embargo until July 1981, and resumed high volume of sales in 1982

3.1. July, July

The modern Iraqi Republic emerged following a coup d'etat on July 14, 1958, when a group of military officers deposed King Faisal II and killed Prime Minister Nuri, marking the end of the Hashemite-led Kingdom of Iraq. The revolutionaries proclaimed the establishment of the Iraqi Republic, and the coup's leaders, Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif, were named Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, respectively.

The coup came as a surprise to Iraq's Western backers, the United Kingdom and the United States. Iraq had long been aligned with the West; even as pan-Arab nationalist ideas spread through the region, Iraq had joined with Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan to found the Baghdad Pact. Under the Pact's auspices, Iraq had been obliged to support the British, French, and Israelis during the Suez Crisis in 1956 against Egypt, then led by the stalwart anti-imperialist Gamal Abdel Nasser. In an immediate post-mortem search for any overlooked indicators of the coup, the U.S. State Department's Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa indicated that despite a "very close watch" being kept for "precisely this development," "no significant indication of the impending action in Iraq appeared in any sources."[140] They were quick to note that they were not the only parties caught off guard: "interestingly enough, informal contacts with individuals who have just returned, having left Iraq only a few days or hours before the coup confirm the impression that there was no outward sign that the eruption was imminent."[141] The Western states knew the Iraqi government was domestically unpopular, but no single opposition group had seemed like an immediate threat. Indeed, just a few months earlier, the United States and the United Kingdom had debated whether Iraq should receive

[140] Memorandum from Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming), July 16, 1958, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula, Document 120.
[141] Ibid.

upgraded jets from the United States, the United Kingdom, or both. The first shipment of five F-86 planes from the United States had been delivered to Iraq mere weeks before the coup.[142]

The July 14 Revolution, as it came to be known, was driven by anti-colonial, pro-Arab nationalist sentiment, and in the immediate aftermath, the public was broadly supportive of the Nasserite tilt of the new regime. But there were serious internal disagreement over the country's direction among the coup's leaders. Arif advocated rapid union with the United Arab Republic (UAR), the short-lived merger of Egypt and Syria. Qasim, now Prime Minister, was uninterested in sharing sovereignty with Egypt and Syria, despite their similar political and social alignments.[143] Rather, Qasim wanted to focus on domestic political, economic, and social development.

In attempting to stabilize the domestic political environment and consolidate his own power, Qasim found allies of convenience among the Iraqi communists. The pan-Arabic and nationalist parties were sidelined; Arif and other Ba'athist cabinet members were removed from power by late 1958. Reporting an encounter with an Iraqi official, British diplomat Samuel Falle wrote to the Foreign Office that "the only people who now had any say were the Communists, and they were more or less running Abdul Karim Qasim, although [he] was 'a good man and not a Communist.'"[144] Nevertheless, domestic fear of growing Communist influence led to a spate of Arab nationalist riots.

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[142] Editorial Note, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XII, Doc.107.
[143] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, third edition (Westview Press, 2012), 88; Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicutt, "Embracing Regime Change in Iraq: American Foreign Policy and the 1963 Coup d'état in Baghdad," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 1 (2015): 101–2.
[144] "Letter from S. Falle at British Embassy Baghdad to W. I. Combs, Eastern Department, Foreign Office," December 18, 1958, *Records of Iraq, 1914–1966* (hereafter *ROI),* Volume 13: 1958–1960 (Archive Editions, 2001), 72.

In March 1959, following an Arab nationalist revolt in Mosul, Qasim formally announced that Iraq was withdrawing from the Baghdad Pact.[145] Iraq's exit from the Baghdad Pact had been widely expected as part of Qasim's broader reorientation of Iraqi foreign policy toward the Soviet Union and away from the West. While initial indications suggested Iraq would seek neutrality and balance between the West and the Soviet Bloc, the United States and especially the United Kingdom served as uncontroversial nemeses for the new regime. The Western states hoped to prevent Iraq from devolving into a Soviet client, but recognized that their options were limited. The Americans were initially sanguine about the Soviets' political gains: "In contrast to the treatment accorded the U.S. and U.K. diplomatic missions in Baghdad, Soviet Bloc missions have been welcomed and encouraged. This has been an aspect of increasing Communist influence in Iraq but is also a reflection of Arab curiosity toward the USSR and of the belief that benefits can be gained without strings from the Soviets."[146] Both states believed that they could at the very least, maintain positive, if more limited, relations with Iraq.

In the first two years after the July 14 Revolution, Iraq crept slowly toward the Soviet Union politically and materially. Immediately following the revolution, the Soviet Union was invited to reopen its embassy in Baghdad. Out of concern for the potential emergence of an Arab superstate, Moscow supported Qasim in his reluctance to join the United Arab Republic. And the Soviets moved quickly to negotiate arms deals and a package of agreements for industrial development with the new regime. The first arms transfer agreement between the newly-established Iraqi Republic and the Soviet Union was signed in the fall of 1958.[147] A January

[145] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 93.
[146] Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board, February 18, 1959, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XII, Doc. 162.
[147] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 93; Francis Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, N-1524-AF (RAND, 1980), 23, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/notes/2007/N1524.pdf.

1959 memo from the U.S. State Department's Operations Coordinating Board noted the "prompt delivery of four shiploads" of materiel.[148] Further arms deliveries, including "four aircraft of unknown type" as well as tanks, occurred in April 1959.[149]

Yet despite the left-leaning policy preferences of Iraq's new Prime Minister, Soviet-Iraqi relations remained limited in the early years of the Republic. The Soviets may have valued Iraq's neutralism vis-à-vis the UAR, but the new regime's repression of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and persecution of the Kurds cut against the Soviets' interests and ideological commitments. When a Communist rally in Kirkuk in July 1959 turned bloody, the Iraqi government punished the ICP and their allies, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), and in 1960, the ICP was denied legal status as a political party. Over the course of the year several prominent Communists were jailed and later executed. [150]

Qasim's repression of the ICP led the Soviets to consider their options for deterring the Iraqi government from further anti-communist actions. The potential for curtailing arms transfers was raised; after all, it would be rather embarrassing for Soviet-supplied weaponry to be turned against communists. But the Soviets were unwilling to deny weapons to their new buyer, because they could not risk Iraq turning back to the West.[151] The United States and Britain had indicated on multiple occasions that they were prepared to resume arms sales if the Iraqi government was willing to discuss new terms and to rein in their anti-Western propaganda. Indeed, both were approached by the regime in 1959 and 1960 to inquire about the availability of specific systems. This episode of non-curtailment highlights how a clearly-identifiable outside option can deter the

[148] Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board, February 18, 1959, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XII, Doc. 162.
[149] "Monthly Summary - April 1959," British Consulate-General, Basra. *Political Diaries of the Arab World.* Volume 8: Iraq 1959 - 1965 (Archive Editions, 1998), 34.
[150] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 94.
[151] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 24–25.

imposition of arms curtailment: in 1960, the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, the United States were considered politically viable options for arms.

When the United Kingdom negotiated a sovereignty agreement with Kuwait in 1961, however, Iraq's fury was immediate and definitive. Britain had long been a public punching bag for the regime, aligned as they were with the hated monarchy, and Qasim loudly blamed them for the 1961 Kurdish uprising. But the United States also lost what little progress it had made toward normal relations when it supported the deal. The Iraqi ambassador to the United States was recalled, and the United States' diplomatic representation in Baghdad was downgraded to the Chargé level.[152] The Americans knew that the Soviets would reap the benefits: "The Soviets will strive to maneuver Qasim into increasing dependence on them through continuance of a large military and economic aid program, and will continue to support his "anti-imperialist" moves," stated one National Intelligence Estimate. It offered a small silver lining: "Nevertheless, neither Qasim nor the Soviets fully trust each other, and the Iraqi Communists are neither influential in the government nor popular in the country."[153]

Between 1961 and 1963, Qasim played a "kind of brinksmanship" in which he used the Communists for support against the hardline Arab nationalists, and vice versa.[154] He was himself "disliked, hated and privately ridiculed by almost all sections of the Iraqi public, including apparently, growing segments of the Army," but the fractured opposition struggled to cohere against him.[155] Qasim continued to move Iraq "progressively closer to the Soviet Bloc," which the United States believed was "deliberately designed to frighten the West": "We attribute the

[152] Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, June 2, 1962, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Volume XVII, Near East, 1961–1962, Document 286.
[153] National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 36.2–62, January 31, 1962, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XVII, Doc. 183.
[154] Memorandum from the Department of State Executive Secretary (Brubeck) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), June 20, 1962, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XVII, Doc. 303.
[155] Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Grant) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (McGhee), May 3, 1962, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XVII, Doc. 262.

improving Soviet position in Iraq less to Soviet skill and sophistication than to deliberate Iraqi policy, a path being taken despite considerable disenchantment with Soviet policy, with Soviet practices and with the quality of Soviet performance and materials."[156]

Having spent several years struggling to incorporate Soviet materiel into their military, the Iraqis' initial excitement over their new weapons had begun to fade by 1963. "The variety of weapons and equipment in the army resulted in administrative and training chaos," according to one British report.[157] In summarizing the state of the Iraq Army, a British military attaché wrote that "reports from Army sources continue to indicate that the Russian equipment is not liked in the Army due to its inferior quality entailing breakdowns and the refitting of inferior spare parts which do not last."[158] Many officers had been forcibly retired by the regime, and the absence of experienced leaders and technical personnel meant that "while the Army has increased its potential in equipment with the continuous Soviet supply since 1959 there has not been a complimentary rise in its potential as a fighting force."[159] The Iraqi Air Force, which had had only 85 operational aircraft in 1958, suffered from a similar inability to assimilate Soviet weaponry: "[As of January 1963] it possesses some 220 aircraft with a further delivery of 31 expected shortly… The expansion of the Iraqi Air Force has been too rapid [and] has outrun the ability to utilise the weapons effectively."[160] Nevertheless, the British reports make it clear that "for financial reasons, the Iraqis will be unable to scrap the large quantities of Soviet equipment she now possesses."[161]

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[156] Memo from Brubeck to Bundy, June 20, 1962, *FRUS* XVII, Doc. 303.
[157] Iraq army (form at a glance), January 1963, *ROI,* Vol. 14: 1961–1963, 401.
[158] The Iraqi army - annual report for the year 1962, *ROI,* Vol. 14, 382.
[159] Ibid, 387.
[160] Terminal report on the Iraqi Air Force, prepared by Wing Commander, R. M. Horsley, Air Attach, British Embassy, Baghdad, December 3, 1962, *ROI*, Vol. 14, 397.
[161] Iraq army (form at a glance), January 1963, *ROI*, Vol. 14, 401.

3.2. Too Many Coups

On February 8, 1963, the Ba'ath party overthrew and executed Qasim in the Ramadan Revolution. Abd al-Salam Arif, who had been Qasim's co-conspirator in July 1958 and his main opponent by November 1958, was installed as President of Iraq, with Brigadier Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr as Prime Minister. No one overseas was quite sure what to expect from the new regime, though the United States expected the Ba'athists to be more moderate in their approach to foreign policy and less likely to align with the Soviets. In their coverage of the coup, *Time* magazine wrote, "The new government is clearly antiCommunist [sic] … More an idea than an ideology, the basic Baath doctrine insists that "there are no Arab nations; there is only one Arab nation."[162]

The practical implications of the regime's pan-Arabism would remain murky, but the Ba'athist crackdown on Iraq's communists was immediate and definitive; one Russian correspondent later described it as an "orgy of violence."[163] One scholar described it as a "new wave of terror" as "all those who had been persecuted in the early years of the [Qasim] regime welcomed the opportunity to get even with their tormentors."[164] Even before the fight at the Ministry of Defense had concluded, Ba'athists began sweeping through the slums. *Time* described a systematic eradication of the ICP: "Hundreds of dogged men in green arm bands [National Guardsmen], carrying mimeographed lists of Red leaders complete with home addresses and auto license plate numbers, methodically hunted down Communists who had grown strong in [Qasim's] final months."[165] Describing the Communist resistance, another

[162] "Iraq: Green Armbands, Red Blood," *Time*, February 22, 1963.
[163] Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs*, 69.
[164] Walter Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East: The Soviet Union and the Middle East, 1958–68* (Routledge, 1969), 102.
[165] *Time*, "Iraq: Green Armbands, Red Blood."

scholar poetically explained that "the Communists fought as only men could fight who knew that no mercy was to be looked for in defeat."[166]Within the first two days, National Guardsmen had executed 1,500 suspected Communists; within a week, that figure had risen to 2,500.[167]

The Ba'athists' efforts to eliminate the Iraqi Communist Party wholesale spurred Moscow to action. The Soviets had ultimately decided to tolerate Qasim's repression of the ICP in 1960, but the persecution of 1963 "was the line beyond which the Soviets could not be pushed with impunity."[168] On February 16, an official statement of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) condemned the new regime in broad terms.[169] At the United Nations, the Soviet delegation claimed that "the 'fascist clique in Baghdad was perpetrating genocide'; crimes against humanity were being committed in Kurdistan; more than 200 villages had been destroyed, and thousands killed in the napalm bombings."[170] Writing to the Foreign Office, a British diplomat noted that "relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union are continuing to deteriorate. One of our Yugoslav colleagues has likened the present situation to that between Russia and Yugoslavia after Tito's break with Stalin. This is perhaps slightly overstating the case as the Iraqis at any rate are still-showing some moderation in their public acts in relation to the Soviet Union."[171]

The Soviets had long been sympathetic to and supportive of the Kurds, but had refrained from direct support while consolidating their relations with Iraq.[172] The new Ba'ath regime

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[166] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'thists and Free Officers* (Princeton University Press, 1978), 982.
[167] Wolfe-Hunnicutt, "Embracing Regime Change in Iraq;" *Time*, "Iraq: Green Armbands, Red Blood."
[168] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 25.
[169] "Secret Research Department memorandum: The Kurdish problem in Iraq, 1958–63," 13 August 1963, *Iraq: Defence Intelligence 1920–1973. Vol. 5: 1958–1973* (Archive Editions, 2005), 528.
[170] Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, 100.
[171] Mr. Maynard, Baghdad, to Foreign Office, London, 19 March 1963, *Records of Iraq, 1914–1966. Vol. 15: 1963–1966* (Archive Editions, 2001), 611.
[172] Mullah Mustafa Barzani sheltered in the Soviet Union for over a decade, then returned to northern Iraq in 1958 when the monarchy was overthrown. The following years, however, had seen the prospects for Kurdish autonomy diminish, and by September 1961 the situation had erupted into open warfare.

declared a truce with the Kurds almost immediately, but as early as March 1963, less than a month after the coup, the Central Intelligence Agency identified Soviet support to the Kurds as a potential source of problems for the new regime: "Emergence of an anti-Communist regime in Baghdad has removed the main inhibition on Soviet support of Kurdish dissidence."[173] Moscow expanded its material support of the Kurds, "who were thereby encouraged to intensify the fighting in the north."[174] By June 1963, negotiations between the regime and the Kurds had broken down and the war resumed.

The Soviet Union did not announce its intent to embargo Iraq publicly. Rather, "Moscow retaliated by first slowing the pace of its military deliveries to Iraq and then stopping deliveries altogether."[175] Unlike in 1960, the Soviets were confident that Iraq lacked a viable outside option. Because Iraq had rejected the Western alliance structure, the Soviets felt they could be antagonistic without risking Iraq's return to its former partners.[176] Furthermore, the quantity of Soviet equipment delivered between 1958 and 1962 meant it was unlikely that Iraq could afford another wholesale changeover back to Western materiel.

The Soviets' confidence may have been misplaced. From the outset, the Ba'athists subordinated military effectiveness to ideological correctness. Their aggressive anti-Communism affected the Iraq military's day-to-day practices, often to their detriment. At the time of the coup, for example, the Soviet Union had delivered six of the 18 MiG-21s on order, with a contingent of Russian pilots and technicians in Iraq to assemble, check, and test the planes. Only two of the planes had been assembled when the Baathists sent all of the Russians home. No Iraqi pilots had

[173] Memorandum from Komer to McGeorge Bundy, March 6, 1963, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Volume XVIII, Near East, 1962–1963, Document 178, fn. 1.
[174] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 25.
[175] "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP85T00875R001700030031-3.
[176] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 7.

been trained to fly these highly-advanced jets yet, but the new commander of the Iraqi Air Force, Gen. Hardan al-Tikriti, was determined that they would be flown. "He wanted to be able to boast that our Iraqi pilots didn't need Russian help: we could do it ourselves," wrote one of the young, inexperienced pilots brought in to teach themselves to fly the new jets, which, "compared to the planes I'd been flying… looked like a rocket ship sitting on the ground."[177]

The Soviets also miscalculated the Ba'athists' willingness to seek out new suppliers. The regime's anti-communist orientation led it to inquire with its former patrons, the United Kingdom and the United States, about the availability of weapons. The Kennedy administration, most notably National Security Council senior staffer Robert W. Komer, saw an opportunity to further its Middle East objectives through the new regime. Komer predicted the Ba'athists would be "moderate, pro-Western, and 'reasonable with the oil companies,'"[178] and advised early recognition [by the United States] and a robust program of political, economic, and military assistance. Kennedy himself pressed for the United States to "do all we can to help Iraq and thus consolidate its break with the Soviets."[179] In early April, the United States agreed in principle to sell Iraq light tanks, tank transporters, combat helicopters, and military trucks.[180]

The British were equally interested in regaining Iraq's business and reinforcing anti-Soviet inclinations in the new regime. In his annual report, Ambassador Sir Robert Allen highlighted the Iraqi government's requests for "British arms, equipment and training facilities in place of Soviet." The Iraqis' interest sharpened when the war with the Kurds resumed, and "a number of contracts" were signed in 1963 for a variety of military goods and services, including

[177] Georges Sada and Jim Nelson Black, *Saddam's Secrets: How an Iraqi General Defied and Survived Saddam Hussein* (Thomas Nelson, 2009), 75–76.
[178] Wolfe-Hunnicutt, "Embracing Regime Change in Iraq," 119–20.
[179] Memorandum from Komer to Kennedy, July 10, 1963. *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XVIII, Doc. 293.
[180] Memorandum from Saunders to McGeorge Bundy, April 2, 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Vol. XVIII, Doc. 204.

fighter aircraft and helicopters. "Thus a good beginning has been made," wrote Allen, "towards a return to the friendly relations with the armed forces which had so much declined under Qasim, and towards weaning them away from their Soviet suppliers."[181]

Despite this "marked change… to a clear desire to return to the West for equipment," neither the United Kingdom nor the United States were, in the end, a truly viable option for Iraq.[182] The United States had no intention of selling weapons that could be used to "quell Kurdish unrest," and was uninterested in supplementing Iraq's own funds through "an unwarranted big new aid program."[183] "Prices and delivery dates quoted by the West are not always… favourable," a British report on the Iraqi Army stated, "and in any case the absorption of Soviet equipment in the period July 1958 - February 1963 was so intense, that Soviet spares and maintenance equipment will be required for many years."[184]

The regime's overall disorganization and internal strife came to a head in November 1963, when a poorly-planned coup by one faction of the Ba'ath party sent the civilian leadership into exile and led to a general uprising in Baghdad. Ten days later, on November 18, Abd al-Salam Arif and a small group of military officers executed another, more successful coup that left them in control of Iraq.

One of Arif's short-term goals was restoring relations with the Soviet Union, which had welcomed the overthrow of the radical Ba'athists. Arif's faction, and Arif himself, had learned much from their painful experiences under Qasim and, subsequently, the more radical Ba'athists. Where the civilian Ba'athists had been violently anti-communist, the military held more

[181] Sir Roger Allen, Baghdad, to Mr. R. A. Butler, Foreign Office, 3 January 1964, *ROI*, Vol. 15, 5.
[182] Annual report on Iraqi Army for the year 1963, *ROI,* Vol. 15, 11.
[183] Memorandum from Saunders to McGeorge Bundy, April 2, 1963, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XVIII, Doc. 204.
[184] Annual report on Iraqi Army for the year 1963, *ROI,* Vol. 15, 11.

moderate views, and while Arif still held pan-Arabist ideals, he was "now inclined to a phased and more realistic approach" to pursuing his goals.[185]

Arif recognized that war with the Kurds was becoming a grinding war of attrition against well-supplied guerillas, and he knew that the Iraqi Army and Air Force were getting desperate for Soviet resupply. Fortunately, returning to the Soviet's good graces was relatively straightforward: Arif halted the intense persecution of the ICP and released a "fairly considerable number of detainees [believed] to be Communists."[186] On February 10, 1964, a truce was declared with the Kurds, "which Nikita Khruschev greeted as a step calculated 'to enhance the prestige of the Iraqi Republic in the eyes of the peoples of the world.'"[187]

Relations improved between Iraq and the Soviet Union quite rapidly thereafter. Writing to the Foreign Office in March 1964, a British diplomat noted that:

> … there has been a slight but distinct improvement over the last two months; pressed to name a date for the visible appearance of this trend, I should say since the end of the Cairo Summit Conference. The Iraqi Ambassador to Moscow… was in Baghdad for consultations for some weeks in February and before he left he said that 'he had discussed with the Government ways and means for developing friendly relations as well as technical and economic co-operation between Iraq and the U.S.S.R.... That friendship had gained additional strength in the course of the struggle against imperialism when the Soviet people stood by the side of the Arab people and their just cause. The Soviet attitude towards the question of the diversion of the Jordan Waters reflected the friendly relations between the Russian and Arab peoples.' This does not seem very meaty but the point is

[185] Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 1028.
[186] Mr. S.L. Egerton, Baghdad, to Foreign Office, London, with enclosure, 14 March 1964, *ROI,* Vol. 15, 613.
[187] Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 1036.

