CORRELATES OF POLITICAL ALIGNMENT: JUMPING OFF THE BALANCING BANDWAGON

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the determinants of interstate political alignment, examining why states join others in conflictual or cooperative endeavors and which side they take in those situations. The puzzle it seeks to address is why some states are much more likely to gain support than others, and whether the likelihood of such support varies on the basis of the issue under dispute and the characteristics of the state itself. The dissertation emphasizes the interests of rulers, particularly in their need to obtain support on issues of high salience to them. The desire for future reciprocation lies at the heart of these alignment decisions. First, leaders consistently reciprocate positive and negative alignments, rarely changing sides in consecutive conflicts. Second, rulers avoid positively aligning with leaders of unstable or politically unrepresentative states, as the latter are less likely to be in a position to return the favor. After providing a general explanation of alignment, the dissertation demonstrates that not all alignments are created equal. The willingness of rulers to reciprocate is contingent on the cost and discernibility of past alignment decisions. A ruler who provided unambiguous support to another and paid a large price for doing so can expect future support more readily than someone who did not. I test the theory in three chapters, two quantitative and one qualitative. In the former, the hypotheses relating to reciprocation and regime characteristics are tested on a new dataset consisting of all potential interventions into existing wars, MID's, and sanctions. The qualitative chapter consists of a case study of the former Soviet Union from 1991 to the present, and attempts to determine whether alignment decisions made by those states were for reasons specified in the alignment theory.
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In December 2001, British Prime Minister Tony Blair received a phone call from US President George W. Bush. The phone call was not unexpected: the two leaders had been working closely together in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, coordinating their assault against Taliban-held areas of Afghanistan. By December of 2001, the Taliban was all but routed. The topic of the conversation, however, was not Afghanistan, but rather Iraq. President Bush wanted to know Britain’s position on a possible attempt to topple Saddam Hussein, the long-time ruler of Iraq. Prime Minister Blair replied that “if [regime change] became the only way of dealing with this issue, we
[are] going to be up for that.”¹ This scene would replay itself in Canberra, Rome, Tbilisi, Bangkok, and several dozen other world capitals. Scarcely a decade later, the phones rang once again in many of the same capitals. The US was still asking friendly states to pursue hostile action against another country. The topic, however, had changed. The target was no longer Iraq, but Iran. The preferred form of alignment was not war, but sanctions. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 illustrate the extent of support for the US-led efforts.

*red = part of US-led coalition; blue = in open opposition to US-led coalition

There are two unmistakable patterns in the maps, both of which relate to the questions this dissertation seeks to address. The first is the sheer similarity of the US alignment partners. The three states that sent combat troops to Iraq – the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland – have all levied sanctions against Iran. The same is true for most states that eventually contributed troops to the Iraq war-effort. Looking at it from another angle, not one country that sent troops to Iraq in 2003 has openly come out against the Iranian sanctions. Hence, the first question that is dealt with by this dissertation is whether each form of alignment – wars, militarized disputes, sanctions, etc.

¹ The quote is part of an unreleased telephone conversation between the two leaders, confirmed by Prime Minister Blair at a public inquiry into the events preceding the 2003 Iraq War (Norton-Taylor 2011).
has its own unique causes, as implied by nearly all the quantitative literature – or whether there is something fundamentally similar between all multi-party alignments.

The second pattern that can be discerned from the maps is the magnitude of support for the US. Despite being considerably stronger than Iraq and Iran, the United States was far more likely to obtain positive than negative alignment. Even the opponents of US sanctions against Iran have not gone so far as to impose retaliatory sanctions against the US or its supporters. The depth of pro-American support is no less striking. The support came from the Americas, Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australasia. It came from democracies and autocracies, states rich and poor, old allies and countries that have only recently become a target of US attention. Consequently, the second issue that is examined by this dissertation is why anyone would pay the steep political and economic cost of joining a conflict in which they were not an original participant, and why they would do so on one side and not on the other.