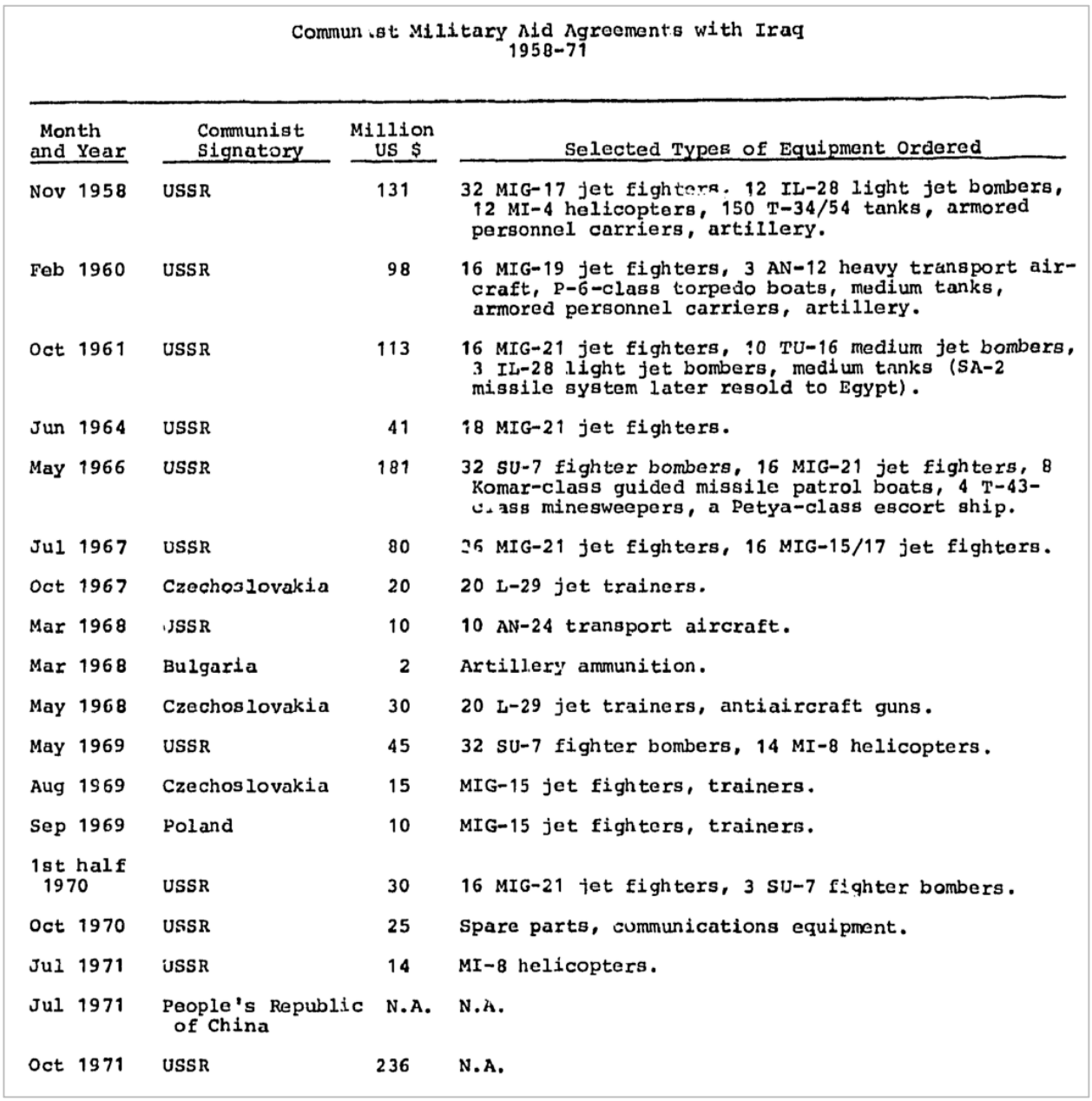
> that no Iraqi envoy in Moscow would have dared to make such a friendly, if platitudinous, statement about mutual relations six months ago. …
>
> 6. One of the major Soviet interests in encouraging a rapprochement lies of course in the field of re-establishing themselves as arms suppliers. They also want to get in again in the technical assistance field.[188]

In response to Arif's efforts, the Soviets resumed military aid in the summer of 1964. Eighteen additional MiG-21 fighters were delivered, along with helicopters, tanks, patrol craft, and surface-to-air missiles that had not yet been disbursed from earlier orders.[189]

3.3. The Mirage of Mirages

Under Abd al-Salam Arif and, beginning in 1966, his brother and successor, Abd al-Rahman Arif, relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq continued to improve. While Egypt was the Soviets' primary client and concern in the Middle East, Iraq's location and oil reserves made it a relatively high priority for Soviet foreign policy. Iraq provided the Soviet Union with a toehold in the Persian Gulf and, by denying the United States Iraq as a client, interfered with the Americans' northern tier strategy. For its part, Iraq recognized that the Soviets' technology was inferior to that of the West, but politically, the Soviets were the safer bet, despite their continued rhetorical support for the ICP and the Kurds. The conflict with the Kurds continued to fester, punctuated by periods of relative quiet when new peace initiatives would be announced and, invariably, abandoned.

[188] Mr. S.L. Egerton, Baghdad, to Foreign Office, London, with enclosure, 14 March 1964, *ROI,* Vol. 15, 613.
[189] *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), released March 2025, https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers; "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972.



Communist Military Aid Agreements with Iraq
1958-71

Month and Year	Communist Signatory	Million US $	Selected Types of Equipment Ordered
Nov 1958	USSR	131	32 MIG-17 jet fighters, 12 IL-28 light jet bombers, 12 MI-4 helicopters, 150 T-34/54 tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery.
Feb 1960	USSR	98	16 MIG-19 jet fighters, 3 AN-12 heavy transport aircraft, P-6-class torpedo boats, medium tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery.
Oct 1961	USSR	113	16 MIG-21 jet fighters, 10 TU-16 medium jet bombers, 3 IL-28 light jet bombers, medium tanks (SA-2 missile system later resold to Egypt).
Jun 1964	USSR	41	18 MIG-21 jet fighters.
May 1966	USSR	181	32 SU-7 fighter bombers, 16 MIG-21 jet fighters, 8 Komar-class guided missile patrol boats, 4 T-43-class minesweepers, a Petya-class escort ship.
Jul 1967	USSR	80	36 MIG-21 jet fighters, 16 MIG-15/17 jet fighters.
Oct 1967	Czechoslovakia	20	20 L-29 jet trainers.
Mar 1968	USSR	10	10 AN-24 transport aircraft.
Mar 1968	Bulgaria	2	Artillery ammunition.
May 1968	Czechoslovakia	30	20 L-29 jet trainers, antiaircraft guns.
May 1969	USSR	45	32 SU-7 fighter bombers, 14 MI-8 helicopters.
Aug 1969	Czechoslovakia	15	MIG-15 jet fighters, trainers.
Sep 1969	Poland	10	MIG-15 jet fighters, trainers.
1st half 1970	USSR	30	16 MIG-21 jet fighters, 3 SU-7 fighter bombers.
Oct 1970	USSR	25	Spare parts, communications equipment.
Jul 1971	USSR	14	MI-8 helicopters.
Jul 1971	People's Republic of China	N.A.	N.A.
Oct 1971	USSR	236	N.A.

Figure 3.1 CIA Assessment of Communist Military Aid Agreements with Iraq, 1958–1971

SOURCE: "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," CIA Intelligence Memorandum, March 1972, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP85T00875R001700030031-3.

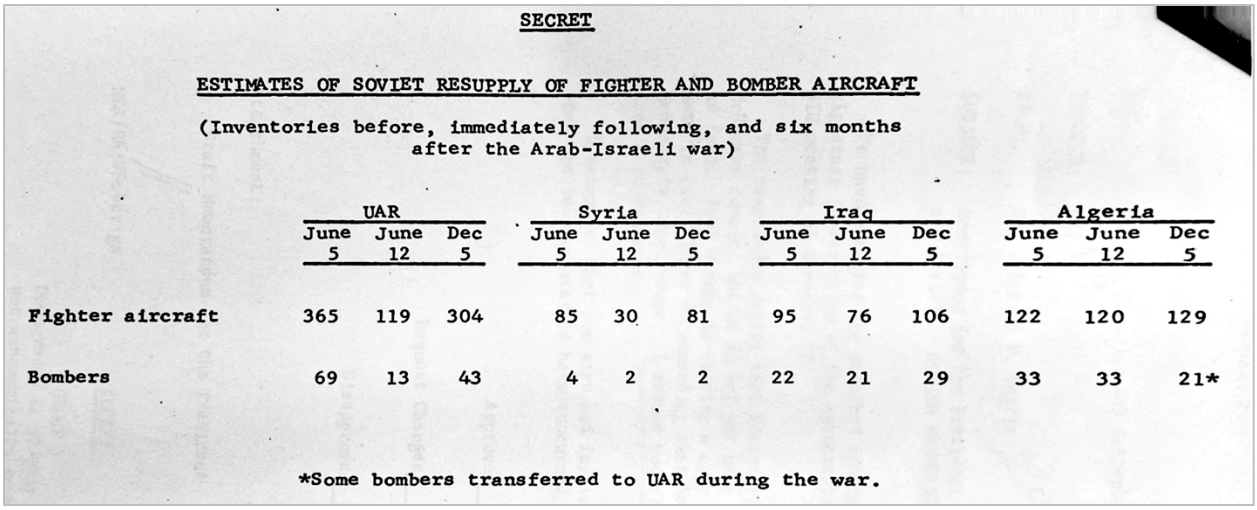
When Iraq severed diplomatic relations with the United States in response to its support for Israel in the Six-Day War in June 1967, the Soviets saw an opportunity to consolidate the break between Iraq and the West by moving toward nationalization of the Iraq Petroleum

Company (IPC).[190] The IPC was a multinational consortium of six distinct companies—British Petroleum (BP), Royal Dutch Shell, Esso, Mobil, CFP, and Partex—headquartered in six countries, two of which were partially state owned by France and Britain.[191] Access to Iraq's oil via the IPC had therefore been an overriding concern for the Western states following the 1958 coup. Iraqi leaders had previously tried to erode the company's monopoly position, with limited success. With Soviet support, and in cooperation with several other Arab countries, Iraq was the first to embargo oil to the United States and United Kingdom.

In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the Soviets sought to repair relations with the Arab states after the "strain caused… by Soviet inaction while UAR suffered defeat."[192] Despite the Iraqis having contributed only minimally to the war, the Soviets were quick to deliver weapons to replace those lost in the conflict. Within a week, Iraq had received 16 MiG 15/17s, with another 12 MiG-21s soon to follow.[193] By the end of 1967, in fact, Iraq had more aircraft in its inventory than it had before the war.[194] Soviet and Iraqi leaders exchanged visits in July 1967, "the first exchange of visits at the presidential level between the Soviet Union and Iraq."[195] *Pravda* ran articles portraying the Arif regime as "anti-imperialist," though they were careful to distinguish between "the 'progressive' regimes in the UAR and Syria, and the 'national' regime in Iraq."[196] Iraq's reliance on the Soviets continued to grow through 1967 and 1968, as it

[190] Not to be confused with the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) or the Insane Clown Posse (also ICP), which did not exist until 1989 and is therefore outside the scope of this chapter.
[191] Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicutt, "The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958–1972" (Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011), 10–12.
[192] Telegram from Department of State to U.S. Embassy Iran (State 210831), June 13, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; Central Foreign Policy Files 1967-69; General Records of the Department of State, 1763-2002, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, MD (hereafter CFPF 67-69; RG 59; NARA).
[193] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Iran to Department of State (Tehran 4973), June 14, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69; RG 59; NARA; "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972.
[194] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Arms for Jordan and Israel, December 11, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 NEAR E; Box 1603; CFPF 67-69: RG 59; NARA.
[195] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 12.
[196] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 12.

deployed a portion of its forces to Jordan and Syria. “This, as well as the festering war in Kurdistan, guaranteed a certain minimum level of Soviet influence with Baghdad” as a result of the Iraqi need for weapons.[197]



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ESTIMATES OF SOVIET RESUPPLY OF FIGHTER AND BOMBER AIRCRAFT

(Inventories before, immediately following, and six months after the Arab-Israeli war)

	UAR			Syria			Iraq			Algeria		
	June 5	June 12	Dec 5	June 5	June 12	Dec 5	June 5	June 12	Dec 5	June 5	June 12	Dec 5
Fighter aircraft	365	119	304	85	30	81	95	76	106	122	120	129
Bombers	69	13	43	4	2	2	22	21	29	33	33	21*

*Some bombers transferred to UAR during the war.

Figure 3.2 U.S. Estimates of Soviet Resupply of Fighter and Bomber Aircraft

SOURCE: Memorandum for the President, Subject: Arms for Jordan and Israel, December 11, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 NEAR E; Box 1603; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

On July 17, 1968, Iraqi military officers and members of Ba’ath party successfully overthrew Abd al-Rahman Arif and seized power in a bloodless coup. Two weeks later, another coup eliminated the Prime Minister and his nationalist supporters, leaving the military officers in command. Unlike in the 1963 coup, this new Ba’athist regime primarily came from army backgrounds and had significant support within the military. The new Ba’athist government was led by General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr as president and prime minister, with the former air chief Hardan al-Tikriti appointed deputy prime minister and minister of defense. Saddam Hussein was appointed Secretary General of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which was the seat of real power in the new government and was invested with executive and legislative powers.

[197] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 26.

One of the new regime's first and overriding objectives was to strengthen relations with the Soviet Union. Most critically, Iraq required uninterrupted access to weapons and other military materiel. Internally, the Kurds remained a threat to the stability and legitimacy of the Iraqi government. Internationally, Iraq needed to improve its military qualitatively and quantitatively if it wanted to be able to back up its belligerence towards Israel and be seen as a real power player in Middle East politics. Finally, the Ba'ath party's continued hold on power depended on the loyalty of the army.[198] After a decade of coups, counter-coups, and foiled coup attempts, "for the first time, party leaders, especially Saddam, attempted to prevent the army from taking part in internal politics, so that it would no longer constitute a threat to the regime. This was done by providing every national resource necessary to build an impressive military power, which would be directed against outside enemies," specifically Iran and Israel.[199]

Iraq hoped that through relatively minor gestures it could mitigate Moscow's criticisms of Iraq's internal policies, particularly regarding the ICP and the Kurds, and regain access to Soviet weaponry. Iraqi Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Sheikhli stated in early August that Iraq would seek close ties "with the socialist camp, particularly the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic,"[200] and Bakr stated that "the first place" in Iraq's foreign policy was the Soviet Union.[201] The regime worked to improve conditions for the ICP, with increased dialogue between Ba'ath leadership and leading communists, as well as the release of communist prisoners. Iraq was one of only a handful of states that was volubly supportive of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968; despite his private reservations, "Bakr personally…

[198] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 46.
[199] Pesach Malovany, *Wars of Modern Babylon: A History of the Iraqi Army from 1921 to 2003*, with Kevin M. Woods (The University Press of Kentucky, 2017), 29.
[200] Bryan R. Gibson, *Sold out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 111.
[201] Quoted in Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 24.

backed the invasion, declaring that 'the most important thing… [was] Czechoslovakia remaining socialist." And the new regime brought Kurds into the new cabinet, granted amnesty to Kurdish insurgents, and announced that it would resolve the Kurdish problem on the principle of autonomy within the framework of the Iraqi union.[202]

Despite the new government's efforts at conciliation, Moscow was skeptical of the new regime's promises—and its staying power. Moscow had no plans to cut Iraq loose from their network of Arab states, but as Shemesh argues, their willingness to press Iraq on domestic political issues stood in contrast to their approach to Egypt and Syria, which were seen as more important, if also more fractious, clients.[203] Though the Ba'athists extended invitations to select Communists to join the cabinet, it was clear they were not interested in truly sharing power.[204] Negotiations between the Ba'ath and the Kurds collapsed almost immediately, in August 1968.

Soviet military support once again quietly dried up "so as not to strengthen the Iraqi regime vis-à-vis the Kurds and the Communists."[205] The first visit of a Ba'ath delegation to the Soviet Union took place in late September 1968. Consisting primarily of military personnel, the delegation's goal was to acquire arms, but no significant agreements were reached. Summarizing the arms transfer relationship between the Soviet Union and Iraq in this period, Fukuyama notes:

> Between July 1968 and the proclamation of the new Iraqi National Action Charter in November 1971, four publicly announced visits by Iraqi military delegations and three by the political leadership to the Soviet Union produced arms transfer agreements that were as a rule a full order of magnitude smaller than those of the period immediately following. This low level of support (comparable to the amounts transferred to Arif)

[202] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 66.
[203] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 23–26.
[204] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 28; Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 99–111.
[205] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 26.

> reflected major disagreements in two key policy areas: Iraqi Communists and Arab-Israeli dispute.[206]

Against this backdrop, it is therefore noteworthy that the Soviets agreed to sell 30 to 35 additional fighter aircraft to Iraq shortly after the Ba'athists came to power.[207] How did the Ba'athist regime engineer this? By cashing out an important bargaining chip: the 54 Mirage-IIIs the Arif regime had agreed to buy from France in April 1968.

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Interest in French aircraft grew out of the Arif regime's recognition that its interests diverged from those of the Soviet Union. The Soviets' failure to support the Arab states fully during the Six-Day War underscored the danger of dependence. The regime therefore sought to diversify its arms imports in late 1967. Aircraft were a reasonable place to start, as the Iraqi Air Force had a variety of aircraft in inventory and had experience incorporating new types of jets. The short-lived Ba'ath regime of 1963 had placed orders with the British for 22 Hawker-Hunter fighters to replace the eight MiGs lost during the February coup. The Arif regime had continued to acquire Hunters in 1964, but returned to Soviet manufactured jets in 1966 when Britain was unable to offer a supersonic interceptor.[208]

Before the war, France had been the majority supplier for Israel, and therefore was not seen as an option for arms by Iraq and the other Arab states. Indeed, in 1967 all of Israel's tactical aircraft were of French manufacture. During the Six-Day War, however, France embargoed arms deliveries to all combatants—which meant, in effect, just Israel. After the war,

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[206] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 28–29.
[207] There is some discrepancy among the sources about specific dates and numbers of aircraft. One CIA report pins the agreement to May 1959, while SIPRI's arms transfer register reports the two aircraft deals in 1968 and the helicopter deal in 1969. "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972; *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*.
[208] Tom Cooper and Efim Sanders, *The June 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War, Vol. 1: Prequel and Opening Moves of the Air War* (Helion & Company Ltd, 2024), 45.

France maintained its embargo on weapons Israel had on order, including 50 Mirage-Vs that had been ordered in 1966 and due for delivery in 1968.[209]

This blatant rejection of Israel opened up new opportunities to promote French weapons among the Arab states. The French justified their efforts by arguing for the benefits of offering a non-Soviet option to the Arab states. U.S. diplomats in Paris more cynically believed that:

> [the] French realized they could not continue to enjoy Arab favor and turn down their requests to buy arms at same time… [the] French may consider Iraqi and other Arabs have already mangled so much in the way of Russian assistance and now need so much more; price for additional Russian support may be more than Arab states wish to pay; all this would add to increased Arab interest in Western supplier.[210]

French discussions with Iraq about the potential sale of the Mirages began with a visit to Paris led by the Iraqi Minister of Planning in December 1967.[211] In Paris, the U.S. ambassador was skeptical of French claims to nobility of purpose: "We doubt French have any illusions that any number French aircraft Iraqis are likely to obtain from France would significantly alter quantity Iraqis receive from Soviets. It is not surprising, however, that French official would utilize time-worn argument of preclusion as justification for pursuing a course the real objectives of which he is less willing to discuss."[212] The American ambassador in Tehran, cabling to ask whether "it might not be useful to make point [to French] that Iraq has no rpt no great need for

[209] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Arms for Jordan and Israel, December 11, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 NEAR E; Box 1603; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[210] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department, Subj: Mirages for Israel (Paris 7693), December 9, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 ISR; Box 1613; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[211] David Styan, *France & Iraq: Oil, Arms and French Policy Making in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, 2006), 65, 85.
[212] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department, Subj: French Mirages to Iraq (Paris 9391), January 22, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

additional aircraft," was less diplomatic in making his views known: "It borders on criminal for French to be peddling such lethal toys to basically irresponsible Iraqi government."[213]

In addition to de Gaulle's broad desire to position France as a third power in international politics, France had concrete, commercial reasons to pursue arms sales to Iraq. France's dependence on Middle Eastern oil had generated a significant deficit, and arms exports were seen as a way to pay for this.[214] Styan notes that "discussions over Iraqi arms purchases were inextricably intertwined with ongoing negotiations over oil… both in terms of France's supply requirements and Arab states' surplus revenues."[215] U.S. diplomats in Paris shared this view: "France, with its eyes on North Rumaila [a significant oil-producing area in Iraq], is fully prepared to bait its hook with aircraft, official visits, and substantial money as well," though they also noted that the Dassault, the manufacturer of the Mirage, "has increasingly painful burden of unsold aircraft."[216]

In February 1968, Iraqi President General Abd al-Rahman Arif made a "highly public and highly publicized" visit to Paris.[217] Charles de Gaulle personally greeted him at Orly Airport, and later declared that France was "ready to assist you according to our means."[218] On that visit, the two leaders signed a bilateral agreement on military training and a contract for 70 AMX-30 armored cars. They also discussed Iraq's interest in purchasing 54 Mirage jets, which Iraq wanted for ground troop support, all-weather ground attack, pilot training, and reconnaissance.[219]

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[213] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Iran to State Department, Subj: French Mirages to Iraq (Tehran 2951), January 20, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[214] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 70.
[215] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 65.
[216] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department, Subj: French Mirages to Iraq (Paris 9391), January 22, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 ISR; Box 1613; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[217] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 85–89.
[218] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department, Subj: Aref Visit (Paris 10048), February 2, 1968, Folder POL 7 IRAQ; Box 2220; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA; Styan, *France & Iraq*, 65.
[219] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 65; "La France a Accepté de Vendre 54 Avions de Combat a l'Irak," *Le Monde*, April 13, 1968.

Reporting on a *Le Monde* story citing "authorized circles," U.S. Embassy France noted that "this schedule might oblige manufacturer to fill order with several aircraft from lots currently being built for French Air Force"—highlighting just how much France wanted to make this deal.[220]

Arif's February visit to Paris did not result in a signed agreement for the Mirages, but negotiations continued into spring. According to a report in *Maariv,* the Soviets attempted to dissuade Arif from the French deal by cutting the price of the MiG-21S from $600,000 to $400,000 each—one quarter the price of a single Mirage.[221] Nevertheless, in early April, an "agreement in principle" was signed in Baghdad for 54 Mirages, with delivery to begin at the end of 1969.[222] France agreed to provide one year of technical assistance based in Baghdad gratis, with training of pilots and technicians to take place in France.[223] *Le Monde* praised the Iraqis as "meticulous negotiators" and noted that Iraq was having difficulties obtaining aircraft from its traditional suppliers.[224]

Did the Arif regime truly want to diversify its aircraft inventory, or were the Mirages intended to give the Iraqis leverage with the Soviets? The Iraqis appear to have been of two minds about the acquisition. On the one hand, they persisted in negotiations with the French even after the Soviets offered a major discount on the purchase price of the MiG-21s, suggesting that diversification may have been a genuine goal. On the other hand, when the memorandum of understanding was signed for the Mirages, Iraq also publicly announced that it had declined to

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[220] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department, Subj: Armored Cars and Aircraft for Iraq (Paris 10412), February 15, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[221] "USSR Reduces Price on Mig-21's Offered to Iraq." Tel Aviv MAARIV, February 10, 1968, translated in Daily Report, FBIS-FRB-68-030, February 12, 1968, FBIS; Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department for the President (Paris 10198), February 12, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[222] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department (Paris 12579), April 11, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[223] Telegram from U.S. Embassy France to State Department (Paris 12625), April 12, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[224] *Le Monde*, "La France a Accepté de Vendre 54 Avions de Combat a l'Irak."

grant permission to French companies to develop an oil field. The state-owned Iraq National Oil Company would pursue the project instead, likely with Soviet assistance. A U.S. State Department report noted this would invariably cost much more and be done less efficiently, and chalked up Iraq's decision to "the Baghdad regime's inertia and fear of domestic criticism directed at 'selling out to foreigners.'"[225] If Iraq had seen escape from its dependence on the Soviets as the highest national priority, it is unlikely the regime would have rejected France's bid for development concessions.

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The Mirage deal, which had been signed three months before the Ba'athist coup, was never fulfilled under the new regime. By March 1969, the deal remained "unconsummated" by Iraq: "Subsequent reporting from reliable sources… indicates that the Iraqis have cooled to the deal and, in effect, have decided to suspend it. … Even though this deal is not officially dead, its resuscitation would probably depend upon how anxious the French are to penetrate this politically radical country and also how much the Iraqis wish to diversify their arms establishment away from complete dependence upon the Soviet Union."[226] A CIA report stated that the contract had been "abrogated by Baghdad after one payment,"[227] though according to the French, "the first down payment was never received, so the deal did not proceed."[228]

[225] France to Sell Mirage Aircraft to Iraq Although French-Iraqi Mineral Negotiations Fail, Intelligence Note 295, April 23, 1968, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder DEF 12-5 IRAQ; Box 1556; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[226] French Arms Activity in the Middle East, Research Memorandum RNA-14, March 11, 1969, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder DEF 12-5 NEAR E; Box 1603; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[227] "France's Policy Toward the Middle East," March 7, 1969, CIA Weekly Summary Special Report, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP79-00927A006900060003-0.
[228] Note: Vente d'armement à l'Irak, February 4, 1974, *Documents Diplomatiques Français,* 1974, Volume 1 (1 January - 30 June), Document 69, 166.

Communist Military Aid Extended to Iraq

Million US $

	Total 1958-71	1958	1960	1961	1964	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Total	*1,081*	*131*	*98*	*113*	*41*	*181*	*100*	*42*	*70*	*55*	*250*
USSR	1,004	131	98	113	41	181	80	10	45	55	250
Czechoslovakia	65	--	--	--	--	--	20	30	15	--	--
Poland	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	--	--
Bulgaria	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--

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Figure 3.3 CIA Estimated Value of Communist Military Aid Extended to Iraq, 1958–1971

SOURCE: "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," CIA Intelligence Memorandum, March 1972, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP85T00875R001700030031-3.

It is true that Iraq may have had multiple motives, such as non-availability of funds, for not proceeding with the acquisition; as noted earlier, Soviet planes were significantly less expensive than French planes. Some scholars have claimed that the Soviet Union was indifferent to French-Iraqi relations, because Moscow "regarded France… as the lesser evil in comparison with Britain and the United States," and therefore would not have granted concessions to forestall their cooperation.[229] This argument, however, falters in the face of the cooling of Franco-Soviet relations following the invasion of Prague in May 1968, when political and military contacts were suspended, and the resignation of De Gaulle in April 1969.[230]

In this author's view, the evidence that Iraq used the Mirage deal as a bargaining chip to extract weapons from the Soviets is circumstantial but highly suggestive. A 1972 report by the CIA examining military aid to Iraq from Communist countries attributes the deal's suspension to "Soviet willingness to provide additional aircraft rapidly and Moscow's pressure on Baghdad not to purchase Western aircraft."[231] In a period when the Soviet Union was curtailing arms transfers

[229] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 25.
[230] *"Ot Atlantiki do Urala": Sovetsko-francuzskie otnosenia 1956–1973 ("From the Atlantic to the Urals": Soviet-French relations 1956–1973)*, Rossia XX vek (Mezdunarodnyj fond "Demokratia," 2015).
[231] "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972, 10.

to Iraq, it nevertheless sent 16 MiG-21 fighter jets and an additional three SU-7 bombers in mid-1969. The bombers in particular "[represented] initial deliveries of an eventual third SU-7 squadron, since [previously delivered SU-7s] represented the completion of SU-7 deliveries under a 1966 arms agreement."[232] The Soviet-Iraqi agreement for this deal is reported to date from September 1968—the Ba'athists first visit to Moscow.

3.4. Back to the U.S.S.R.

Despite the additional aircraft, Iraq's military ambitions and obligations quickly outstripped its capacity in 1969–1970. Of Iraq's 15-16 brigades, four were stationed in Syria and Jordan as part of Iraq's contribution to deterring Israel, and three were maintained in Baghdad to protect the regime itself. Another four were sent to the Iranian border in the south after Iran, in defiance of a 1937 treaty governing the Shatt al-Arab, seized several islands in the river in April 1969. Iraq thus only had four or five brigades to dedicate to the war against the Kurds, which had rekindled in August 1968. This was hardly sufficient: a 12-brigade offensive the previous year "had failed to attain any of its objectives."[233] According to Gibson, "The Shah tied the waterway to the Kurdish War [and]… having cornered the Iraqis, the Shah passed word to Baghdad that he was willing to 'break off supplies to the Kurds in return for concessions in the Shatt.' When the Iraqi regime rejected the proposal, the Shah encouraged the Kurds to reopen hostilities in the north and escalated tensions along the Shatt further."[234]

In spring and summer of 1969, Iraqi leaders, including defense minister Hardan Tikriti, undertook a series of visits to Moscow in search of weapons, but the Soviet Union continued to

[232] Moscow Resumes Jet Fighter Deliveries to the Near East, Intelligence Note 564, July 29, 1969, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder DEF 12-5 NEAR E; Box 1603; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[233] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 30; Edgar O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Struggle, 1920–94* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1996), 86.
[234] Gibson, *Sold Out?*, 120–21.

demur. Bakr decided to take Iraq's threats in turn, and when tensions with Iran subsided over the summer, Iraq launched a 10-bridge offensive against the Kurds in the north. But little was accomplished except the destruction of several dozen tanks, and the offensive wound down in October as winter set in.

In November 1969, Saddam Hussein was appointed vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, making him second only to Bakr in the leadership hierarchy. In January 1970, Hussein went to Moscow on his "first pilgrimage," where he…

> [hoped] to negotiate a deal with President Aleksey Kosygin to withdraw Soviet support from the Kurds. But the Russian was implacable: he wanted no massacre of Iraqi Kurds. As Saddam explained it in a conversation years later with Congressman Stephen Solarz, Moscow's decided lack of sympathy with his difficulties provided a rude awakening. 'We were, of course, young Baathists,' he told Solarz. 'We had conflicts with the Communist party in Iraq, some of which were bloody. Yet we kept thinking the Soviet Union could behave differently.'"[235]

Fukuyama argues that despite this flurry of diplomatic activity, the civilian leaders of Iraq were looking for ways to reduce Iraq's military commitments, not expand them, in order to reduce the salience of the military as a political actor. To that end, they did not need the Soviets to be especially lavish as long as they continued to provide materiel necessary to sustain existing weapons. Fukuyama states that "[Iraq] could have turned to the Soviets for new arms, which in time might have changed the course of the [Kurdish] war… The fact that this did not occur… indicates an intention not to accept the consequences of using Soviet aid in order to pursue a military victory, and not an insuperable lack of ability to do so."[236] In other words, Iraq's pursuit

[235] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 11.
[236] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 32.

of détente was the result of domestic political dynamics, not Soviet curtailment of arms transfers. Nor were the Iraqis trying to induce the Soviets to generosity. Iraq did not have an outside option that could replace the Soviets, but neither was it looking for one.

Instead, Iraq's civilian leaders, specifically Saddam Hussein, wanted to reduce the independent political power of the military. When a group of military officers, angry about the failure of the August offensive, attempted a coup on January 20-21, Saddam led the effort to purge 300 army officers and remove his primary rivals from the RCC.[237] This leadership shake-up finally allowed the civilian members of the RCC to exercise their preference for disengagement.[238] On January 24th the RCC announced that it recognized the "binational character" of Iraq.[239] Saddam personally negotiated the March Manifesto, which "called for a substantial degree of autonomy in areas with a Kurdish majority; a Kurdish vice-president and five Kurdish cabinet ministers; and proportional representation in the army, bureaucracy, legislature, and universities."[240]

With domestic political opposition under control and relations with the Kurds on the upswing, Iraq was in a position to pursue its greater regional ambitions. The death of Gamal Nasser in September 1970 and Anwar Sadat's Corrective Revolution to "de-Nasserize" Egypt opened the door for Iraq to improve its relationship with the Soviets.[241] The Soviets were slow to recognize that Sadat was not interested in carrying Nasser's legacy on, but over the following two years, Egypt moved ever farther away from the Soviet orbit.

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[237] Unlike other political figures, Saddam Hussein is referred to by his first name here. This is in keeping with the conventions of the literature on Middle Eastern politics, where the referential use of "Hussein" is typically reserved for the king of Jordan.
[238] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 31–32.
[239] O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Struggle, 1920–94*, 90.
[240] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 32.
[241] Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs*, 133–38.

The Soviets resumed wide-ranging, high-value arms agreements with Iraq in late 1971 as it became increasingly clear that the Soviets needed to hedge their bets among their Middle Eastern client states. According to one CIA report:

> The Soviet Union extended a $236 million credit in October 1971, apparently as part of an agreement to modernize Iraq's armed forces. It is not yet known what equipment the agreement calls for. Baghdad did press for a new generation of fighters, but apparently accepted updated models of the MIG-21 jet fighter and the SU-7 fighter-bomber. MI-8 helicopters, T-55 tanks, armored personnel carriers, antiaircraft guns, and antitank rocket launchers also are believed to be included in the new accord.[242]

American officials noted this rapid improvement of relations and suggested that:

> Soviets probably were no longer able to resist Iraqi pressure for getting arms supply off ad hoc basis and under comprehensive umbrella agreement as Soviets have done with Egypt and Syria…. We do not think Soviets have increased military aid to Iraq as part of aggressive policy in Gulf aimed at Iran. However, as investment increases, Soviets may become even less inclined to jeopardize relationship with Iraq and therefore less able to resist Iraqi pressures for even more military and economic assistance. In sum, our view is that Iraqi arms deal designed to placate Baghdad, not to pose threat to Shah.[243]

On April 9, 1972, Iraq and the Soviet Union signed a 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, only the third such treaty the Soviets signed. Alexei Kosygin, Premier of the Soviet Union, was present in Baghdad for the signing, the highest-ranking Soviet official to visit Iraq since the 1968 coup. Article 1 referenced the two states' "unbreakable friendship" and "respect

[242] "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq," March 1972, 10.
[243] Telegram 12737 from the Department of State to the Embassies in Iran, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, January 22, 1972, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Volume E–4 (Documents on Iran and Iraq, 1969–1972), Document 295.

for sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs" which was intended to indicate this was not an imperial decree; "violation, or even one-sided abrogation of the Soviet treaty (as in Egypt's case in 1976), did not entail the threat of Soviet military action against the state."[244] The text of the treaty contained no explicit guarantees or promises of military support, but it created obligations to consult with one another on security and foreign policy issues: "In the event of the emergence of situations threatening the peace of either Party or creating a threat to peace or violation of peace, the High Contracting Parties will contact each other without delay with the aim of coordinating their positions for removing the emerged threat or re-establishing peace."[245] Furthermore, the treaty stated that the two states would "continue to develop cooperation in the subject of strengthening their defense capacity."[246] Shemesh argues that Iraq understood this article to constitute "a Soviet commitment… to supply weapons needed by Baghdad first and foremost in the context of its dispute with Tehran."[247] Indeed, Iraq's concerns about Iran appear to have driven their desire for the treaty in the first place: a CIA memo noted that "according to a clandestine source… the Soviets rejected an Iraqi request that the friendship treaty include a guarantee the USSR would intervene if Iraq were attacked by Iran."[248]

Between 1972 and 1974, Soviet-Iraqi ties expanded rapidly, marked by "intense political collaboration" on issues over which they had previously disagreed: oil, the Kurds, Iran, and Israel.[249] On June 1, 1972, a few short weeks after the signature of the friendship treaty, the Iraq Petroleum Corporation was nationalized. The Kurdish war resumed one year later, in June 1973, with the Kurds receiving significant covert assistance from Iran in the form of arms, money, and

[244] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 71.
[245] Quoted in Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 74.
[246] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 74.
[247] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 74.
[248] Moscow and the Persian Gulf, May 12, 1972, CIA Intelligence Memorandum No. 0865/72, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Vol. E–4, Doc. 307.
[249] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 35.

even personnel and air support. Iranian support was backstopped by the United States, which had urged Iran to police the Persian Gulf after the British pulled out in 1971. As in 1969, "Iraq's Kurdish problem… merged to a great degree with its Iranian problem; Baghdad faced both a domestic insurgency and an increasingly powerful Iran at the same time."[250] As always, the Soviets did not want to antagonize Iran unnecessarily, but they were more interested in promoting stability in Iraq than they had been during previous periods, now that the Ba'ath and the ICP had agreed to cooperate and form the Patriotic National Front.[251] As a result, they were less concerned about the fate of the Kurds, at least initially. The aftermath of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973 also found the Soviets and the Iraqis on the same side. While Anwar Sadat and Henry Kissinger conducted backchannel negotiations, the Soviets and Iraqis pushed a rejectionist position.

This overlap of interests was reflected in Soviet arms transfer policies and arms deals with Iraq, with five major agreements between late 1971 and the end of the Kurdish war in 1975. Fukuyama reports that the value of these weapons was over $1.7 billion, "over twice the total amount of military assistance Moscow had given in the entire 13 years since the fall of the monarchy."[252] Soviet and Iraqi leaders exchanged several visits over this four-year period, particularly surrounding the resumption of the Kurdish war in March 1974, when Bakr ordered the Kurds to accept Iraq's plan for their autonomy. When this was rejected, military operations began again in the north. Prosecuting this war would, naturally, require weapons from Moscow, which the Soviets were now willing to provide. Defense Minister Andrei Grechko paid a surprise visit to Baghdad March 23-26, 1974, where he negotiated a major arms transfer agreement

[250] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 38.
[251] Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 102.
[252] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 44.

"including MiG-21s, 23s, and SU-7s destined for use in a ground attack role against the Kurds" as well as Scud surface-to-surface missiles.[253] Moscow even gave permission for Soviet pilots to fly bombing missions for Iraq, "because, at that time, no Iraqi pilots were qualified to fly either [the Tu-22 or MiG-23]. [The] combat deployment of the Soviet planes and pilots served as a tangible commitment to Baghdad's war effort against the Kurds."[254]

The number of high-level engagements and the size of the arms deals could lead one to conclude that Soviet and Iraqi relations had never been better. But 1973 brought three flies to the ointment of Soviet-Iraqi collaboration. Though none intrinsically threatened the relationship in the immediate term, they created conditions that would soon lead to friction. First, in March, Iraq reached a final settlement with the IPC, the oil conglomerate that had been nationalized in 1972. This paved the way for a more normal relationship with the Western industrial countries that had been invested in the IPC.

Second, in the same month, Iraq proclaimed its sovereignty over two Kuwaiti islands that stood between the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr and the Arabian Sea. To Iraq's surprise, Moscow publicly opposed this move, and successfully pressured Iraq into withdrawing.[255] Reporting on activities surrounding the first anniversary of the Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Treaty, the U.S. Interests Section in Baghdad reported that "warm comrades-in-arms relationship of just two months ago is changing. For Iraq, Russia is assuming more role of valued supporter, but not close confidante and certainly not leader of joint alliance."[256] In an interview with a Lebanese news outlet, Iraq's Foreign Minister was asked whether Iraq wanted the islands for the Soviet

[253] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 89; Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 40.
[254] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 89.
[255] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 95–96.
[256] Telegram from the Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State; Subj: First Anniversary of Soviet-Iraqi Treaty, April 10, 1973, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Volume XXVII, Iran; Iraq, 1973–1976, Document 212.

fleet. He said, "Soviets are our friends. They offer valuable aid without strings. We do not accept that the treaty brings Soviets to this area. Soviets have no bases or armies in Iraq. We differ with them on many issues . . . we have our national strategy and ideology and they have theirs." Assessing the effect that Moscow's reticence had on Iraq, Smolansky and Smolansky state:

> The sense of betrayal felt by the Ba'th over this failure of Russian support for Iraq's first major foreign policy initiative after the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation must have been acute. It no doubt engendered mistrust and even bitterness toward the Kremlin among some Ba'thi leaders and impressed upon all of them the undesirability of allowing Iraq to become further dependent on the USSR. Thus, even this brief 'success' for Soviet influence left a costly legacy.

In the wake of this instance of Soviet disloyalty, the third development was good news for Baghdad and bad news for Moscow: the oil price shock of 1973. Following the Yom Kippur War, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which accounted for over half of worldwide oil production, embargoed the countries that had supported Israel. Global oil prices tripled; in the United States, they quadrupled.[257] As a result, oil producing states experienced a windfall in their revenues—which, crucially, arrived primarily in the form of hard currency. While Iraq had pushed for a harder line, advocating for a halt to all economic relations with the West, it nevertheless benefited from OPEC's efforts. Iraq was suddenly flush with cash that could be spent anywhere in the world on almost anything it wanted. Iraq's defense budget increased dramatically; the amount allocated specifically for procurement grew "from $500 million in 1970 to $4.5 billion in 1975."[258]

[257] Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, "Oil Embargo, 1973–1974," Milestones: 1969–1976. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo.
[258] Quoted in Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 134.

3.5. Saddam A-Go-Go

A windfall of hard currency alongside the IPC settlement gave Iraq access to a much larger pool of potential international partners for an ambitious range of development efforts. Contractors from Western Europe, the Soviet bloc, North America, and South America were invited to participate in building a new, modern Iraq. Recognizing the need to improve the quality of life for the everyday Iraqi, Saddam had plans for a wide range of projects and programs—everything from constructing housing to establishing sugar refineries to constructing brick-making factories to the creation of massive dairy and egg farms. Saïd Aburish, who worked with the Beirut-based firm that coordinated Iraq's overseas procurement during the mid-1970s, called it "a wish list of staggering proportions."[259]

Iraq's wish list also, naturally, included weapons. With ever-growing oil profits, Iraq sought out weapons from the Western industrial states. Iraq's tentative approaches to the United States were rebuffed; though the United States saw value in weaning Iraq away from the Soviets, the standing policy was to deny arms to states that had severed diplomatic relations with Washington. The United Kingdom, Iraq's one-time supplier, was initially unwilling to approve arms sales to Iraq, first out of concern for Iran's sentiments and security, and later in deference to Israel and the United States' embargo on the Arab belligerents.[260] By 1975, however, they had reversed their position and were in business with Iraq.

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[259] Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 108.

[260] Aburish attributes some of Iraq's inability to make deals with the United Kingdom to contractual terms Iraq demanded: "At the meeting which I set up, both sides agreed on the technical and delivery details, but suddenly an unexpected problem arose. The Iraqis had previously requested me to ask BAE for a British government letter addressed to them, 'guaranteeing the uninterrupted flow of spare parts under all conditions.' In other words, the British government was to keep the planes flying regardless of any war which might involve Iraq. [The letter BAE] gave the delegation stated that her Majesty's Government would only 'endeavour [sic] to guarantee' what the Iraqis had requested. The head of the Iraqi delegation, who had been silent until the letter was produced, looked straight at [the BAE representative] and said 'Sir, my English is not good, but either you endeavour or you guarantee.'" Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 142.

Above all, France was Iraq's prime target for increased economic and political engagement. Despite the quiet demise of the 1968 Mirage deal, France had remained eager to maintain good relations with Iraq, and it welcomed Iraq's interest in arms acquisitions. In June 1972, two weeks after the IPC nationalization degree had been signed, Saddam made his first visit to Paris. France "pulled out all the stops" and agreed to acquiesce to the nationalization of the IPC in exchange for a ten-year guarantee of oil at concessionary prices—"'a sort of exemption from nationalization.'"[261] In exchange, Saddam would receive 16 Alouette attack helicopters and 128 Panhard armored cars—hardly likely to change the balance of power with Iran, but sufficient for Saddam to determine whether he could do business with France.[262] Though he had recently signed the Soviet friendship treaty, Saddam told the French president, Georges Pompidou, that Iraq had "chosen" France, and would need her as a "counterweight."[263] This was a theme Saddam would return to regularly as the two states exchanged several more high-level visits over the next several years; for Iraq, France offered a way out of the superpowers' closed spheres of influence.[264] And France was stalwart in its independence; unlike the other Western powers, France did not embargo the Arab states after the Yom Kippur War in October 1973.[265] Even when the French government changed in May 1974 following Pompidou's death, "there was no reorientation of policy towards Iraq [under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing]. France still had to ensure supplies of oil from the Middle East and Iraq, while trying

[261] Quoted in Claude Angeli and Stéphanie Mesnier, *Notre allié Saddam* (O. Orban, 1992), 30; see also Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 13; and Styan, *France & Iraq*, 121–22.
[262] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 13.
[263] Quoted in Angeli and Mesnier, *Notre allié Saddam*, 21.
[264] See, e.g., M. Cerles, Ambassadeur De France à Bagdad, à M. Jobert, Ministre Des Affaires Étrangères. Suj: Entretien du ministre avec M. Saddam Hussein (7 fevrier), February 11, 1974, *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 1974, Volume 1 (1 January - 30 June), Document 82, 202.
[265] Telegram from U.K. Embassy France to Foreign Office, Subj: French Arms Embargo, October 16, 1973, Folder: Arms Sales to Middle East Countries; DEFE 13/942; Defence Intelligence Staff Records; Section I: 1971-1974; Foreign Office Files for the Middle East, 1971–1981, accessed through AM Archives Direct (hereafter FO/ME).

to counterbalance the resulting commercial deficit with an aggressive policy of commercial exports and investments in Iraq."[266]

Iraq remained heavily dependent on the Soviet Union for its near-term military materiel needs, however. With the war against the Kurds continuing into 1974, Soviet weapons continued to arrive; "during the first eleven months of 1974, 46 Soviet ships discharged arms in Iraqi ports, compared to 37 in all of 1973," including "some of the USSR's most sophisticated weapons."[267] Fukuyama reports that in early 1975, "arms transfers reached record levels, for use in the struggle against several common enemies: Israelis, American oil companies, Kurds, Iranians, and a panoply of lesser reactionaries, puppets, and stooges."[268]

Yet there were numerous indications that all was not well in the Iraq-Soviet relationship. According to Aburish, "The USSR [was] unhappy with Saddam's duplicative efforts, which suggested a growing closeness to the West, and had begun to suspect that his alliance with the Communist Party in the Patriotic National Front was no more than a cover."[269] Iraq's diversification of its trade and development partners—what the U.S. State Department described as a "policy trend toward non-alignment and rapprochement with the West"—was a visible indicator of Iraq's desire for greater independence.[270] This diversification had serious economic and political implications. In a meeting of U.S. Chiefs of Mission in early 1975, the Chief of U.S. Interests in Baghdad, Arthur Lowrie, summed it up quite bluntly: "The Soviet Union has suffered a massive defeat in the economic sphere in Iraq during the last 2 years which is

[266] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 124.
[267] "Communist and Free World Supply of Arms to Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya," November 22, 1974, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP85T00875R002000010024-9, 3-4.
[268] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 46.
[269] Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 137.
[270] Telegram from the Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State, October 24, 1974, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Vol. XXVII, Doc. 263.

comparable only to the withdrawal from Egypt. Virtually every contract is now going to the West."[271]

The Soviets appear to have taken a somewhat schizophrenic approach to Iraq in this period. A stream of visits exchanged during 1974 was accompanied by public praise for Iraq in Soviet government-controlled news outlets. Privately, however, the U.S. State Department noted that "Soviet and Communist diplomats throughout early months of 1974 expressed exasperation with Iraqi prickly behavior."[272] The same CIA report that highlighted the increased volume of transfers in 1974 also noted that some much-needed ammunition had been withheld because it was destined for use the Kurdish war. More tellingly, it stated that "Moscow has refused in recent months [the second half of 1974] to conclude a new arms accord with Baghdad."[273] The arms that were being delivered were ordered on earlier contracts, but the rate of losses as a result of the war against the Kurds was outpacing deliveries.