These questions on the determinants of political alignment\(^2\) touch upon some of the most fundamental themes in the field of International Relations (IR). The clearest link is to the long-standing debate over the balance of power. Which states partake in balancing coalitions and why is central to that centuries-old argument. Though not couched in the same language, the democratic peace thesis seeks to explain alignment behavior on the basis of regime type. More broadly, theorizing in terms of alignment brings together numerous literatures, ranging from writings on war and military interstate disputes (MIDs), to voting behavior at the United Nations, to trade disputes.

\(^2\) Briefly, political alignment is the stance a state takes on a well-defined proposal that is intended to resolve a stake over which two or more states have conflicting positions. The full definition can be found in section 1.1 of this dissertation.
Conceptually, this research examines the decision by rulers to take sides in concrete political disputes, engaging in cooperative or conflictual behavior with other members of the international system. This dissertation aims to show that many manifestations of conflict or cooperation are similar and share the same set of causes. Nevertheless, all alignments are not created equal, either in their intent or in their impact.

Political alignment is not only of theoretical, but also of practical importance. Whether we want to know which states will join the United States in leveling sanctions against Syria, if a war between Israel and Iran would expand, or which bloc Colombia will support in the next round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, a theory of political alignment can tell us which factors most strongly affect the political calculations of state leaders. The benefit of utilizing such a theory is that it grants the researcher the ability to put themselves in the shoes of a statesman – a point made long ago by Hans Morgenthau. Instead of thinking about the wide array of factors that could be responsible for every foreign policy decision, we can contemplate what a ruler wants to achieve and how a given action helps them come closer to attaining that objective.

The issue of alignment is hardly unique to IR. Congressmen make deals to support each other’s bills, political parties enter into governing coalitions, and firms pursue strategic alliances with their competitors. The common denominator in this research is the individual agreement on a stake, or alignment, as the unit of analysis. It would be trivial to make common party membership as the starting and ending point of research on congressional voting. Neither would a study about the grand coalition between Germany’s Social Democrats and Christian Democrats assume unconditional inter-party support across all pieces of legislation, nor use the distribution of power
between the parties to explain all votes. Yet these premises provide the foundation of much of the alignment literature, flaws that this study strives to address.

The disconnect between alignment research in IR and similar studies in other fields does not end with the problematic unit of analysis; it is widened by the complete disregard for past interactions. States are assumed to possess certain interests and blindly follow them at each point in time. Allies exist to be used and later tossed aside, while ties with former enemies are easily mended. Whether another state was a reliable or a treacherous ally in the past is meant to have no bearing on their likelihood of being sought for closer cooperation. Thus, most alignment theorists would be hard-pressed to explain the ambivalent American response to the recent revolt in Bahrain on the one hand and the harsh response to Libyan actions on the other.

More generally, research on alignment has been hampered by two contradictory trends in IR. The early focus on grand theory meant that a narrow set of factors were used to predict every possible form of alignment. States aligned with one another because of power or threat, and they did so across all issues. The recent trend involves a shift toward specialization and mid-range theory, leading to islands of marginally-related explanations. Not only are the areas of conflict and cooperation studied in isolation from one another, but the concepts of conflict and cooperation themselves fragment into numerous narrowly-defined research programs. The very idea of alignment has been subordinated to the investigation of the causes of war, MIDs, crises, military alliances, sanctions, UN General Assembly voting, bilateral trade, multilateral trade, foreign aid, etc. While this research enriched our understanding of individual expressions of alignment, it did so at the cost of generalizability and deductive rigor. Few statesmen
would draw a sharp distinction between the factors influencing their ability or willingness to engage in each form of cooperative and conflictual behavior named above, and yet that is exactly how those research questions are approached. Disconnected theories are used to explain every cooperative and conflictual form of alignment, and little attention is paid to the empirical and theoretical inconsistencies between thematically-similar studies.