The most detailed account of the Soviets' initial curtailment of arms supplies for Iraq is that of investigative journalist Kenneth Timmerman:

> What irritated Saddam Hussein the most was that the Soviets simply refused to discuss sending arms. They rejected requests to meet with Saddam's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Abdel Jabbar Shenshall, who had prepared a list of weapons Iraq desperately needed in order to wage the final offensive against the Kurds. … Kosygin supported the autonomy plan for Kurdistan since it would keep Iraq weak and manageable. He did not support a war against the Kurds.

[271] Memorandum of Conversation, February 15, 1975, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Volume E–9, Part 2, Documents on the Middle East Region, 1973–1976, Document 23.
[272] Telegram from the Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State, October 24, 1974, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Vol. XXVII, Doc. 263.
[273] "Communist and Free World Supply of Arms to Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya," November 22, 1974, 4.

> The Soviet attitude was debilitating to Saddam, morally and militarily. Ever since they had replaced Great Britain as Iraq's principal arms supplier in 1958, the Soviets had very carefully, like drug pushers, built up Iraq's dependence. Lavish supplies of arms were coupled to strict policies concerning maintenance and training. The Iraqi air force had been the first customer outside the Warsaw Pact to receive the MiG-21 fighter, but for years the Iraqis were not allowed to learn how to service the plane themselves. It was the same with the T-54 tanks, the workhorse of the Iraqi army. Iraq could not wage a military campaign without active Soviet support. The USSR knew that in a matter of months, Saddam would run out of munitions and spare parts. And so with a marked absence of polemic — not even a reproach - Kosygin simply turned a deaf ear to Saddam's pressing requests for more arms. The Soviets never called it an embargo per se. But for Saddam, it was humiliating. It was this bitter experience with the USSR that convinced him to go shopping elsewhere.[274]

Timmerman's account of the Soviets' use of arms transfers for political influence is supported by Aburish, who adds that Saddam thought the USSR was "withholding its most advanced weapons from him" even as his generals told him that Soviet technology was inferior to that of the West.[275]

[274] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 17–18.

[275] Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 130. Haim Shemesh's account includes reference to an "especially large arms deal" in January 1975, following the downing of two Iraqi jets by Iranian missiles, but his is the only mention this author has seen of this agreement, and this author was unable to find either of the Washington Post articles Shemesh cited as evidence. No such deal is reported in SIPRI's database of arms transfers, nor is reference to such a deal made in declassified U.S. State Department cables. However, in the time frame in which Shemesh indicates this deal took place, Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko failed to visit Baghdad during his "suddenly scheduled swing through the Middle East," which followed Brezhnev's cancellation of his visit in December 1974, implicitly suggesting Soviet disfavor of Iraq. However, Gromyko visited Damascus and Egypt, and concluded a significant agreement for MiG-23s with the latter, suggesting perhaps some confusion on Shemesh's part as to the recipient of the weapons. Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 125; Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Iraq's 'Non-Invitation' to Gromyko," The Washington Post, February 8, 1975.

Relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union continued to sour. Leonid Brezhnev had been scheduled to go to Baghdad in January as part of a three-country tour of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, but the visit was scratched—"apparently without consulting the Iraqis, and presumably therefore somewhat to their chagrin"—with no explanation provided.[276] An Egyptian ambassador's description to a British diplomat further underscores the sense of betrayal felt by the Iraqis during the winter of 1974–1975:

> Not only were the Iraqis at odds with the Russians over… negotiations with Israel … but all three Governments [Egypt, Syria, and Iraq] had cause to be out of countenance with the Russians over the latter's attachment of conditions to their supply of arms. In the case of Iraq these conditions had not been made explicit when the arms were supplied but there had been a sharp tug on the reins in the course of the summer when the Russians had withheld ammunition needed by the Iraqis for the fighting in the North. Application of an embargo of that kind was, of course, the most unacceptable condition of all: by supplying arms at all, the supplier enters into a moral commitment to supply spares and ammunition in time of need and in the case of the Kurdish fighting, Iraq had been encouraged to get into it in the first place by the Russians.[277]

Moscow seems to have assumed that the political differences between Iraq and the Western states, combined with Iraq's material dependence on the Soviet Union, was sufficient to deter Iraq from continuing its drive to independence. The Western industrial states also saw

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[276] Quote from "Letter from British Embassy Iraq to Middle East Department, British Foreign Office," April 12,1975, Folder: Political relations between Iraq and Soviet Union, 1975; FCO 8/2543; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Section II: 1975–1978, FO/ME. Brezhnev was suffering from health problems at the time, which were assumed to be the reason for cancellation, though Anatoly Chernyaev's diary shows a Brezhnev who is "angry" and not sure why he is going on this "unnecessary" and perhaps even "harmful" trip. Anatoly Chernyaev, "Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, 1974," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 471, May 25, 2014, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB471/.

[277] Letter from British Embassy Iraq to Middle East Department, British Foreign Office, Subj: Brezhnev's Postponed Visit to the Middle East, January 16, 1975, Folder: Political relations between Iraq and Soviet Union, 1975; FCO 8/2543; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Section II: 1975–1978, FO/ME.

Iraq's dependence on the Soviets as a drag on improving relations, but they were more optimistic about the potential to overcome political and ideological differences. One British report, for example, noted that "many of the aims and ideals of the Ba'ath are alien to those of Communism, and their alliance with the Soviet Union has come about largely out of expediency… They will not take kindly to Soviet pressure or interference."[278]

Iraq's response to Moscow's arms curtailment was a clear refutation of the Soviets' assumptions and a vindication of the British assessment. Rather than acquiesce to Soviet pressure, Iraq used a short-term strategy of endurance to allow it to pursue its longer-term goal of diversification. The Ba'athists were hardly subtle about their disinclination to concede. In November 1974, a major reshuffle of the cabinet further consolidated Saddam's power and, "above all… demonstrated it has no intention of sharing power with ICP, 'Arab nationalists', or any other 'progressive' elements."[279]

Saddam's diversification strategy had two prongs. First was the formation in late 1974 of the Committee for Strategic Development (CSD), a three-man group—Saddam himself; Minister of Planning and Deputy Prime Minister Adnan Hamdani, responsible for procurement; and Chief of Staff Adnan Khairallah, responsible for identifying military requirements—that would oversee all of Iraq's arms procurement projects.[280] Ultimately, this group was tasked with determining what Iraq would need to do to get out from under the Soviet thumb and, eventually, truly self-reliant.[281] In Saddam's view, in addition to pursuing arms imports from a range of suppliers,

[278] Confidential Annex D: "Party ties between the CPSU and the Iraqi Ba'ath Party," undated (c. 1973), FCO 51/299, *Iraq: Defence Intelligence,* Vol. 5, 675.
[279] Telegram from the Interests Section in Baghdad to the Department of State, November 13, 1974, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Vol. XXVII, Doc. 265.
[280] Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 134.
[281] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 18.

independence would require domestic manufacturing capabilities and the educational ecosystem necessary to indigenize weapons development and production.

The second element in Saddam's strategy was the escalation of Iraq's mutual courtship with the French. In November, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac visited Baghdad—the first French head of government to do so since the 1968 revolution. Over the course of 1974, France had become the "largest single supplier of manufactured goods to Iraq," and Chirac was excited to continue to expand Franco-Iraqi cooperation.[282] "On a personal level," according to Styan, "Chirac and Saddam Hussein appeared to get on excellently. [They] had a tete-a-tete lasting over six hours during the trip, apparently establishing a personal friendship."[283] Both men saw partnership with France as a more natural fit for Iraq than the Soviet Union, given their shared embrace of "secularism, national sovereignty, and autonomy in a bipolar world."[284] Saddam told Chirac that Iraq "absolutely must get out from under the Soviets,"[285] and indicated he was interested in spending billions of dollars on French weapons. He was particularly interested in French aircraft, like the Mirage fighters, and nuclear technology, which the Soviets had been denying to Iraq.[286] While no arms sales were announced following this visit, French officials made public that France would supply Iraq with two nuclear reactors "à des fins pacifique" (to peaceful ends).[287]

Saddam knew his efforts toward diversification would take time to pay the dividends he wanted. The French obviously could not be expected to meet the immediate need for weapons

[282] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 124.
[283] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 125.
[284] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 125.
[285] Telegram from U.S. Embassy U.K. to the Department of State, Subj: French and British Perceptions of Iraq and Arms Policy (London 15988), December 6, 1974, Electronic Telegrams: 1974; Access to Archival Databases (AAD), Central Foreign Policy Files 1973–79, RG-59, NARA.
[286] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 21.
[287] Styan, *France & Iraq*, 124.

for Iraq's war against the Kurds. Even if a deal could be made quickly enough, France did not stockpile military equipment for later sale, so large quantities of major weapons systems, such as tanks and aircraft, could not be provided on short notice. The CIA estimated that Dassault, the manufacturer of the Mirage, was averaging "about 28 months from order to first delivery," though it would occasionally "manipulate delivery schedules to provide a new customer with… a few aircraft at an earlier date."[288]

This meant Iraq would have to find a way to endure in the short term without Soviet support. One way to change the strategic environment was to resolve Iraq's differences with Iran. Saddam let it be known among Middle Eastern leaders that he was ready to "pull Iraq out of Soviet orbit" and settle all disputes with Iran if Iran agreed to stop assisting the Kurds in the ongoing war.[289] The Shah, while skeptical of Saddam's trustworthiness, saw the Kurds as a losing prospect. This was an opportunity to decrease Iraq's reliance on the Soviet Union and gain concessions on the Shatt al-Arab waterway.[290] Once it became clear that an agreement was possible, Saddam went to France "in utmost secrecy" to meet with Chirac and Giscard. He presented "a long shopping list" and arranged for a "detailed presentation of the weapons… as soon as possible"—in effect, signaling that Iraq was readying itself to focus on its longer-term military needs.[291]

On March 5, 1975, Iran and Iraq signed the Algiers Accord. Iran would recognize Iran's interpretation of the division of the Shatt al-Arab river "in return for 'strict and effective' border controls and the 'end to all subversive infiltration,'—a dropping of Iranian support for the

[288] "National Intelligence Bulletin," April 29, 1975, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP79T00975A027600010051-9, A1.
[289] Backchannel Message from the Ambassador to Iran (Helms) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), March 8, 1975, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Vol. XXVII, Doc. 276.
[290] Gibson, *Sold Out?*, 189–90.
[291] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 24.

Kurds."[292] The Kurdish war ended almost immediately thereafter, and Iran and Iraq spent several months negotiating the disposition of refugees across the two countries.[293] Primakov claims that, "[having] built multilateral relations with both countries, the Soviet Union welcomed this normalization," a statement with which few other observers of the time would agree. However, "few could have doubted," Primakov continues, "that Iraq was headed towards a clash of ideologies with the Soviet Union. And the ideology Iraq had chosen was directly associated with Saddam Hussein."[294]

Having reduced Iraq's immediate need for weapons and ammunition, Saddam went to Moscow for two days in April to discuss a new arms agreement and nuclear cooperation pact. Iraq was in a better negotiating position than at any point in the recent past: with France ready and willing to increase arms sales, Iraq had a viable outside option. But as Timmerman notes, "unless [Saddam] wanted to turn his army's vast quantities of Soviet hardware into scrap metal," Iraq needed to repair its relationship with the Soviets.[295] Minor agreements were reached, including Soviet provision of training for Iraqi nuclear scientists and a research reactor, albeit with proliferation-resistant safeguards.[296]

Nevertheless, the Iraqis hardly struck a conciliatory tone toward the Soviets. Upon his return from Moscow, Saddam sat for an interview with *Washington Post* reporter Jim Hoagland, whereupon he announced that Iraq wanted to "make the Gulf a 'zone of peace' free of foreign military bases," which would have excluded the Soviets from the base they had helped construct at Umm Qasr.[297] He stated that relations between Iran and Iraq "'are proceeding in such a way as

[292] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 46.
[293] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 90; Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 46.
[294] Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs*, 305.
[295] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 25.
[296] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 25.
[297] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, citing Arab Report and Record (ARR) 75/248; Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 194–95.

to reduce the search for procurement of arms'" and made it clear that Iraq would continue to seek arms from the West, regardless of Soviet sentiments: "'If national conditions dictate that we should diversify in this field we shall do so… We have a free will."[298]

News of the Soviets' embargo on arms to Iraq began to surface publicly in the summer of 1975. Citing "diplomatic sources," the *Boston Globe* reported that Moscow had "suspended all arms shipments" to Iraq:

> American and other Western analysts say the suspension of arms shipments is aimed at underscoring Russia's displeasure over a variety of recent actions by the Iraqi government in Bagdad. Heading the list of major irritants in the Soviet-Iraq relationship, the sources say, are …
>
> — Bagdad's mounting efforts to decrease its dependency on Soviet arms. Over the last 18 months, the analysts estimate, Iraq has contracted to purchase nearly $1 billion in weapons from such countries as France, Italy and Yugoslavia and it is actively seeking additional arms deals in the West.
>
> — Iraq's attempts, since a rapprochement in March, with Iran, to build support among Persian Gulf nations for the exclusion of Russian and American military forces from the Gulf in favor of some sort of regional, indigenous security arrangement.[299]

Neither side was inclined to litigate their disagreements in public, however, implying Iraq did not want to sever relations with the Soviet Union entirely. Their decision stands in contrast to the Egyptian decision earlier in the year to expose Moscow's arms embargo, which was meant to signal to the United States that Egypt wanted to continue to distance itself from the Soviet

[298] Jim Hoagland, "Iraq Tries to Boost Gulf Security to Replace Outside Military Pacts," *The Washington Post*, April 25, 1975.
[299] William Beecher, "Russia Reportedly Cuts off All Arms Aid to Iraq," *Boston Globe*, July 10, 1975.

Union. As Fukuyama notes, "the Iraqis had no comparable need; indeed, they had a considerable incentive to preserve their ties to the Soviet Union despite their current policy differences."[300]

Iraq's earlier efforts to ensure they could wait out the Soviets' curtailment began to pay off. A delegation from Iraq, led by Saddam, traveled to France in early September 1975. The difference between the receptions in Paris and in Moscow could not have been starker. During Saddam's visit in April, Brezhnev had not made time to meet with Saddam at all.[301] By contrast, Jacques Chirac met Saddam at Orly Airport with a red carpet and the warmest greetings: "I welcome you as my personal friend. I assure you of my esteem, my consideration, and my affection."[302] Over the next five days, amid cultural outings and visits to military bases and nuclear research centers, the Iraqis and the French negotiated an arms deal that "in its dollar value was as large as any of the major agreements reached with the Soviet Union."[303] While Saddam was careful to note that "the replacement of Soviet arms is not an objective of Iraqi policy,"[304] he expressed interest in acquiring nearly everything France was willing to sell. This list included petrochemical plants, desalinization plants, telecommunications systems, an airport, a subway system, and a navy yard in addition to a full range of weapons: Mirage jets; Alouette III, Gazelle, and Super-Puma helicopters; howitzers; and several new types of missiles, including Exocet anti-ship missiles.[305]

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[300] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 52.
[301] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 135. In a cable summarizing Saddam's visit, the British Embassy in Moscow suggested that "While this could be explained by pressures on Brezhnev due to party plenum which took place on second day of Hussein visit, it is difficult not/not to conclude that time could have been found for Hussein if Soviet side considered results of visit warranted endorsement at highest level." Telegram from U.K. Embassy U.S.S.R. to Foreign Office, Subj: Soviet/Iraqi Relations (MCW 1355), April 23, 1975, Folder: Political relations between Iraq and Soviet Union, 1975; FCO 8/2543; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Section II: 1975–1978, FO/ME.
[302] Quoted in Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, xvii. Also related in Angeli and Mesnier, *Notre allié Saddam*, 53.
[303] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 52.
[304] "Iraq Under Baath Rule, 1968-1976," CIA Research Study, November 1976, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP79T00889A000900040001-6, 31.
[305] Timmerman, *The Death Lobby*, 32.

It would take several more exchanges of delegations over several months to work out the specifics of these sales, but according to a CIA estimate, Iraq's military spending for 1974–1975 was split almost evenly between Soviet arms and French and British arms: "In 1974–1975, of a total $1,468 million spent in arms orders, 43 percent (636 million) were in Soviet arms, 31 percent ($462 million) to France, and 9 percent ($128 million) to Great Britain."[306] Iraq's pursuit of diversification in arms imports supported its larger goal of foreign policy independence. "Arming Iraq may serve Soviet political purposes," the CIA report stated, "but Iraq supports Soviet foreign policy goals only where they suit Iraq's policies and purposes."[307] Whatever expectations of patron-client amity and consideration had once existed had evaporated, and Saddam, no longer believing the Soviet Union had any intention of dealing fairly with Iraq, no longer saw Soviet favor as existentially necessary.

The Soviet embargo of Iraq came to an end the following year, in the wake of Syria's invasion of Lebanon in April 1976 "in direct contravention of a Soviet request not to do so."[308] Two of the states that were central to Soviet policy in the Middle East no longer appeared reliable: Egypt had been questionable for several years, and now Syria seemed unwilling to toe the Soviets' line. Iraq's relationship with Syria had gone from bad to worse over the years, and Iraq stood ready to gain from Syria's loss of Soviet favor.[309] In April 1976, Kosygin went to Baghdad to mend fences—the first high-level Soviet figure to visit Iraq in over two years.[310] In August, Iraq and the Soviet Union signed their largest arms agreement yet, worth "well over a billion dollars" and consisting of "600 T-62 and I-64 tanks, 100 Mig-23s, quantities of SAM-6S,

[306] "Iraq Under Baath Rule, 1968–1976," November 1976, 31.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 53.
[309] Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968–1988*, 152–53.
[310] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 228.

Scud and Scaleboard SSMs [surface-to-surface missiles], several hundred 155mm and 203mm guns, and a wing of Mig-25s that were to remain under Soviet control," according to "an Iranian source."[311] Another large arms deal was signed in October 1976 for more T-62 tanks and Scud missiles, and in 1977 for more aircraft.[312]

3.6. Goodbye Brezhnev

The short window of Iraqi-Soviet comity did not last long, but the potential for Soviet arms curtailment would no longer act as a constraint on Iraq's domestic policy or its strategic ambitions. In 1978, there was another crackdown on Iraqi Communist Party members when they began to agitate against the regime, specifically denouncing Saddam's accommodation with Iran and his rapprochement with the conservative Arab regimes.[313] Executions and purges were

[311] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 54.
[312] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 28.
[313] Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 56.

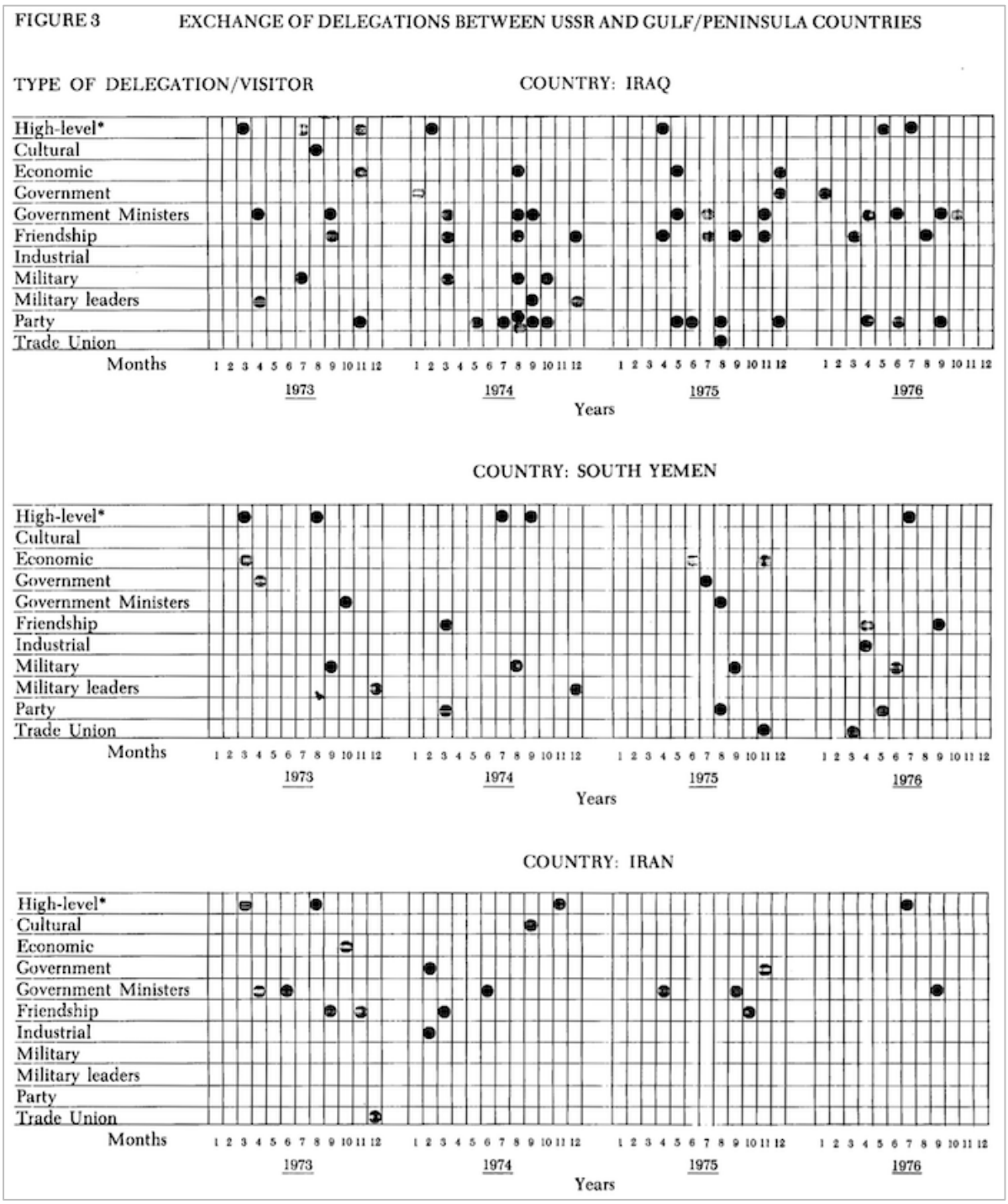


Figure 3.4 Exchange of Delegations Between USSR and Iraq

SOURCE: "The Soviets in the Persian Gulf/Arabian Peninsula: Assets and Prospects," CIA Research Study, December 1976, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP79T00889A000900070001-3, 7.

NOTES: Charts for South Yemen and Iran provided for comparison of frequency and volume of visits. "High-level" refers to Politburo Members, Prime Ministers, and Heads of Government. In the original, there are different markers for delegations from the Soviet Union and delegations from the country, but scan quality does not allow reliable differentiation here.

accompanied by explicit statements attributing the ICP's activities to Moscow; in an interview with *Newsweek*, Saddam said, "The Soviet Union sees its security in spreading Communism… they won't be satisfied until the whole world becomes Communist."[314]

According to Primakov, who developed a relatively candid relationship with Saddam in the 1970s, "[Saddam] knew our reaction would be extremely negative. He knew this risked limiting our cooperation. But flexibility, the ability to maneuver, to adapt to circumstances, to accurately assess reality, were never, despite his pragmatism, Saddam Hussein's strong points."[315] Nevertheless, unlike during the Ba'athists' persecution of the ICP in 1963, Moscow did not curtail weapons to Iraq. Oleg Grinevsky, then-head of the Near East department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recalled Saddam's visit to Moscow in December 1978: "[He] made a favorable impression… he held himself evenly, kindly, with dignity, and talked a lot about grandiose plans to unite the Arab world in the fight against the Camp David deal. These plans were to [Kosygin's] liking, and therefore Saddam easily received a solid contract for… Soviet weapons."[316]

The Soviets' unwillingness or inability to punish Iraq in 1978 highlights again the limited utility of arms supplies as a lever of influence. While Iraq was Moscow's primary recipient of weapons outside the Bloc countries, Iraq was no longer exclusively dependent on Soviet goodwill for military supplies.[317] According to Fukuyama, "by early 1978 [Iraq] was reported to have stockpiled enough spare parts for its Soviet equipment to last five years without external resupply. The large arms deal in August 1976 had clearly been a source for much of this

[314] Roland Flamini, "Saddam Hussein in 1978: Interview by Arnaud de Borchgrave," *UPI*, September 14, 2002, https://www.upi.com/Defense-News/2002/09/14/Saddam-Hussein-in-1978-interview/86931032023250/.
[315] E. M. (Evgeniĭ Maksimovich) Primakov, *Missions à Bagdad: histoire d'une négociation secrète*, trans. Fabienne Mariengof and François Olivier (Ed. du Seuil, 1991), 33.
[316] Grinevskiĭ, *Taĭny sovetskoĭ diplomatii ("Secrets of Soviet Diplomacy")*, 181.
[317] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 28.

inventory." Iraq's arms purchases from France and other countries were being delivered, and with no immediate threat of heavy fighting on the horizon, Iraq was under no immediate pressure to secure future shipments. Curtailing weapons to protect the ICP would only have led Iraq to further diversification. Reflecting on the transition the Iraqi-Soviet relationship underwent in the mid- to late-1970s, Primakov noted:

> Saddam's pragmatism played a role in his attitude toward the Soviet Union. He attached particular importance to military cooperation with us. Moreover, when it was hampered on our side, he was prepared, at first, to do anything to revive it. … But time passed, and Saddam changed more and more. The desire to cooperate with the USSR was still present, but it no longer outweighed everything else.[318]

By the time the Iran-Iraq War began, Iraq could hardly be considered a Soviet client. Any sense of shared interests—namely, opposing American involvement in the Middle East—had been subsumed by more immediate concerns, and the two states were as likely to snipe at one another in public as they were to support one another's initiatives. In the wake of the revolution in Iran, the Soviets sought to capitalize on America's loss to improve their standing with the new regime, to Iraq's dismay. Thereafter, Iraq was volubly critical of the Soviets' "severe and large-scaled" invasion of Afghanistan, which they equated with the imperial activities of the United States, warning that this "occupation… would undoubtedly provoke anxiety on a large scale and without exception among all those who have relations of friendship with the Soviets."[319]

As noted earlier, the Soviet Union imposed an embargo on all arms transfers to Iraq shortly after the Iran-Iraq War began. While reliant on Soviet-style equipment and ammunition,

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[318] Primakov, *Missions à Bagdad*, 32–33.
[319] *Comment on Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan* (Translation and Foreign Languages Publication Department, Iraq Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980), 32–33, https://archive.org/details/CommentOnSovietInterventionInAfghanistan.

Iraq could acquire much of this materiel outside the Soviet Union itself. Yugoslavia in particular had become a reliable source of Soviet-origin weapons and ammunition as well as repair and training services.[320] At times, "the market did not cooperate" and Iraq was "limited in [its] choices and options," but nearly all potential suppliers were willing to discuss the possibilities.[321]

Nevertheless, Iraq knew it could not afford to alienate the Soviets entirely. Tariq Aziz was sent back to Moscow in November 1980 to sound out the Soviets, but once again was received by Ponomarev and sent back to Baghdad empty-handed.[322] The Soviets, it seemed, were still trying to curry favor with Iran, and hoped Iraq could be pressured into ending a war that had quickly become a stalemate. Saddam, for his part, was surprisingly stoic about the Soviets' refusal to provide military equipment:

> When we have reached a point of adversity with the Soviets, in fact there is nothing that should lead us to this situation as long as we make things clear in our relationship with them and be forthright in an exchange of interests. It should involve exchange and improvement of relations. As long as we realize this has taken place, it is on its way to being cleared, and relations should return to normal and friendly . . . However, siding with the Soviets is indicative of weakness. At the same time, opposing the Soviets is completely unacceptable. We don't want to be seen as dependent or regarded as being in the Soviet camp. And if we do not improve our relations with them it is as if we have severed our agreement

[320] "Iraq-USSR: A Downturn in Relations," CIA National Foreign Assessment Center Intelligence Memorandum, February 1980, CIA CREST, Doc. 0001255354-1, 3.
[321] "Saddam and Senior Military Officials Discussing Arms Imports and Other Issues Related to the Iran-Iraq War," undated (c. late 1983–early 1984), SH-SHTP-A-000-627, reproduced in Woods et al., *The Saddam Tapes*, 142.
[322] David B. Ottaway, "Iraq Hardens War Aims, Seeks to Dismember Iran: Iraq Toughens Position on War with Iran Bitter at Tehran's Refusal to Seek Peace, Baghdad Aims to Divide Enemy," *The Washington Post*, April 19, 1981; Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 233.

> with them. Never mind, there is room for improving the atmosphere and returning to good relations like they were before.[323]

In private and in public, Iraq continued to signal to the Soviets that it was not concerned about the effect of their embargo on Iraq's ability to prosecute the war. Primakov recalled a meeting with Tariq Aziz in March 1981 in which Aziz "made this quite abstract, almost cryptic comment: 'We have settled the question of sourcing arms for Iraq. But the time has come when we need an answer to another question: will the limited [arms] supplies from the Soviet Union supplement those from our other source or the other way round?'"[324] Primakov interpreted this as an indication that Iraq was anticipating the United States would soon provide military supplies, but Aziz could have been referring to almost any other country as the "other source," with France the most likely candidate.

Even after Moscow agreed to lift the embargo in June 1981, the Iraqis remained suspicious and dissatisfied with the Soviets. To their mind, the "quantity and perhaps quality" of arms received in 1981 hardly made up for ten months of embargo.[325] More importantly, the Soviets' continued professions of neutrality rankled; "as one Iraqi official put it: 'The Soviets are straddling the fence, and it's unpardonable."[326] Tariq Aziz, in an interview with a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, wryly stated, "The Soviet role is the great mystery of this war."[327] Finally, the Soviet dam burst in summer 1982, and Iraq began receiving the tanks, jets, anti-aircraft missiles, and other systems it had been requesting.[328]

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[323] "Saddam and Iraqi Officials Discussing the King Fahad Initiative, Relations with the USSR, and Perceptions of other Middle Eastern Countries," 3 October 1981 (SH-SHTP-A-000-711), reproduced in Woods et al., *The Saddam Tapes*, 140.s
[324] Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs*, 312.
[325] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 237.
[326] Quoted in Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 237. Original quote in U.S. News and World Report, May 3, 1982.
[327] Karen Elliott House, "Iraq Says Goal Is to Curb Khomeini," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 29, 1982.
[328] Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 242.

3.7. The Final Countdown

As with everything else he has done in his life, Saddam Hussein explained the purpose of his arms programme in a succinct and final way: 'No country which relies on importing weapons is completely independent.'[329]

In this chapter, I have sought to explain why and how Iraq reacted to a series of arms curtailments over the second half of the twentieth century. Throughout its modern history, Iraq faced the client's dilemma of minimizing risks associated with dependence without forgoing the potential rewards a patron can provide. Iraq's experiences and choices clearly demonstrate the limitations associated with the two main schools of thought on dependence in asymmetrical bilateral relations. For many years, Iraq remained dependent on the Soviet Union, despite Moscow's occasional reluctance or outright curtailment of arms transfers, in contravention of the "risks outweigh rewards" school, which would have expected Iraq to reduce dependence at all costs. But Iraq learned the hard way that outside suppliers may not be available to save the day in the event of an embargo, especially if it begins mid-war. Iraq therefore sacrificed a degree of operational and logistical coherence and simplicity in favor of ensuring no single outside power could act as a check on Iraqi ambitions.

Bringing these perspectives together into my theory of strategic response, I have shown that Iraq's choice of response to distinct periods of arms curtailment was driven by two overarching factors. First, Iraqi leaders considered whether their patron could be relied upon to protect Iraq's interests. Second, Iraq had to consider whether there were any viable third parties that could meet its military needs in the requisite timeframe. Table 3.2 summarizes these variables for the periods discussed in this chapter.

[329] Quoted in Aburish, *The Politics of Revenge*, 129.

Patron	Curtailment Periods	Viable Outside Option	Patron Type	Expectation for Strategy	Strategy Selected	Support for Theory
US, UK	July 1958 onward	Yes	Fair-weather Friend	Diversify	Diversify	Strong
USSR	Feb. 1963 - Nov. 1963	No	Staunch Supporter	Acquiesce	Acquiesce	Strong but over-determined
USSR	July 1968 - Jan. 1970	Yes, for advanced aircraft only	Staunch Supporter	Bargain	Bargain	Strong
USSR	Jan. 1970 - Oct. 1971	No	Staunch Supporter	Endure	Endure	Strong
USSR	1974 - 1975	No (immediate) Yes (longer-term)	Fair-weather Friend	Endure / Diversify	Endure / Diversify	Strong
USSR	1980 - 1982	Yes	Fair-weather Friend	Diversify	Endure and Bargain	Medium

Table 3.2 Summary of Curtailment Episodes with Strategy Selection Expectations and Outcomes

4. Pakistan, 1947–1970: The Triangular Tightrope

From the moment of independence, Pakistan faced overwhelming structural problems. The new state's territory was divided between West Pakistan and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), with 1,200 miles of India in between. In theory Pakistan should have inherited some of the administrative capacity of the British colonial government, but in practice the chaos and violence of partition made establishing a new government in Karachi extremely difficult. The under-resourced government faced an almost insuperable list of immediate responsibilities, as historian Paul McGarr relates: "Dividing British India's financial and physical assets, settling refugee property claims, deciding how to distribute vital irritation water, demarcating borders, establishing ground rules for economic interaction, and above all, overcoming the emotional bitterness caused by partition were thorny and intractable tasks."[330] In a report shortly after independence, the U.S. embassy in Karachi remarked, "The difficulties with which the new Dominion government of Pakistan was confronted in August were increased manifold in September and assumed such proportions as to threaten the very existence of the new state."[331]

India was, of course, Pakistan's greatest fear. India's leaders, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru, had not welcomed the idea of a separate Muslim state. India saw itself as the only rightful successor to the British Raj, and, in the Pakistani view, it would not rest until it had rectified the mistake of partition. Pakistan's leaders were firmly convinced that India had sought its demise as a sovereign state since independence; in his autobiography, Ayub Khan wrote, "Her aim was to cripple us at birth."[332] The 1971 War, when India aided the secessionist movement in West

[330] Paul M. McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945 - 1965* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19.
[331] Quoted in McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 18, citing telegram from U.S. Embassy Karachi to State Department, October 27, 1947.
[332] Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 1967), 48.

Pakistan and helped establish an independent Bangladesh, made the threat seem all the more pressing and existential.

In such circumstances, it is natural that Pakistan would seek a patron that could provide financial and military assistance, but it struggled to find a patron that it could rely on politically and materially—in other words, a staunch supporter. While Britain was initially a candidate for that position, a series of disappointments led Pakistan to lose faith in Britain's ability to deal even-handedly with its two former dominions. The United States eventually stepped into the role, at first reluctantly and later with greater enthusiasm, but it refused to provide a security guarantee against India. When it became clear that the United States's support was conditional and limited, Pakistan looked to China. The two countries' preferences vis-à-vis India were generally compatible, and Pakistan came to see China as a much more reliable partner. At the same time, Pakistan recognized that China had technological and financial problems of its own, and might not always be able to supply what Pakistan needed when it needed it. So, despite the United States' inconsistency, Pakistan sought to maintain its relationship with the Americans without giving in to American demands.

As with Iraq, the history of Pakistan provides illustrations of the causal mechanisms underpinning my theory of client strategic response to arms curtailments. Pakistan initially sought to demonstrate its loyalty to the United States as a way of overcoming America's hesitation to sell arms to a poor country in a volatile region that was of minimal importance to the United States. When the United States instituted an embargo during the 1965 war, Pakistan's sense of betrayal was intense, and it turned to China for the tanks they needed to prosecute the war. But China could not supply Pakistan with sufficient materiel and lacked the most advanced technologies, so Pakistan could not write off the Americans entirely. In the subsequent years,

Pakistan used the prospect of purchases from the Soviet Union as a bargaining chip to induce the Americans to soften their stance. But because Pakistan had internalized the knowledge that it could never truly rely on the United States for assistance in a war against India, it continued to acquire a variety of weapons from China and France to hedge against future U.S. curtailments.

The Pakistan case offers important structural differences from the Iraq case that support my contention that variables like shared polity type, economic orientation, and natural resources, while important, are not primary determinants of client strategies or client preferences regarding their patron. Whereas Iraq aligned with the Soviet Union, Pakistan took part in numerous U.S.-led alliances and partnerships, offering an opportunity to explore how clients of the Western states experienced curtailment. In Pakistan, we also see that the absence of natural resources or other foreign exchange-generating exports can limit the number of viable third-party suppliers a client might have; Pakistan relied in large part on the generosity of its arms suppliers to meet its defense needs, and was therefore unable to attract as many potential sellers as Iraq. But poverty need not prevent a client from finding any viable suppliers: by virtue of its location and geography, Pakistan was a desirable client for several suppliers and was often able to negotiate favorable deals.

The Pakistan case also offers an opportunity to investigate how the public and private aspects of arms curtailments do not always align, and how this can drive client behavior that might otherwise seem puzzling. Formally, the U.S. embargo that was levied in 1965 was not rescinded until a decade later. During that time, however, the way the United States interpreted and implemented this embargo varied. Moreover, this variation did not always occur in tandem with the overall state of the relationship; even after Pakistan had assisted the United States in

establishing relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), the U.S. embargo remained in place, with only minor exceptions.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses Pakistan's relationship with Britain in the wake of independence, when Britain's unreliability led Pakistan to diversify its arms imports and seek patronage from the United States. The second section addresses the United States' arms embargo during 1965 India-Pakistan War. I show how Pakistan's uncertainty about the United States led Pakistan to pursue two response strategies. First, Pakistan sought to diversify its arms imports through supplies from China. Second, Pakistan used the prospect of turning to the Soviet Union for weapons to induce the United States to source replacement tanks on Pakistan's behalf—a questionably legal activity under the United States' own embargo, which remained in place until 1975.

4.1. From British Colony to America's "Most Allied Ally"

Pakistan and India achieved independence not through violent overthrow, as in Iraq, but through decades of persistent efforts to induce the British to relinquish control voluntarily. After World War II, an exhausted Britain recognized that it no longer had the resources to administer such a large and fractious territory. A deadline of June 1948 was set for the transfer power of to an independent India, and in March 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten was dispatched as the last viceroy of British India. On June 3, Mountbatten announced in a radio address that negotiations to preserve the unity of India had failed; the country was to be partitioned, with a new British withdrawal date of August 1947.

Over the summer, many complex decisions were made in a rush. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a lawyer with no experience of the region, drew the new national borders in six weeks. Mountbatten addressed himself to the disposition of over 500 princely states that existed in a

patchwork amid British-controlled territory, successfully cajoling most that lay within what would become sovereign India to accede to India.

At midnight on August 14, 1947, India and Pakistan became independent countries, and British rule ended in South Asia. From the moment of its independence, Pakistan saw India as an acute, overwhelming threat to its sovereignty and security. The explosion of communal, often sadistic violence during the mass migration of partition immediately poisoned relations between the two countries.

4.1.1. The Final British Straw

The disposition of the princely states that had not been won over by Mountbatten—Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Kashmir—further compounded their enmity. The former two had Muslim rulers with majority-Hindu populations, and their geography suggested accession to India was inevitable (see map in Figure 4.1).[333] By contrast, Kashmir's population was majority Muslim, but its ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, was not. Geographically and topographically, Kashmir could plausibly have been appended to either state. Demographically, Kashmir could potentially have been divided along religio-ethnic lines, as had been done in the Punjab; the areas to the north and west were predominantly Muslim, while the areas to the south and east were predominantly Hindu.[334] Maharaja Singh initially refused to make any decisions about the future of his state. In the fall of 1947, several weeks of escalating violence instigated by tribesmen from Pakistan and Afghanistan forced the issue, and Singh formally acceded his state to India on October 24, 1947.

[333] Junagadh decided its affiliation through a plebiscite, while Hyderabad received a one-year deferral of its decision, only to be seized by the Indian army in September 1948.
[334] This is not to suggest that the partition of Kashmir would have been an easy or optimal solution, or that it would have forestalled future contestation over the territory.

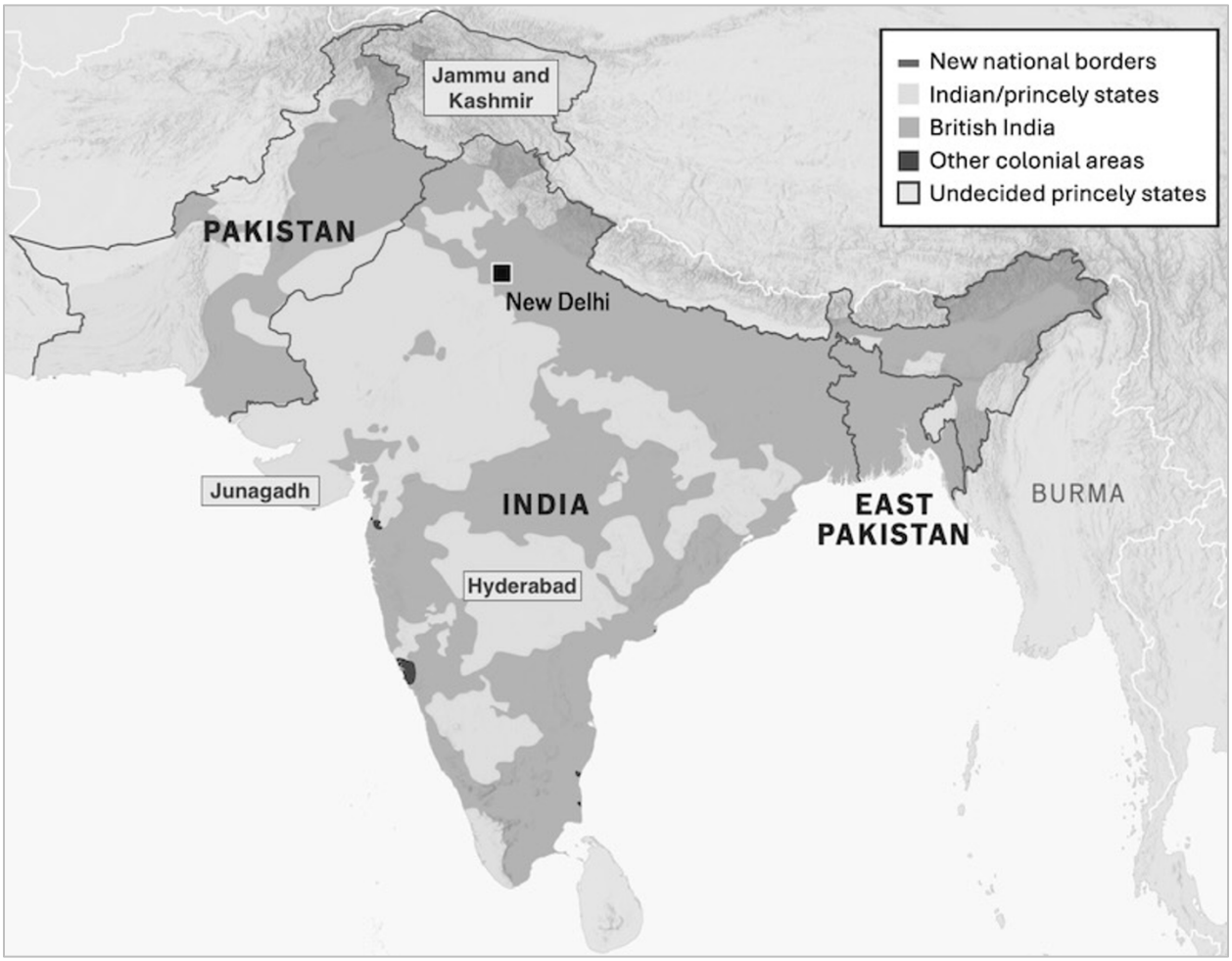


Figure 4.1 Map of Post-Independence India and Pakistan, with Princely States

SOURCE: "A short history of India in eight maps," The Economist, April 12, 2024, citing "Mountbatten's report on the last Viceroyalty: 22 March–15 August 1947," by Lord Mountbatten of Burma and Lionel Carter.