Even when the concept of alignment is mentioned – rarely as a vital dependent or independent variable – it is invoked in mutually incompatible ways, befalling a fate similar to that of the balance of power theories that once made up the dominant alignment research program. Alignment has been used to denote, inter alia, alliance partners, a congruence of interests, a shared issue position, and a general foreign policy direction. The term itself is never explicitly defined, nor its empirical domain specified. As a result, cross-study comparisons become problematic, and attempting to understand what a given author means by alignment becomes a laborious task.

These challenges to alignment theory do not lessen the importance of political alignment as a source of inquiry. International politics deeply affect the lives of numerous individuals in the world, and alignment decisions underlie all but the simplest interactions in the international community. The effects of alignment range from determining the outcomes of wars, to providing leverage in trade disputes, to outlining the shape of climate change agreements. Romania’s unprovoked entrance into World War I cost the country hundreds of thousands of lives. The Yugoslav coup that ended

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3 See Haas (1953), Zinnes (1967), and Schroeder (1989) for overviews of the many different, frequently contradictory, ways in which the balance of power concept is employed. The three authors would not be pleased to know that many of their warnings about the term’s usage have gone unheeded.

4 The idea of alignment figures to play a larger role both in and out of academia as the world moves further away from Cold War alliance systems, and with it, legalistic conceptions of cooperation (Wilkins 2012).
that state’s brief alignment with the Axis Powers in World War II led to a military confrontation and brutal occupation that killed a total of a million Yugoslav citizens.

Non-military alignments have also entered the annals of human history, for reasons good and bad. The decision to resolve the post-World War II German issue by forming a European Coal and Steel Community – eventually giving rise to the European Union – led to economic stability and an unbroken cycle of peace. The use of reparations to punish Germany in the wake of the First World War contributed to German economic stagnation and the rise of nationalist parties, the German Nazi Party among them.

Humanity is affected not just by alignments that were made, but also ones that were not. The reluctance of Austria-Hungary to get involved in the Franco-Prussian War resulted in the creation of a unified German kingdom, subordinating the Dual-Monarchy to the new German economic and military behemoth. The decision by the Soviet Union to abstain from participating in the United Nations Security Council during the discussion of the Korean crisis led to an expansion of the Korean War.

A theory of alignment has the prospect of not only explaining political decisions, but to also add to the cumulation of knowledge in IR by bridging several literatures that at their core deal with alignment decisions. There is an abundance of research on the determinants of war, MIDs, sanctions, foreign aid, and UN voting. Many of these works make strong theoretical and empirical contributions, but, in treating their own subject matter as self-contained, do not adequately engage with related research. A theory of alignment would provide a framework for showing how these studies are linked, allowing for greater synthesis between these thematically-related areas of research.
1.1 Definitions

A theory of alignment first requires a definition of alignment and the specification of its theoretical domain. Given the lack of consensus in the field as to how the term is defined, I start with the dictionary definition. According to Merriam-Webster, to align is “to array on the side of or against a party or cause” (“Align”). One implication of this definition is that to align with one side also means aligning against another. There could be two or more sides, and they do not have to be equally balanced, but there needs to be at least one actor on each side.

For practical purposes, the domain of the theory is restricted to stakes on which there is some disagreement between two or more other states, or what might be termed third-party alignment. One can conceivably operationalize any agreement between two or more states as an instance of positive alignment and any disagreement as negative alignment. This would, unfortunately, broaden the concept to unwieldy proportions, making virtually any inter-state activity fall within the domain of the term. One could also allow for alignment between state and non-state actors or between multiple non-state actors. This would first require a pre-theory as to which non-state actors are important, what their preferences are, and how they interact with each other and with states. Such a pre-theory would be a significant contribution to the field of IR, but is outside the purview of the present study. Therefore, I require at least one state on opposite sides of an issue position before an alignment can be made. If a state does not take an explicit position, then it is considered non-aligned.