Pakistan had been suspicious of Britain's impartiality before the trouble in Kashmir; afterwards, Pakistan was fully convinced that Britain was on India's side. Lord Mountbatten shared a personal friendship with Nehru, and Pakistan had long suspected him of favoritism in the process of independence and partition.[335] After independence, Nehru had invited

[335] McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 16–17.

Mountbatten to remain in India as its first Governor-General. Now, Mountbatten directed the Indian army to Kashmir to reestablish order and gain control over the territory for India.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Governor-General of Pakistan, was incensed by the deployment of the Indian army, and wanted to send Pakistani troops to Kashmir at once. But his order to Sir Douglas Gracey, acting as Pakistan's Commander-in-Chief in General Frank Messervy's absence, went unheeded. Gracey's loyalty to Pakistan was tempered by his allegiance to the British supreme commander, Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck, who oversaw all British forces in India and Pakistan. When Auchinleck heard of Jinnah's plans, he flew to Karachi to tell Jinnah in no uncertain terms that no British officers would be involved in such an action. If this order were defied, all British officers would be withdrawn from Pakistan's service.[336] The presence of the Indian army, which needed no British officers to carry out its mission, and the absence of the Pakistani army, made it unlikely that the Maharaja's accession would be overturned.

It is unclear whether the Pakistan army would have been able to do much to reverse the tides in Kashmir in 1947. The separation of the British Indian Army into two distinct forces had been a hurried affair, and the new Pakistani army had emerged at a severe disadvantage against the new Indian army. Along with the inherent challenges associated with the noncontiguous territory of West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Pakistan lacked much of the infrastructure and capabilities necessary for the operation of a military. Most military sites and supplies had been located in the south and east, where they had been constructed to support the fight against Japan during World War II. West Pakistan, where the new government would be located, had been provisioned and garrisoned for low-level warfare against the tribes of the Northwest Frontier and lacked bases, supply depots, and manufacturing capacity. The only

[336] Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, 2nd ed. (Lancer, 1999), 18.

significant military installations it inherited were the Army's Staff College and the Army Service Corps School. Of the elements that comprised the British Indian Army, Pakistan was allotted eight of the twenty-nine infantry regiments; six of the twenty armored units; and eight of the forty-eight artillery regiments. In terms of manpower, Pakistan received the thirty percent of the British Indian Army's 400,000 soldiers that were Muslim. Only two regiments, the Baluch and Frontier Force Regiments, would be transferred as near-complete units, however; the remainder would have to be reconstituted on arrival. In effect, the Pakistan military found itself starting from square one.

The division of the army's weapons and materiel, which had not begun until early October, was even more haphazard, and Pakistan was entirely reliant on India's sense of fairness and honor to provide its allotment from the British Indian Army's storehouses. Pakistan expected to receive "170,000 tons of equipment and stores… in 300 trainloads from India." In the end, however, "only three railway wagons arrived, and these contained either obsolete items or rubbish."[337] The problem was so acute that C-in-C General Messervy flew back to London to request additional materiel from Britain's store of war surplus items.[338] Pakistan also requested $510 million of military aid from the United States, which had supplied British India with equipment during World War II. President Truman declined to offer grants or credits, though some arms were sold for cash before the United States embargoed arms to both India and Pakistan in March.[339]

By May 1948, Pakistan's army was in marginally better shape, and Jinnah finally succeeded in sending regular troops to Kashmir, where the Indian army had been fighting

[337] Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army*, 4.
[338] Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army*, 5.
[339] Dennis Kux, *Disenchanted Allies: The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 44.

tribesmen and Kashmiri Muslims since October. Over the summer it became clear that neither state had the military power to force a conclusive end to the war. Throughout the year, Britain worked feverishly to promote a negotiated settlement to the problem of Kashmir under the auspices of the United Nations. The first Kashmir war concluded with a ceasefire on January 1, 1949, with troops arrayed along a temporary border that became the Line of Control.

Despite Britain's slapdash exit from the subcontinent, it could nevertheless have remained Pakistan's patron had it not lost Pakistan's trust in its impartiality. There were many reasons Pakistan might have chosen to repair relations with Britain, not least of which was that its military was familiar with British equipment, doctrine, and training. Furthermore, in the late 1940s, there were no viable alternatives. Among the possible patron states, only Britain had a vested interest in maintaining peace and security in Southern Asia. The United States was uninterested in taking a leadership role in the region; Truman and Eisenhower relied on Britain to retain its position as the primary supplier of arms, equipment, and training for both India and Pakistan. Joseph Stalin saw the new states as nothing more than puppets of the imperialist West and wanted nothing to do with them. When Truman invited Nehru to Washington in 1949, Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan attempted to arrange a visit to the Soviet Union "as a way to show the West not to take their country for granted."[340] The visit never happened; the Soviets would not agree on dates and eventually indicated the visit was indefinitely postponed.

Yet Pakistan's sense of disappointment and even betrayal grew with every British slight, real or imagined, and Pakistani leaders saw Britain as a fair-weather friend at best. The numerous structural weaknesses and threats facing Pakistan had created a political culture that prioritized defensive considerations above all others. Given the disparities between the Indian and Pakistani

[340] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 32.

militaries, Pakistan saw Britain's attempt to maintain overall balance between India and Pakistan when considering arms transfers as an intentional effort to keep Pakistan weak and vulnerable to Indian predation.

4.1.2. Joining Team America

Britain's refusal to provide sufficient support led Pakistan to look elsewhere for the political and military resources it needed to deter India. If that required paying higher prices, so be it: in one radio broadcast, Liaquat Ali Khan said that defense "dominates all other government activities. [Pakistan] will not grudge any amount on the defence [sic] of our country."[341] Despite the United States' desire to remain at arm's length from South Asia and, especially, the Kashmir conflict, Pakistani officials were persistent in their requests for military assistance. The Truman administration noted the requests, but in light of the Korean War and the need to bolster NATO nations' defenses, equipping Pakistan was hardly a strategic priority. In a meeting two days after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia George McGhee told his Pakistani interlocutors that the United States "was already heavily committed to supply military equipment for several parts of the world." McGhee chided Pakistan for failing to send troops to Korea, and indicated that he simply was not sure what benefit the United States would receive from supplying arms to Pakistan, which, in the U.S. view, did not need protection against either an internal security problem or an outside aggressor.[342] One Pakistani former official replied that "this was no time to dwell upon mistakes. In the last three years both countries have acted politely to each other. Now Pakistan was taking the initiative and putting forth its requirements."[343] These themes were echoed a month later in a meeting between

[341] Quoted in McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 21, citing News Chronicle, 9 October 1948.
[342] Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (McGhee), October 18, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, Volume VI, Part 2: Asia and the Pacific, Document 497.
[343] Ibid.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Zafrullah Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which Khan suggested that it was unlikely that Pakistan would ever be on the Soviet side "in the event of trouble." But, Khan warned, Pakistan's ability to be "openly and militarily" on the U.S. side was a function of the support Pakistan could expect "if it should be attacked by India."[344] No conclusion was reached, but the Pakistani Ambassador sent an additional five notes in the subsequent five weeks requesting a U.S. decision on the release of equipment.[345]

Pakistan did not make much progress in obtaining arms from the United States until the Eisenhower administration. As part of an extended tour of the Middle East and South Asia, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited India and Pakistan in May 1953. Dulles came home a convert: he was "tremendously impressed by the martial and religious qualities of the Pakistanis,"[346] and believed "those fellows [will] fight any communist invasion with their bare fists if they have to."[347] Dulles pushed for a Middle East defensive pact that would include Pakistan as an anchor against communist advancement in the Middle East.

Pakistan had finally found a high-level champion in the U.S. government. Through the remainder of 1953, Pakistani officials and military officers continued to advance their cause through visits to Washington and through invitations to U.S. officials to visit Pakistan. On an outing to inspect U.S. Army facilities, Pakistan Army Chief Ayub Khan unexpectedly pressed for meetings with State Department officials, where he told Assistant Secretary of State Henry Byroade, "For Christ's sake, I didn't come over here to look at barracks" before enumerating the

[344] Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State, November 17, 1951, *FRUS,* 1951, Vol. VI, Pt. 2, Doc. 502.
[345] Editorial Note, *FRUS,* 1951, Vol. VI, Pt. 2, Doc. 503.
[346] Memorandum of Discussion at the 147th Meeting of the National Security Council, June 1, 1953, *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Volume IX, Part 1, The Near and Middle East, Document 137.
[347] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 56, citing Dulles testimony, June 2, 1953, U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Selected Executive Session Hearings, 10, 96.

reasons to provide support to Pakistan.[348] Recalling the incident later, Byroade summarized Ayub's position:

> Pakistan had the type of manpower to make one of the finest armies in the world. They were, however, ill equipped, having been left with little more than sawed off British parade pieces. He said that if we would equip his army, cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S. would reach a height and warmth hardly precedented anywhere in the world.

Pakistan also used the press strategically as a forum to make its case, hinting strongly that the United States and Pakistan were working toward forming a military alliance. Leery of provoking India, U.S. officials demurred when asked by reporters about these.[349] U.S. reticence bought little; Nehru's reaction was "emotionally extreme."[350] He warned that it would be "a matter of grave consequence to [India]… if vast armies are built up in Pakistan with the aid of American money."[351] He suggested, furthermore, that this would lead "not only to war, even world war, but a step which will bring war right to our doors."[352] Nevertheless, Pakistan's strategy was fairly effective; during a brief visit to Karachi, the Governor-General told Vice President Nixon, "Were the U.S. not to grant aid now, especially in view of all the publicity, it would be like taking a poor girl for a walk and then walking out on her, leaving her only with a bad name."[353]

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[348] Telegram from Ambassador Byroade to Secretary of State Kissinger, Subj: Bhutto and U.S. Arms Policy (Islamabad 10832), December 15, 1973, CIA CREST, Doc. LOC-HAK-203-120-2.
[349] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 58.
[350] Telegram from Byroade to Kissinger (Islamabad 10832).
[351] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 58.
[352] Nehru speech in Bangalore, January 3, 1954, quoted in "Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office from U.K. High Commissioner in India," January 4, 1954, British National Archives, 1954 US Military Aid to Pakistan, 1953–54, Folder 1 (FO 371/112314).
[353] Memorandum of Conversation with the Ambassador in Pakistan (Hildreth), December 7, 1953, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XII, Doc. 1143.

The British also opposed to the idea of the United States supplying weapons to Pakistan. They cautioned that to do so would upset the ongoing negotiations over Kashmir, which had waxed and waned since the 1949 ceasefire. Britain nevertheless realized their warning would fall on deaf ears. The United States had lost confidence in Britain as its agent in the region, concluding that Britain was too pro-Indian.[354] An internal British Foreign Officer report summarized the situation quite bluntly:

> In general matters have so developed, partly at any rate owing to India's extraordinarily stupid tactics, that neither India, Pakistan nor the United States can retreat (even if they wished to) and there is little room for manoeuvre. The United States have told us that they think that it would now be difficult in any circumstances for the U.S. Government to withhold aid from Pakistan, and are pressing ahead rapidly with a new approach.[355]

The "new approach" was a military pact between Turkey and Pakistan that would ensure the security of the Middle East and, not coincidentally, provide the United States with a domestically defensible reason for expending resources on Pakistan. After obtaining initial concurrence from Turkey and Pakistan for this concept, Eisenhower administration formally approved military aid to Pakistan in January 1954. As one *New York Times* reporter put it, it seemed that the United States had decided that Pakistan's potential, unspecified role in the defense of the Middle East was more valuable than "preserving pleasant relations with Mr. Nehru."[356] Eisenhower nevertheless sent a note to Nehru promising that "if our aid to any

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[354] McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 41–43.
[355] Internal memorandum submitted to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations regarding U.S. Military Aid to Pakistan, enclosed in letter from R.W.D. Fowler to J.E. Cable, January 4, 1954, Folder: US Military Aid to Pakistan, 1953-54, Folder 1; FO 371/112314; Foreign Office; Section I: 1947-1964; Foreign Office Files for India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, 1947-1980, accessed through AM Archives Direct, 34.
[356] Dana Adams Schmidt, "Pakistan to Get Arms; Middle East Defense Is Considered More Important Than Indian Objections," *The New York Times*, February 14, 1954.

country, including Pakistan, is misused and directed against another in aggression, I will undertake… appropriate action both within and without the United Nations to thwart such aggression."[357]

With formal approval in place, the United States began providing military assistance to Pakistan. The United States was hardly generous at first, and its initial proposal of a one-time $30 million arms package was met with outrage and despair. Pakistan's ambassador to Washington described General Ayub as "dejected" and "broken-hearted" by this paltry sum, and indicated that Ayub might be reconsidering the partnership.[358] Pakistan nevertheless signed a mutual defense assistance agreement with the United States in May 1954. An October meeting between Eisenhower and Prime Minister Bogra resulted in a secret aide-memoire that promised a significant increase in Pakistan's allocation.[359]

Yet arms were so slow to arrive that even the U.S. Ambassador in Karachi was moved to intervene. In a strongly-worded cable exhorting his colleagues to pick up the pace, Ambassador Hildreth pointed out that successfully meeting the projected delivery schedule was critical to maintaining Pakistan's goodwill and cooperation. The delays Pakistan was experiencing, in Hildreth's view, "seem to amount to a repudiation of a written commitment entered into at the Governmental level."[360]

In the face of the United States' foot-dragging, Pakistan's strategy was to demonstrate its loyalty and support in any way it could. Pakistan became a vocal supporter of U.S. positions in multilateral fora, including during the 1955 Bandung summit, where Bogra accused the Soviets

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[357] See Walter H. Waggoner, "President Grants Arms Aid to Pakistan, Assures India," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1954.
[358] Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director, Office of South Asian Affairs (Smith), August 6, 1954, *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Volume XI, Part 2, Africa and South Asia, Document 1158.
[359] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 68–69.
[360] Despatch from the Embassy in Pakistan to the Department of State, August 26, 1955, *FRUS,* 1955–1957, Volume VIII, South Asia, Document 198.

of being imperialists.[361] Pakistan joined U.S.-led security arrangements, becoming a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and a member of the Baghdad Pact (later the Central Treaty Organization, or CENTO) the following year. Even as it signed, Pakistani leaders recognized that these alliances were unlikely to be of direct benefit to Pakistan's own security. For example, Dulles specifically made sure that SEATO would deal only with communist aggression, despite Pakistani objections. Joining these pacts was intended to signal how committed Pakistan was to Western causes. As Pakistan's foreign minister explained to his countrymen, "Even if the treaty did not give Pakistan security against an attack by India, the country would be better off with the Americans if it joined SEATO."[362] Reflecting on this period later, Ayub Khan wrote, "Thus Pakistan was associated with the United States through not one, but four mutual security agreements. In this sense, she was sometimes regarded as 'America's most allied ally in Asia.'"[363]

Pakistan's loyalty strategy was put to the test again in 1957, as the U.S. National Security Council met to reconsider its South Asia policy. The Eisenhower administration had begun to question what benefit the United States received from its alliance with Pakistan. During Prime Minister Suhrawardy's three-week official visit, his request for the early delivery of B-57 bombers was rebuffed, and his complaints about U.S. economic assistance to India went unheeded. Pakistan publicly decried the United States' intransigence, arguing that foreign aid was funding India's military expansion to the detriment of Pakistan. Privately, however, Pakistan gave its approval for the United States to fly U-2 reconnaissance missions from Pakistan and to build a secret intelligence facility at Badaber, near Peshawar. From this site, the CIA would be

[361] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 71.
[362] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 72.
[363] Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 130.

able to collect highly prized signals intelligence from Soviet missile tests, as well as other communications.[364]

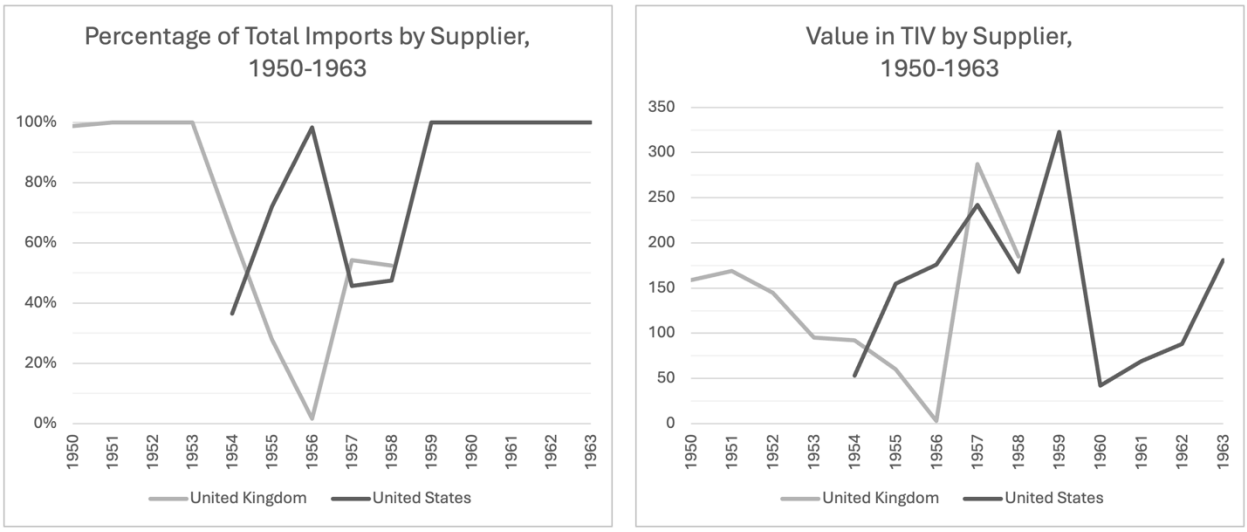


Figure 4.2 Annual Pakistani Arms Imports by Supplier, 1950–1963

SOURCE: SIPRI Arms Transfer Register

NOTE: "TIV" (Trend Indicator Value) is a SIPRI-derived measurement that represents the transfer of military resources. It is not a measure of financial value; rather, it provides a measure of resource transfer that is comparable over time and across contexts.

In October 1958, following a coup and the establishment of martial law, Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army General Ayub Khan stepped into the role of President of Pakistan.[365] Ayub was well-respected in both Karachi and Washington as a competent administrator, as well as being personally "very likeable," according to Eisenhower; he was "an extrovert, outgoing personality, who speaks well [and] loves sports (cricket, horseback riding)."[366] Ayub was quick

[364] McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 75–76; Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 90–96.
[365] In 1956, Pakistan's new constitution replaced the position of prime minister with that of president. The prime minister at the time, Major General Iskander Mirza, assumed the office of president upon its creation.
[366] Editorial Note, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Volume XV, South and Southeast Asia, Document 377.

to reassure the United States that "recent developments have, if anything, strengthened Pakistan's faithfulness to its alliances."[367]

The following year, Pakistan requested F-104 supersonic fighter jets from the United States, along with Sidewinder missiles to equip its existing B-57 bombers and Nike-Ajax surface-to-air missile systems. These were needed, Ayub claimed, to counter the threat posed by increased foreign overflights, which were driven by Soviet, Chinese, and Indian suspicion of the U.S. facility near Peshawar. At the time, the United States was trying to cut back on military aid globally, and Pakistan was an easier target than Vietnam, South Korea, or Taiwan. The United States were disinclined to offer the F-104s or the Nikes, as both would be beyond the "gradual" and "limited" modernization the administration envisaged.[368] The Sidewinders alone represented a significant technological advancement for the region, but these were nevertheless offered in the hope that it would satisfy Ayub.[369]

Pakistan continued to press for the F-104s, but remained warm and friendly in public engagements. Ayub pulled out all the stops for Eisenhower's visit in December 1959, the first by a U.S. president while in office. Ayub personally met Eisenhower at Karachi airport. "The two leaders drove the fifteen miles into downtown Karachi cheered by 750,000 flag-waving Pakistanis. They then shifted into an open horse-drawn state carriage for the final, mile-long ride through jammed city streets to reach Ayub's official residence."[370]

Pakistan's strategy of loyalty and cooperation was on display again during the meetings between the two presidents. Reflecting on a recent visit to Iran and Turkey, Ayub emphasized

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[367] Telegram from the Embassy in Pakistan to the Department of State, October 31, 1958, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 334.
[368] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Pakistan, January 26, 1960, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 378.
[369] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Pakistan, February 19, 1960, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 379.
[370] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 107–8.

the importance of the CENTO countries, which were "all prepared to fight against communism" as a "shield for the Middle East and Africa and for South Asia." The problem, he reflected, was that they had no means to equip themselves for the defense of the area, and no one but the United States could come to their assistance." The CENTO forces, he said, should be modernized and expanded; as it was, the three countries operated a haphazard mixture of equipment, and "it was difficult to operate an army in these conditions." For his own country, Ayub wanted "a greater degree of uniformity" and wanted to "go on a completely American basis." Eisenhower assured Ayub that "he had no question that in Pakistan and Turkey we had sturdy allies" and promised to "give the matter more thought."[371] Pakistan had to wait three more months for a response, during which internal deliberations appeared likely to result in a firm denial. In the end, however, the United States authorized the transfer of ten F-104s in light of Pakistan's "special military requirements."[372]

In the decade between 1949 and 1959, Pakistan reduced its arms acquisitions from Britain and replaced them with supplies from the United States (see Figure 4.2). In line with my theoretical expectations, when faced with insufficient supply from Britain in the late 1940s, Pakistan chose to endure and await a more favorable negotiating environment rather than acquiesce to British policy preferences, in no small part because it believed Britain was an unreliable patron. In 1949, there was no viable outside option for Pakistan, but by 1954, the United States' fear of communism taking hold in the Middle East gave Pakistan the opening it needed to replace Britain as its patron. Pakistan's belief that the United States was a staunch

[371] Memorandum of a Conversation, December 8, 1959, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 375.
[372] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Pakistan, March 3, 1960, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 380. Kux posits that the favorable decision was "the price the United States had to pay" for the continued use of the Badaber facilities for intelligence gathering and U-2 flights. Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 112.

supporter was reflected in its decision to demonstrate loyalty to Washington and acquiesce to its requests when faced with an insufficient supply of weapons.



Figure 4.3 President Eisenhower and President Ayub Khan during carriage ride in Karachi
SOURCE: AP Photo

4.2. Walking the Triangular Tightrope

In 1965, India and Pakistan went to war again. A spate of skirmishes over disputed territory in the Rann of Kutch early in 1965 had resulted in an agreement to settle the border through arbitration by the International Court of Justice—a important political victory for Pakistan. Coming off this success, and believing the Indian military would be unable to react to a quick military campaign in Kashmir, Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar on August 5th. Pakistani soldiers were disguised as locals and sent to stir up Kashmiri resistance and ignite a

rebellion against Indian rule. They were discovered almost immediately, and a series of offensives and counteroffensives led to an assault by India on September 6 across the international border in Punjab.

Following India's attack, Pakistan made it clear that it expected "not only moral and diplomatic but tangible military support from allies and associates."[373] In a cable summarizing his meeting that same day with Ayub and Foreign Minister Zulfikar Bhutto, Ambassador McConaughy quoted Ayub: "You can warn us and India too, but you cannot avoid responsibility. You are on trial. You cannot hedge or hide from this obligation."[374] McConaughy pointed out that Pakistan had initiated hostilities and, in contravention of promises made, used American military equipment to do so, but Ayub brushed these concerns aside while Bhutto passed over an aide-memoire invoking the 1959 defense agreement signed between the United States and Pakistan.[375] In the text of that agreement, the United States committed to "take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as may be mutually agreed upon" in the event of attack.[376] The U.S. view, however, was that this commitment had been made as part of a set of agreements signed bilaterally with each of the CENTO countries—Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey—and thus only extended to instances of communist aggression. Pakistan's leaders had understood this at the time—then-Foreign Minister Qadir said it was "nothing new"[377]—but shorn of context, the agreement seemed like a broader promise of American protection.

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[373] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 161.
[374] Telegram from the Office in Pakistan to the Department of State, September 6, 1965, *FRUS,* 1964–1968, Volume XXV, South Asia, Document 187.
[375] Telegram from the Office in Pakistan to the Department of State, September 6, 1965, *FRUS,* 1964–1968, Vol. XXV, Doc. 187.
[376] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 102.
[377] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 102, citing Telegram 1677 from Karachi, January 16, 1959, *FRUS,* 1958–1960, Vol. XV, Doc. 341, fn. 4.

Pakistan was therefore stunned and outraged when the United States announced the suspension of military and economic aid to both India and Pakistan on September 8. The embargo was partly an attempt to prevent Congress from taking more drastic action, but it was in line with the Johnson administration's broader efforts to reduce American spending in South Asia. Nevertheless, such an embargo was particularly deleterious to Pakistan, which fielded primarily American weapons systems at the time. To make matters worse, it included weapons over which the United States retained re-export authority, meaning Pakistan could not request supplies from Iran, Turkey, or other U.S. allies without the U.S. approval. Bhutto told McConaughy that this decision, "[if] adhered to, would mean that Pak-U.S. relations could not be the same again… [This] decision [was] not an act of an ally and not even that of a neutral."[378]

The 'betrayal' of the 1965 War is often cited as the moment that Pakistan decided that the United States could never be trusted to defend Pakistan against India, but in reality, Pakistan's concerns about the United States' reliability as an ally had been mounting since Kennedy came to office in 1961. At the time, "it appeared [to Pakistan] that a clique of pro-Indian 'Harvard intellectuals' had seized control of American foreign policy."[379] Ayub warned the new administration that the United States needed to be careful to treat genuine allies better than countries like India, which accepted aid and offered scorn in return. If the United States continued to treat both equally, Afro-Asian nations would begin to question "whether the benefits of alignment with the West continued to outweigh its associated risks."[380]

As Ayub noted in his autobiography, it was the 1962 Sino-Indian War that led Pakistan "to a gradual and painful realization that as between India and Pakistan, the United States had

[378] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 162.
[379] McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 104.
[380] McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia*, 104–5.

chosen India."[381] During Ayub's first official visit as p resident to the United States in July 1961, he had asked Kennedy about reports that his administration was considering giving military aid to India, which would "force [Pakistan] out of the pacts and alliances and everything."[382] Kennedy said that the United States had no intention of doing so. If that were to change, he assured Ayub, "we would talk with Pakistan and see what was the best course of action."[383]

Sixteen months later, on October 20, 1962, Chinese forces advanced into disputed territory along the border with India. In a panic, Nehru frantically cast around for weapons from any country willing to send them immediately, stunning the United States and its Western allies with his apparent repudiation of nonalignment.[384] Before any supplies could be delivered, however, China declared a ceasefire. India had been soundly defeated within a month, in a war that played directly into the West's fears of an implacable, unstoppable 'Red China' on the move.

Given the geography of the situation, Pakistan saw no real threat to India from China, so it was especially painful to learn that, in contravention of Kennedy's promise, the United States offered military assistance to India without consulting its ally.[385] The United States did not even provide prior notification; a letter from Kennedy arrived after the decision had been conveyed to the Indians.[386] Pakistan saw this provision of military aid to India as an active decision to deprioritize Pakistan's security in favor of its arch enemy, which would invariably turn its increased military might against its weaker neighbor. In a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador in

[381] Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 139.
[382] Memorandum of Conversation; Subj: Kennedy-Ayub Talks, July 11, 1961, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Volume XIX, South Asia, Document 30.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (Basic Books, 2018), 251.
[385] The Sino-Indian War began during the Cuban missile crisis. Given the demands this placed on Kennedy's attention, the oversight is likely to have been unintentional.
[386] Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 145.

Islamabad, Ayub told him that the "patience of [the] Pakistani people… [is] not beyond limit." He saw the incident as a "demonstration [that] the US [was] not sympathetic with, nor understanding of Pakistan position and essential interests."[387] In his cable to the State Department, Ambassador McConaughy noted that "Ayub was restrained and calm although inwardly angered and upset… At no point did he threaten change of policy towards US or towards alliances but clearly he felt that Pakistan, and he personally, as friends of US had been let down by US."[388] The United States tried to reassure Pakistan that U.S. weapons would not be used against it, arguing that "all of our aid is for the purpose to defeat Chinese communist subversion."[389] "What [the United States] did not realize," Ayub wrote, "was that no government in Pakistan worth the name could have ignored the very real danger posed by India and allowed the security of the country to rest on flimsy assurances and paper guarantees."

After the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, Pakistan was desperate to replace lost equipment and shore up its defenses against India. Pakistan had lost almost one hundred Patton tanks in one battle, and it needed to replenish and, ideally, add to its stocks of main battle tanks and fighter aircraft. But the United States maintained its embargo. It was in no hurry to return to the previous level of military aid it had been providing to Pakistan, and the embargo provided an excuse to re-evaluate America's commitments and interests in South Asia more broadly. Congress was souring on military assistance as a way of incentivizing or coercing states into good behavior, particularly underdeveloped states that were heavily reliant on international assistance. It had enacted legislation, the Conte-Long and Symington amendments, that were

[387] Telegram from the Embassy in Pakistan to the Department of State, November 5, 1962, *FRUS,* 1961–1963, Vol. XIX, Doc. 191.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Statement by John F. Kennedy on November 2, 1962, quoted in Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 148.

designed to limit the extent to which the provision of U.S. foreign aid would allow governments to divert national resources away from economic development to weapons purchases.

Within the Johnson administration, there was some concern that maintaining the embargo could lead to an unrestrained arms race between India and Pakistan, spurred on by competition between the Soviet Union and China and abetted by European states willing to sell to anybody with the money to spend. Some officials believed that resuming sales would provide the United States with the leverage needed to compel an agreement between India and Pakistan on arms limitations. At the same time, the administration was grappling with the risk of India responding to China's 1964 nuclear test by developing its own nuclear weapons, even as negotiations over the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) were underway. Officials feared that resuming military aid to Pakistan might push India further towards nuclearization.

In responding to the 1965 embargo, Pakistan pursued two strategies, bargaining and diversification, that reflected its uncertainty about whether the United States should be seen as a fair-weather friend or as a staunch supporter that had temporarily gone astray. In his memoir, written shortly after the 1965 War, Ayub reflects at length on the ups and downs of Pakistan's relationship with the United States, and concludes that Pakistan's only option was to walk a "triangular tightrope," even if it meant fewer rewards. "If we cannot in an unlimited way identify ourselves with American interests," Ayub wrote, "we must learn to do with less than unlimited American assistance."[390]

4.2.1. Strategy 1: Diversify with China

Pakistan had been among the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China and establish formal diplomatic relations in 1950, though relations had soured over Pakistan's

[390] Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 119.

support for a United Nations resolution criticizing China's management of the revolt in Tibet. After the Sino-Indian War, however, the two countries formally resolved their outstanding border disputes, despite Washington's warnings that to do so came "perilously close to trafficking with [the] enemy."[391]

The frequency of visits between Chinese and Pakistani officials increased through the early 1960s. Zhou Enlai visited Pakistan in February 1964, the first visit by a Chinese premier in seven years. President Ayub and Foreign Minister Bhutto visited Beijing the following March, where they were met by nearly a million people.[392] The United States' protests and thinly-veiled threats continued as well. At Kennedy's funeral, President Johnson reportedly told Bhutto, "I have a teenage daughter and she goes out with her boyfriend. I don't care what she does with him behind my back, but I'll be damned if she does anything in front of me."

During the 1965 war, China privately encourage Pakistan to exercise restraint, but publicly it was an unflagging supporter, denouncing India as the aggressor. Premier Zhou Enlai and President Liu Shaoqi assured Pakistan that China would respond if India expanded the war to East Pakistan.[393] On September 17, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a demarche to the Indian charge d'affaires, threatening dire consequences if India did not immediately remove all men and material from the disputed border territory that China claimed.[394] It reiterated its 'ultimatum' three days later, prompting the UNSC to act quickly to pass the ceasefire resolution. China's support during the 1965 war thus established for Pakistan that China was an "all-weather friend."

After the war, Pakistan began to acquire a variety of weapons from China, including

[391] Quoted in Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 138.
[392] Ghulam Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations: A Historical Analysis* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 58.
[393] Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations*, 63.
[394] Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations*, 64.

MiG-19 aircraft and T-54 tanks.[395] The Johnson administration was sufficiently concerned about the prospect of Pakistan accepting Chinese arms that it modified its embargo slightly in March 1966 to allow Pakistan to obtain 'nonlethal' equipment. On a practical level, this modification was insufficient; Pakistan needed to replace major weapons systems. On a political level, Pakistan had come to the conclusion that it needed to minimize its dependence on the United States. China was the obvious alternative. Even if the weapons were inferior to those produced by America, the war had demonstrated the danger of dependence on one supplier.

Pakistan was generally unwilling to share information about its military supply relationship with China with the United States. Between 1966 and 1968, the State Department's bimonthly memos summarizing Indian and Pakistani arms procurement showed a higher level of uncertainty about China than other suppliers: estimates of Chinese items delivered are marked as approximate, and expectations about future deliveries are all "Uncertain."[396] Even when asked directly, Pakistan declined to volunteer information about their bilateral engagements and activities. When the U.S. Ambassador explained a new U.S. policy on arms sales, the Defense Ministry Director of Procurement and Purchases "did not reveal number of Chinese tanks acquired stating likewise he did not reveal to third parties statistics on American arms to Pakistan. However, he felt sure Embassy/MAAG had reasonably accurate figure already and added, 'The tanks are in Multan; go count them.'"[397]

Pakistan and China continued to exchange official delegations with some regularity through the late 1960s, "some publicized and some not." One intelligence report noted these

[395] Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 172.
[396] Indian Arms Procurement from the Soviet Bloc and Pakistani Acquisitions from Communist China, France, and Iran, Research Memorandum RNA-51, December 6, 1967, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder DEF 15 PAK 1-1-67; Box 1607; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[397] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Pakistan to Department of State (Rawalpindi 4451), May 25, 1967, Folder DEF 15 PAK 1-1-67; Box 1607; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

visits were illustrative of the "increasingly close military cooperation which exists between Peking and Rawalpindi. … Presumably, this latest group requested additional Chinese military assistance to add to the significant aid which Peking has already provided (since 1965 the Chinese have provided at least 160 T-59 medium tanks and 124 MIG-19 jet aircraft)."[398] The report continued:

> Apparently as a partial quid pro quo for Chinese assistance, Pakistan has recently shown a willingness to provide Peking with US-supplied aircraft technology, even when the release of such data violates the terms of acceptance. In July 1968 an intelligence source revealed that Chinese technicians had been allowed to examine US-provided F-104 aircraft at Pakistan's Sargodha Air Base and to collect F-104 spare parts and material samples which were taken back to China for analysis. Later, the same source reported that the Chinese were also allowed to take back a complete F-104 engine, including the internal guide vane part of the fuel control system. … Pakistan's willingness to pass on US technology may help to explain Peking's relative generosity to Pakistan.[399]

4.2.2. Strategy 2: Bargaining with America using Soviet arms

As with China, the pace of visits between Pakistan and the Soviet Union picked up, and in September 1967, President Ayub went to Moscow. The United States did not believe the Soviets were yet willing to provide major offensive weapons to the Pakistanis, but the prospect could not be wholly discounted.[400] The United States recognized that its embargo had given

[398] Pakistan and Communist China Strengthen Cooperation, Intelligence Note 944, December 4, 1968, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder POL 1 CHICOM-PAK; Box 1971; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Soviet Union to State Department, Subj: Pak Tank Purchase Request (Moscow 932)," Folder DEF 12-5 PAK 7-1-67; Box 1608; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA. During this period, US is determining whether it will approve sale of 100 M-47 tanks from a third country (Belgium, Italy, and Iran are the likely candidates at this point).

Pakistan little choice but to approach China for arms, but hoped it might yet forestall Soviet acquisitions.

In April 1967, the Johnson administration announced that it would begin allowing the acquisition of "lethal spares" and opened up the possibility of purchasing American-made weapons from third parties.[401] Pakistan requested 200 American-origin tanks, at minimum, to replace those lost in 1965. Concurrently, the United States' 10-year lease on the base at Peshawar was coming up for re-negotiation; if Pakistan did not approve an extension, the United States would have to vacate the base by July 1969. While the official policy was to treat the tank problem and the Peshawar problem as unconnected, the administration knew that, in practice and in the Pakistanis' view, they were inextricably linked.

An October 1967 meeting between Ambassador Oehlert and Pakistan's Defense Minister and Defense Secretary saw a push by the Pakistanis to sway the US to approving Pakistan's request for 200 tanks. Oehlert suggested information about the numbers and types of tanks received from China along with assurances that Pakistan would not seek additional tanks if 200 tanks were provided. Oehlert offered his own speculative interpretation of this approach:

> A. It is opening ploy in campaign to relate US military supply to Peshawar continuance. Although only tanks were mentioned it seems probable ante will be raised to encompass at least all pending requests for military supplies (including aircraft, artillery, rifles) and will be related to Pakistan's continuing requirements for lethal end items replacement and modernization to maintain desired military posture vis-a-vis India;

[401] Analytical Summary Prepared for the National Security Council Review Group, Subj: Military Supply Policy Toward South Asia, November 22, 1969, *FRUS,* 1969–1976, Volume E–7, Documents on South Asia, 1969–1972, Document 42.

B. Ayub returned empty handed from Russia with respect to USSR military equipment for GOP and reduced assistance for GOI, although possibility exists he obtained some assurances of help insufficient to Pak needs, and he wishes to see can be done with USG; and

C. Postponement of suggested discussion until Ayub's return from France indicates he wishes defer our conversation until he explores possibility of obtaining military equipment from France.[402]

Pakistan continued to increase its engagement with the Soviet Union. The Soviets seemed pleased by the prospect of reducing U.S. influence further, and both states sought to tweak the United States' nose when possible. For example, it was publicly announced on April 3, 1968 that Premier Alexei Kosygin would visit Pakistan later that month. Three days later, Pakistan gave its formal notice to the United States that the agreement for Peshawar would not be renewed.

As Pakistani-Soviet relations improved over the next two years, the U.S. government worked assiduously, and as quietly as it could, to help Pakistan acquire M-47 tanks from a third party. Italy and, by extension, West Germany, were approached first, followed by Belgium and then Turkey (Iran volunteered, but the United States discouraged this). The first two indicated willingness but eventually backed out due to domestic political pressures. Turkey also approved, but the deal was never concluded. As part of the tank deal, Pakistan agreed that it would not make major arms acquisition from any source without prior consultation with the United States.

In late April 1968, Premier Alexei Kosygin spent several days in Pakistan. This was the first visit of any high-level Soviet official to Pakistan, and the first time Ayub appeared in public

[402] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Pakistan to State Department for White House, Subj: Military Supply (Rawalpindi 1269), October 1, 1967, Folder DEF 12-5 PAK 7-1-67; Box 1608; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

for official duties since his heart attack in January.[403] With this visit, the U.S. began to grow concerned about the potential for Pakistan to acquire Soviet equipment:

> "At the top of the Pakistani agenda will undoubtedly be the subject of the Soviet supply of arms to India. …Except for a half-dozen MI-6 helicopters and some trucks, however, the Soviets have been unwilling to provide military equipment to Pakistan. Ayub can be expected to ask again for military aid, and this time Soviets may be prepared to offer at least a token quantity, perhaps of non-lethal equipment."[404]

The visit did not result in the public announcement of any major changes in Soviet arms supply policies, either in the form of reducing arms sent to India or offering to sell weapons to Pakistan, though they agreed to finance and provide technical assistance for a steel mill and a nuclear power plant in East Pakistan.[405]

Privately, however, the Pakistanis told the Americans a different story. One interlocutor, Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force Air Marshal Nur Khan, said that the Kosygin visit had been a "great success" though it was "properly being played in very low key." The Soviets had agreed to sell military hardware, including SU-7 combat aircraft. Nur Khan indicated that the PAF "still would prefer American F-4 phantoms or equivalent." Furthermore, Khan said, the time had come for a "frank talk between PAF and Americans regarding implications of military supply policy for future relations." As things stood, the PAF was already flying Chinese MiGs; adding Russian equipment would "cross [a] watershed." According to Nur Khan, "Arms

[403] Premier Kosygin to Begin First Visit to Pakistan April 17th, Intelligence Note 292, April 12, 1968, Department of State Directorate of Intelligence and Research, Folder POL 7 USSR; Box 2678; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Mr. Kosygin's visit to Pakistan, 1968; FCO 37/202; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Section II: 1965-1971; Foreign Office Files for India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, 1947-1980, accessed through AM Archives Direct. The British interpreted the visit as a disappointment for Pakistan: "Pakistan newspapers have been so prolific in their reference to the growth of Soviet-Pakistan friendship and cooperation as to suggest that Pakistan failed to obtain any major concessions from the Russians."

deals with Soviets while US still refusing sales would prove to Pak public that Washington considered US-PAK relations unimportant and at lower level than Pak-Soviet relations."[406] Ambassador Oehlert followed up with the Defense Minister the following day. He confirmed that the Soviets had "indicated a willingness to consider quote a few end quote" and acknowledged that the acquisition "would therefore require prior consultation [with the] USG," per the terms of the tank deal.

The tank deal, however, had started to morph into an albatross around the United States' neck as it reached out to country after country only to hit unexpected roadblocks. In August 1968, Pakistan's Defense Minister and Defense Secretary informed Ambassador Oehlert that the USSR had agreed "in principle" to sell Pakistan "any hardware it wants, including tanks." They were quick to note that President Ayub wanted the United States to know that he was "reluctant" to accept because:

> A. From an economic viewpoint he would prefer to acquire cheaper, second-hand material;
>
> B. From a logistical viewpoint he would prefer to acquire U.S.-produced material;
>
> C. Most importantly, he wished to avoid, if possible, any increased dependence on USSR.
>
> They then stated that despite Ayub's reluctance, he would be forced to move in the Russian direction unless he could be assured early-on that U.S. manufactured sources would be forthcoming.[407]

[406] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Pakistan to Commander in Chief of the U.S. Strike Command (CINCSTRIKE), Subj: Military Supply (Rawalpindi 4962), May 8, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 PAK 4-1-68; Box 1608; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[407] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Pakistan to State Department, Subj: USSR Military Supply for Pakistan (Rawalpindi 7085), August 24, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 PAK 6-1-68; Box 1608; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

Pressure on the United States to revisit its embargo policy continued to mount. In an October 1968 meeting in Washington, Air Marshal Nur Khan requested the removal of limitations on direct U.S. sale of aircraft, specifically F-104s. The Air Marshal made it clear that

> the PAF would very soon have to make basic decisions for the years ahead. The Soviets were apparently prepared to offer Pakistan something, but he would much prefer to build around the F-104 for future development. This aircraft is cheaper and better than either the Mirages or MIG-21s. Should nothing be forthcoming from Western sources, however, Pakistan would have to build around aircraft of Communist origin.[408]

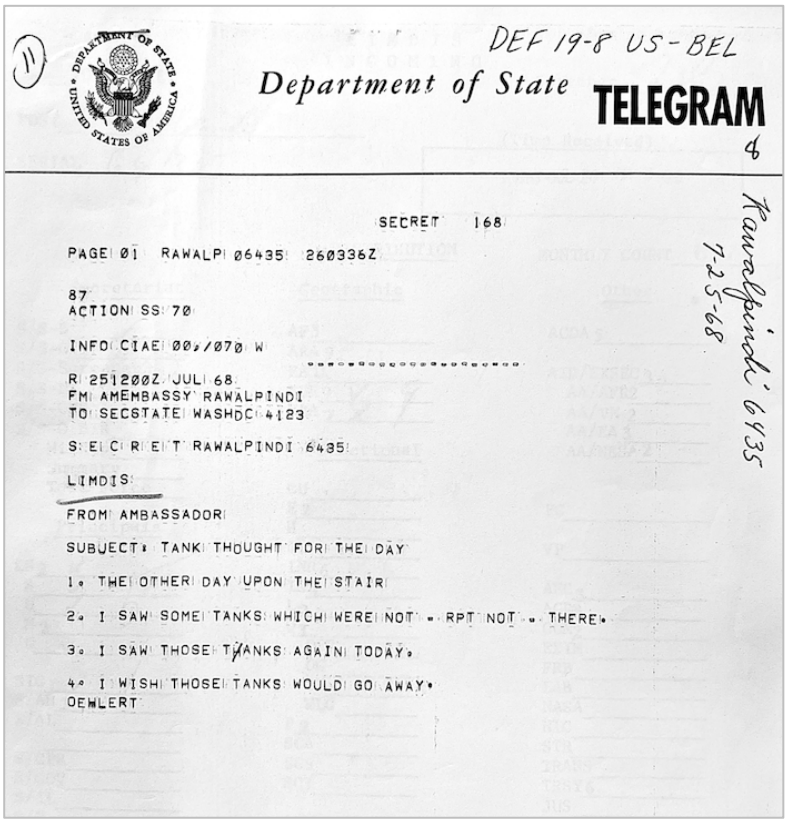
The effort to find a country willing to sell 100 M-47 tanks to Pakistan dragged on throughout 1968, with Belgium, Italy, and Germany all backing away after months of negotiation. In November, Pakistan secured a pledge for 200-300 tanks from the Soviet Union. Once more, Pakistan attempted to use Soviet equipment to induce a shift in American policy. Ambassador Oehlert, by now thoroughly disheartened, sent a short cable summarizing a meeting with General Yahya Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army:

> 1. General Yahya told me this morning that the Russians had some time ago offered to furnish the GOP 200 tanks but that so far the GOP had not repeat not accepted the offer.
>
> 2. He said the GOP was almost completely discouraged with the possibility of obtaining 100 tanks from [Turkey] and even if it did with the prospects of obtaining any further relief directly or indirectly from the USG.
>
> 3. He pleaded with me for the USG to liberalize its military supply policy, stating that if it did not repeat not, the GOP would have no repeat no possible

[408] Memorandum of Conversation with Commander-in-Chief Air Marshal Nur Khan, October 2, 1968, Folder DEF 12-5 PAK 9-1-68; Box 1608; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

> alternative but to accept Russia's offer and then to go down the road of converting its military equipment to Russian manufacture.[409]

In the end, the United States was unsuccessful in securing M-47 tanks for Pakistan. Instead, Pakistan acquired 200 tanks from the Soviet Union: 100 new T-55s and 100 refurbished T-54s. Neither Pakistan nor the Soviet Union sought to entrench their arms relationship in a meaningful way, however The price of additional Soviet arms assistance was forgoing relations with China, which Pakistan was unwilling to do.[410] No additional arms deals were reached after 1968, and no deliveries were made after 1970.