The next step is to adapt the term to IR through the prism of the issue paradigm on which the alignment theory is based. Though they do not explicitly define it,
Mansbach and Vasquez (1981, 236) refer to an agreement/disagreement aspect of conflict and cooperation, which provides the theoretical basis for the alignment concept used here. Those who agree to a concrete resolution of a stake are said to have a shared issue position. An issue position is a position an actor takes toward a specific attempt to resolve a stake (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 188). Issue positions are distinct from stakes, which are objects of value that actors attempt to obtain (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 74), and issues, which are a number of interrelated stakes.

The proposal to settle a stake does not have to be limited to a written declaration, as the term might suggest. The proposals can include a declaration of war, an imposition of sanctions, or a promise to support certain clauses in a multilateral treaty. The common element is the presence of a clear action or a promise of a future action that is intended to aid or hinder another state or group of states. This definition rules out vague announcements of support or opposition, and declarations on topics that have no obvious solutions, like ambiguous peace processes or opposition to a rising state’s power.

There are large extant literatures on specific forms of alignments, other than those already mentioned. The closest connection between the concept of alignment and its manifestations is one relating to formal alliances, which is covered more thoroughly in the theory chapter. As the alliance literature makes clear, there is a substantial number of

\[ \text{\footnotesize{5 This definition is also consistent with Sullivan’s (1972, 115) view of informal alignment, which he defines as the tendency for two nations to share a common conflict object. The theory of alignment proposed here does not explicitly differentiate between formal and informal alignments as long as the alignment is entered into publicly. The latter component would rule secret agreements as a source of alignment, as the causal mechanism of the theory requires domestic and international actors to be aware of an alignment’s existence. To the extent that the alignment theory differentiates between formal and informal alignments, it is that the formal ones tend to be costlier to ratify and to implement, which makes them more valued than alignments in the lower cost categories. See section 1.4 for more detail.}} \]
reasons for entering into alliances, and those alliances serve a multitude of different purposes. A country might ally with someone in order to improve its military capacity, to deter an attack, or to gain influence over the new ally’s foreign policy decision-making process. They might also form alliances whose requirements rest anywhere on a spectrum that includes consultation to jointly planning an attack on a third state. What makes any of these alliances a form of alignment is that there is a specific promise to act in an agreed-upon manner once certain conditions are in place, and it is explicitly or implicitly directed against a specific threat. In cases where there is no clear target, it would be reasonable to still consider the act a type of alignment. Nevertheless, one of the purposes of the scientific enterprise is to group phenomena that are similar. An agreement on a stake that has no party on the other side would operate based on a different logic to the alignments discussed throughout this dissertation and will therefore not be considered an instance of alignment for the purpose of theory or empirical testing.

Membership in international institutions creates the same quandary. Joining some institutions is a sign of supporting some states and opposing others. This is clearest in the case of institutionalized multilateral alliances, like NATO and the Warsaw Pact. One can also view membership in certain economic institutions as a method for minimizing another country’s influence over one’s economy, with membership in the WTO being a primary example. More recently, we have witnessed Ukraine lose a piece of its territory and face the prospect of an all-out invasion over its decision to sign an association agreement with one economic bloc over another. On the other hand, membership in many institutions, especially economic ones, is not remotely controversial from an international perspective, and would not be considered a form of alignment here.
Although alignment decisions are generally viewed as being purposive, the
definition of alignment used here does not make this a requirement. Leaders of one state
might have the same issue position as those of another because they want something from
the latter or because both happen to desire the same resolution to a stake. In practice,
determining whether a specific alignment is purposive or incidental is a futile exercise.
Attempting to directly ascertain the motives for these decisions is counter-productive and
requires making the kind of judgments that political scientists are ill-equipped to make.

Given the above considerations, I define political alignment as a shared issue
position, composed of three interrelated components. To be positively aligned, two or
more states must be in agreement on a concrete proposal or action that is intended to
resolve a specific stake or dispute. Conversely, states can be negatively aligned if they
find themselves on different sides of a stake, or they can be nonaligned if they are not a
party to that stake’s resolution. Due to theoretical and practical concerns, the domain of
this dissertation is limited to multi-party alignments, involving at least three states.