DEF 19-8 US-BEL

Department of State **TELEGRAM**

4

SECRET 168

Rawalpindi 6435
7-25-68

PAGE 01 RAWALP 06435 260336Z

87
ACTION SS-70

INFO CIAE-00 /070 W

R 251200Z JUL 68
FM AMEMBASSY RAWALPINDI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4123

S E C R E T RAWALPINDI 6435

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

SUBJECT: TANK THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

1. THE OTHER DAY UPON THE STAIR

2. I SAW SOME TANKS WHICH WERE NOT - RPT NOT - THERE.

3. I SAW THOSE TANKS AGAIN TODAY.

4. I WISH THOSE TANKS WOULD GO AWAY.
OEHLERT

Figure 4.4 Cable from Ambassador Oehlert to the State Department: "Tank Thought for the Day"

SOURCE: Telegram from Ambassador Oehlert, Subj: Tank Thought for the Day (Rawalpindi 6435), July 25, 1968, Folder DEF 19-8 US-BEL 1-1-1968; Box 1686; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.

[409] Telegram from U.S. Embassy Pakistan to State Department for the President (Rawalpindi 1941), Folder DEF 19-6 USSR-PAK 1967-1-1; Box 1713; CFPF 67-69, RG 59, NARA.
[410] Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations*, 67–68; Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 180–81.

4.3. Weathering Friendships

In just over two decades, Pakistan went from a British colony to America's "most allied ally" to China's "all-weather friend." In line with my theoretical expectations, when Pakistan lost faith in Britain, it diversified despite the added costs and complications that could result. Pakistan used a strategy of loyalty when it believed the United States was staunchly on Pakistan's side in its prolonged fight with India. And when Pakistan was on the fence about America as a patron, it concurrently used strategies of diversification and bargaining to maximize its relationship with China without forgoing the entirety of its relationship with the United States.

Most interesting is Pakistan's attempt to use the Soviet Union as a bargaining chip with the Americans. As India's main supplier and supporter, the Soviet Union was hardly likely to be a better patron than the United States, and further expanding its suppliers would create additional difficulties for the Pakistan Army. So, on the fence about America as a patron, Pakistan engaged the Soviet Union not as a genuine attempt to diversify its supply base, but to induce the United States to reconsider its arms supply policy.

Pakistan's bet on China seemed to pay off. While Pakistan's relationship with China angered the United States in the 1960s, it proved a boon to Nixon's project of normalizing relations with China. Pakistan view China as the staunchest of patrons, which historian Andrew Small ascribes to "the fact that Beijing has rarely needed Pakistan to do anything vastly different from what it intends to do anyway."[411]

[411] Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

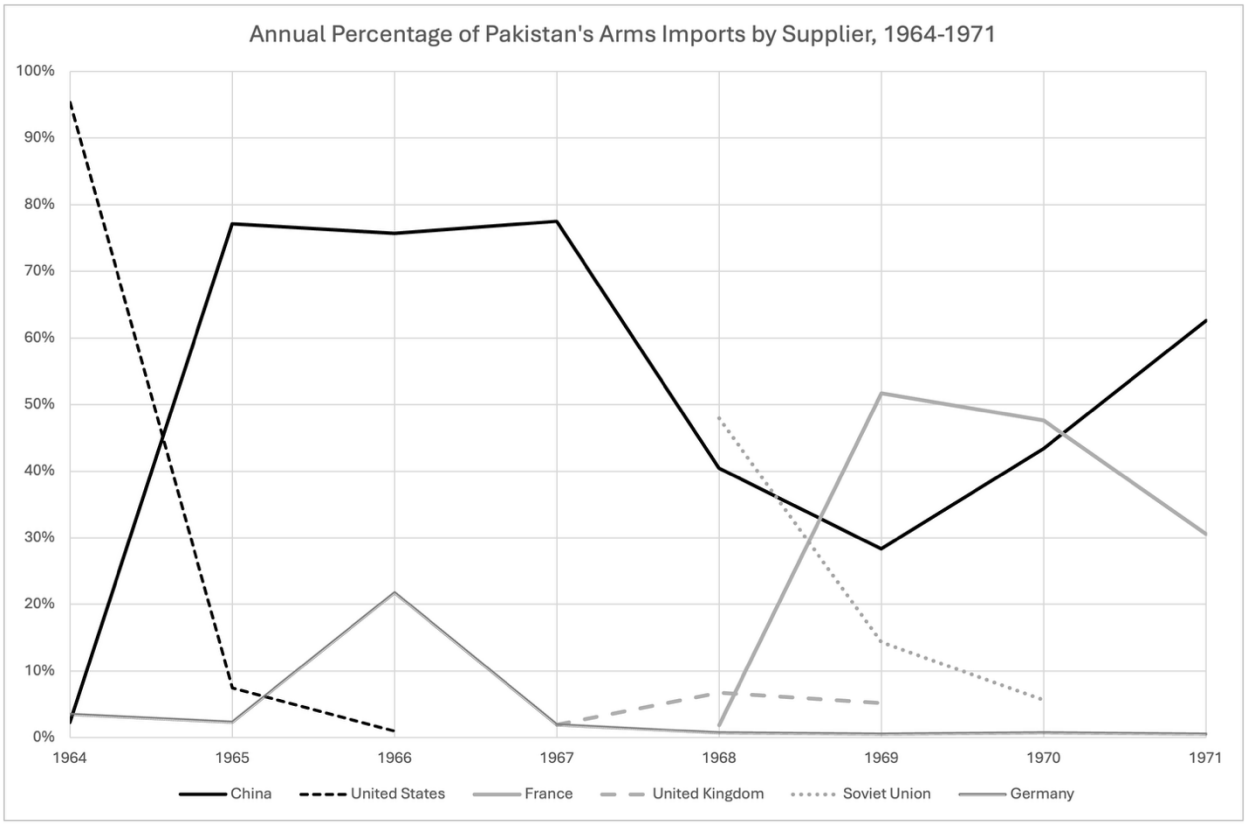


Figure 4.5 Annual Percentage of Pakistan's Total Arms Imports by Supplier, 1964–1971

SOURCE: SIPRI Arms Transfer Register

5. Concluding Thoughts, Future Research

What happens when a patron state stops supplying weapons to a client? Curtailing arms transfers is a serious political act, and clients frequently—but not always—interpret curtailment as a deliberate insult. At its worst, curtailment can even be seen as a betrayal, as the Pakistan case shows. Existing literature has addressed the risks and rewards of dependence, with some arguing that risks associated with dependence invariably outweigh any potential rewards while others argue that the risks are not unmanageable and the potential rewards may be quite high. From this, however, it is theoretically unclear how we might expect states to react. When the risks of dependence become real – when arms are used to influence and potential harms become actualized – under what circumstances will clients diversify? And when do clients deviate from the expectation of diversification? In this chapter, I provide a brief summary of my main theoretical claims and empirical findings, and note the contributions this work makes to the field of international relations. I then offer some thoughts on how my theory might be adapted if some of my key assumptions were relaxed, leading into a discussion of potential avenues for future research.

5.1. Theoretical Claims and Empirical Findings

This dissertation approaches the question of how and why client respond to arms curtailments from the starting point that changing suppliers is always costly, and for many clients, finding a better patron can be difficult. When faced with an arms curtailment, clients therefore must balance their immediate need for weapons against longer-term goals that might be most achievable with their existing patron. Existing literature in international relations has addressed the risks and rewards of dependence, with some arguing that risks associated with

dependence invariably outweigh any potential rewards while others argue that the risks are not unmanageable and the potential rewards may be quite high. From this, then, it is theoretically unclear how we might expect states to respond, and little work has been done to evaluate this question empirically.

To address this, I have developed a reputational theory that argues that the client's choice of response strategy is conditioned on the client's opportunity and willingness to exit the patron-client relationship. First, does the client have a viable external source for the weapons it needs? Second, does the client perceive the patron as genuinely invested in its security, or merely a fair-weather friend? These two dimensions generate four potential response strategies: acquiescence, bargaining, endurance, and diversification.

I argue that whether the client seeks to use a third party as leverage in ongoing negotiations with the patron or as a genuine exit from dependence depends on the client's evaluation of their patron's type. Clients that are concerned with retaining their patron may nevertheless seek an outside option to change the balance of power between client and patron. In practice, this will look like repeated warnings to the patron of the possibility of losing the client. On the other hand, a client that sees their patron as unreliable will be more willing to absorb the costs of diversification in the short run to reduce their dependence in the longer run. This typically requires clients to keep their outreach to third parties quiet to avoid provoking a backlash from the patron before the new partnership can be fully established.

I then test my theory using case studies of Iraq (1958–1982) and Pakistan (1947–1970). These dyads during in these time frames are inherently important, but are infrequently addressed in Western international relations research: Iraq's role in the international system after 1991 and Pakistan's role after 1998 have attracted significant scholarly attention, but prior periods have

been underutilized. In each of these cases, I process trace multiple episodes of arms curtailment using primary source material from six supplier countries, including declassified internal government documents, official speeches and publications, memoirs of officials and diplomats, and contemporaneous media reports. I find that both cases exhibit patterns of response in line with my theoretical framework.

5.2. Scholarly Contributions

By centering client agency and theorizing the behavior of weaker powers in relation to their stronger partners, this dissertation offers new insights into how clients balance the risks and rewards of dependence. Specifically, I offer four innovations that can further our understanding asymmetric bilateral relationships theory generally. First, I treat clients as agentic actors that actively choose strategies to maximize their own interests. Much of the literature on asymmetric relationships implicitly or explicitly centers the stronger power's dilemmas and decision-making processes, with an overwhelming focus on how the United States manages its alliances and partnerships. By contrast, I am interested in the strategies clients use to influence the course of their relationships with stronger powers.

Second, centering the client's decision-making and taking the client's desired outcomes seriously draws into focus the distinctions between forms of hedging. My research shows that hedging behavior as described in the existing international relations literature can be profitably subdivided into two distinct forms: bargaining and diversification. A client's pursuit of an alternative supplier is often termed "hedging," but this fails to acknowledge *why* the client is seeking out a third party. Naturally, a client may be seeking to diversify their arms imports in order to reduce their dependence on their patron. To this explanation, I add the possibility that clients may engage third parties to use as leverage with their existing patron. By framing arms

curtailments as extended periods of negotiation between two parties, I am able to draw on research on negotiation strategies and dynamics from fields like organizational psychology and management science to develop behavioral expectations and observable implications.

I have also introduced the concept of *arms curtailment*, which adds unilateral embargoes and slow-rolling deals or deliveries to the study of formal, multilateral arms embargos, a perennial topic of interest in international relations. The concept of arms curtailment is a closer approximation of how supplier states use arms transfers for political purposes. The case universe of formal embargoes invariably suffers from the same selection bias that research into economic sanctions has had to grapple with, namely that the negative cases—instances when an embargo was possible but was not levied—do not appear in the data. Data on arms curtailment would naturally suffer similar selection biases, but including these less-prominent and less-formal instances is the difference between studying only exclusionary blockades and studying unilateral sanctions on a handful of products—oil, for example, or rare earth minerals. The latter gives us a much more accurate picture of how sanctions are used in the real world.

Finally, I use the concept of patron-client relations to highlight aspects of asymmetric bilateral relationships that are theoretically important but get lost in other concepts like alliances, alignments, and economic dependencies. The patron-client relationship emphasizes the importance of informal, reciprocal, ongoing obligations in international politics. While formal agreements may be part of these relationships, the patron-client relationship can exist absent documentation.

5.3. Directions for Future Research

5.3.1. Minor Modifications: Adding Specificity, Complexifying Assumptions

Intellectual honesty requires scholars to acknowledge the limitations of their work, and in order to develop and test a basic theory of client response strategies, this dissertation treated several characteristics of curtailment episodes as univariate. I assumed that the form that an arms curtailment takes—public or private, full embargo or postponed deliveries—does not affect the client's response strategy. Similarly, I assumed that characteristics of the weapon being denied—types, numbers, capabilities—and the context in which the denial is made—peacetime or wartime—do not meaningfully change client response patterns. To avoid creating an endogeneity problem, I also assumed that an arms curtailment does not itself affect the client's perception of the patron's type. In the real world, of course, each of these elements may vary. I discuss each in turn here and offer some initial thoughts on how allowing for variation might lead in new research directions.

5.3.1.1. The Effect of Curtailment Characteristics on Client Strategies

As noted, many characteristics of curtailments were treated as uniform for purposes of developing and testing my theory. In practice, of course, not all curtailments are created equal. It is likely that some curtailments are negligible in some circumstances, either because the systems targeted are not critical to the client or because background conditions mean that the curtailment does not put the client in danger. In other situations, some types of curtailments might generate serious strategic risks for clients, such as the French decision to embargo weapons to the countries of the Middle East on the eve of the Six Day War. While the Israeli Air Force achieved aerial dominance almost immediately with their existing stock of French planes, in the months

following the war the French refused to ship Israel the 50 Mirage V jets they had ordered and partially paid for, creating shortages of critical parts.[412]

While this variation is clearly important empirically, whether or not it matters *theoretically* is as yet unknown. The type of weapon needed and the purpose for which the request is made (short-term existential need, such as spare parts during a high-intensity war, versus peacetime acquisitions for prestige or for long-term deterrence against neighbors) may change clients' propensity for different strategies. Refusing to sell weapons while a client is fighting a war is often treated by the client as an abandonment. As Spindel and Kuo find, this is one of the few instances when states will change their supplier base, which I would suggest is a result of a shift in the client's perception of its patron. Refusing to sell cutting edge technology or high-end weapons, however, may be less likely to cause a perception shift; a client might be annoyed or feel slighted, but they are unlikely to see it as a betrayal and a threat to their immediate survival.

Disaggregating weapons systems by their subjective utility to the client is another direction for future research. This idea builds on the logic and categorization developed by Spindel, who interacts military utility with the prestigiousness of a weapons system to develop a four-part typology to understand the symbolic value of different weapons systems.[413] I envision a simplified schema of functional, fancy, and forbidden weapons. Functional weapons would include the weapons that are the workhorses of most militaries; they might lack prestige, but without them, the war would be lost almost immediately. Fancy weapons, on the other hand, are at the cutting edge of technology for a given time in a given region. In my research, I found

[412] "France's Policy Toward the Middle East," CIA Weekly Summary Special Report, 1969, CIA CREST, CIA-RDP7900927A006900060003-0.
[413] Spindel, "Beyond Military Power."

numerous examples of states expressing concern about introducing new categories of weapons into an area or hoping that the recipients would view the transfer of equipment not yet prevalent in their region as a signal of the sender's credibility.

This typology would also address the role that transfers of forbidden weapons play in patron-client relations. These weapons could be weapons of mass destruction, obviously, but could also include ballistic missiles, anti-personnel mines, and other systems around which control regimes have been established. Clients are unlikely to assume that their patron will provide these types of weapons, and their denial is therefore less likely to affect the patron-client relationship. Furthermore, when a weapon is forbidden, the client's perception of the supplier's patronage type is irrelevant to their actions: their only options are either to develop it indigenously if there are no outside options (which is difficult and may still make them a target of coercion), or to work with an outside option covertly and deniably.

Indeed, a request may not even be worth making if it tips the patron off to the client's pursuit of a weapon the patron does not want the client to have. When a supplier is set against a client obtaining a type of weapon and the client is unwilling to compromise, no bargain is possible. In such circumstances it makes little sense to attempt to play suppliers off against one another; to do so risks the possibility that the patron might decide to not only deny the request, but to actively try to prevent acquisition from any potential supplier.

5.3.1.2. The Effect of Curtailment on Client Perceptions of Patron Type

My theory treats the shift in client beliefs about patron type as an exogenous change; in my story, changes in a client's belief about its patron type are not related to arms curtailment, either in the present or in a previous period. Yet states can glean critical information about a patron's type from a curtailment episode. What systems are targeted, how public the embargo is, how long the hold lasts, whether the patron permits its allies to meet the demand deniably—the

answers to these questions provide useful clues to the patron's future behavior and its reliability as a security provider. This is because curtailing weapons is costly to the supplier not only economically but reputationally as well. Canceling or delaying orders is costly and complicated for the firms that actually producing and selling the weapons, even when the supplier is subsidizing the purchase. Major arms suppliers have multiple customers and clients, none of whom want to risk coercion via denied or delayed weapons.

Client Belief about Patron Type			
Before Curtailment	**After Curtailment**	**Interpretation**	**Implications for Client Behavior**
Staunch Supporter	Staunch Supporter (no Δ)	Curtailment was not serious enough to merit client updating beliefs about patron's type	Client will remain loyal, choosing continued dependence for the sake of operational efficiency
Staunch Supporter	Fair-weather Friend	Curtailment came as a surprise; likely caused client strategically significant losses	Client will lose faith in patron and will seek to hedge against dependence even if doing so increases costs
Fair-weather Friend	Fair-weather Friend (no Δ)	Curtailment was already understood to be a strong possibility	Client's beliefs will be affirmed; client will reduce dependence on patron further, if possible
Fair-weather Friend	Staunch Supporter	Implausible that curtailing arms transfers would signal patron reliability	N/A

Table 5.1 Potential Effect of Arms Curtailment on Client Beliefs about Patron Type

Arms curtailment can act as a shock that changes the client belief about its patron type—but not always. In this dissertation I operationalize patron type as the client's belief at the time of the curtailment, but it is worth considering how the decision to curtail arms can affect a client's beliefs about their patron. Table 5.1 provides an initial intuition, but I do not attempt to provide a definitive answer to these questions. This naturally opens up the broader question of how clients form assessments of patron type and what can cause these assessments to change. A clear answer

to these questions could be helpful to policymakers trying to understand whether a client is engaging with third parties for bargaining purposes or for true diversification and a reduction in dependence. Disentangling these requires an understanding what causes clients to realign their perception of their existing supplier.

My research suggests that curtailing arms transfers to a client fighting a strategically-important or high-intensity conflict can trigger a sense of betrayal that leads clients to diversify. My case studies provide support for Leveck and Narang's contention that not all alliance violations are created equal. Furthermore, it appears that once a client has experienced abandonment and lost faith in their patron, the relationship will be hard to restore to its former level. There are two plausible reasons for this: first, the client is likely to have taken steps to diversify their arms import portfolio and are unlikely to want to return to a position of greater dependency. Second, there are limited methods patrons can use to tie their hands and credibly commit to future support of their client. In the absence of goodwill and broad strategic alignment, there are few incentives for the client to put their future security in the hands of a proven risky bet.

5.3.2. Effects of Arms Curtailment on Nuclear Aspirations

Powerful states often offer security guarantees, such as defensive alliances, to prevent their proteges from pursuing nuclear weapons programs. While relying on a patron for security can risk abandonment, research shows that states offered alliances give up their pursuit of nuclear weapons. But not all potential proliferators receive such offers. Some are given advanced conventional weapons, such as fighter jets, with which to defend themselves. Supplying weapons for the client's self-defense can help the patron avoid becoming entangled in a conflict in which it has little at stake.

As my research shows, however, substituting arms for alliances does not eliminate the risk of abandonment. Curtailing arms transfers is a common tactic used by states seeking to change a client's behavior. As noted, the states that pose the greatest risk of entangling their patron in undesirable conflicts are more likely to receive conventional arms instead of an alliance. Yet for many of the same reasons patrons seek to avoid entrapment, they may be hesitant to supply arms to a client at war. Those clients are thus at a high risk of having arms transfers curtailed.

For a client facing an existential threat—the kind that drives pursuit of nuclear weapons in the first place—the risk of having their arms supply cut off at a critical moment may be too great. In such circumstances, the client may covertly pursue nuclear weaponization. Future research could thus build on the concept of arms curtailment to identify the circumstances under which transfers of conventional weapons can effectively promote nuclear nonproliferation and the potential costs of this strategy. One key factor clients consider when evaluating whether they can trust their patron not to cut off arms support in a crisis is, quite simply, whether it has happened before. My research suggests that those states that pose high risk of entrapment to their patron are also more likely to have experienced arms curtailment from their patron in the past. As a result, they are more likely to continue to pursue nuclear weapons because they cannot trust that their patron will maintain their arms supply in the future.

I expect that on balance, states that have experienced arms curtailments will be more skeptical of security guarantees and demand more favorable deals. In extreme cases, states that have experienced unexpected arms cut-offs during high-intensity conflicts will be unwilling to rely on security assurances of any sort and are likely to seek nuclear weapons regardless of the inducements offered. If nonproliferation fails, providing conventional weapons will have been

counterproductive if it enhanced the state's nuclear delivery options or its ability to engage in destabilizing behavior below the nuclear threshold. For policymakers, then, my research suggests that providing conventional arms is only useful if the client believes arms supplies will persist unconditionally.

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