1.2 Contributions

The main contribution of this dissertation is the creation of a falsifiable, issue-based theory of interstate political alignment. The importance of falsifiability is self-evident: hypotheses that cannot be disproven provide little value to the scientific enterprise (Popper 1963). Contrary to Popper’s notion of science, the theory here is probabilistic. Factors hypothesized to affect alignment decisions set constraints on state rulers. Regardless of the degree of those constraints, the rulers are free to ignore them, albeit at a high price. Some leaders are very risk-acceptant. Some might be concerned about their legacy. Others might have preferences that are wildly at odds with the needs
of their country. In yet other states, multiple actors have claim to their state’s foreign policy, complicating efforts at a coherent foreign policy. Even with these disclaimers, the proposed theory can be considered falsified if its key hypotheses fail standard tests of statistical significance or do not have a substantive effect on alignment decisions.

Part of what makes the proposed theory falsifiable is the use of concrete alignment decisions as the unit of analysis. Many previous studies of alignment have been plagued by the ambiguity of what was being investigated. The most problematic of those studies equated alignment with a general foreign policy direction of a country. The flaw with that line of inquiry is that the key determination – namely the direction of a country’s foreign policy – is incredibly subjective. One can point to different alignment decisions to argue that country X was either pro-country Y or anti-country Y. Using specific alignment decisions minimizes the role of subjectivity.

The second major contribution of this dissertation is the amalgamation of multiple IR literatures, including those on war onset and war joining, militarized interstate dispute (MID) onset and joining, sanction onset, reciprocation, and the democratic peace. Each of the literatures views its particular type of alignment as the dependent variable, overlooking not only foreign policy substitutability, but also the similar impact of these alignments on future foreign policy decisions. A theory of MID onset might control for past MIDs – which make future MIDs more likely – but not past sanctions or alliances. The resulting omitted variable bias leads to incorrect estimates of regression perimeters.

If the goal of IR research is the cumulation of knowledge, then the field will advance by breaking down artificial boundaries between the study of various forms of cooperation and conflict. Treating each form of alignment as a separate field for
investigation would make sense only if the underlying data-generating process – statesmen making foreign policy decisions – operated under the same logic. That is clearly not the case. Rulers do not view each act of cooperation or conflict in isolation from other such acts just because the latter are of a different form. The sanction regime imposed by the United Nations on Iraq in the 1990s was not put into place because of Iraq’s past sanctions-related behavior, but rather because of actions that would currently be covered by separate IR literatures: interstate wars, civil wars, and human rights abuses.

One way that this dissertation integrates some of the IR literatures is by creating a measure of alignment. Unlike earlier attempts at issue typologies, this measure is not based on the theoretically indefensible distinction between economic and military issues. Instead, it places all alignment forms into a two-dimensional plane. Each type of alignment is classified on the basis of its cost and discernibility – the ease of determining whether an alignment was directed for or against a specific state. Being an early joiner to a multi-party war would be a costly and discernible alignment. With a few exceptions, a UN General Assembly vote would be neither costly nor discernible.

The third contribution of this dissertation is the introduction of a new alignment dataset. Previous studies that explicitly used alignment as the outcome to be explained relied on a qualitative research design. Quantitative studies of the subject limit themselves to explaining one form of alignment, which precludes a direct comparison of their results. The dataset used here combines four forms of alignment for which data is widely available. The closest design to this dataset is utilized by the war joining/expansion literature. This group of datasets is coded in a manner to allow states to join the original disputants. What the datasets do not do is allow states to join disputes
on the side of states that were not initial parties to the dispute. The former design would attempt to explain Brazil’s joining of World War II with reference to the country’s relationship with Germany and Poland, the first two states involved in that conflict.

The dataset used in this dissertation instead allows states to join any dyadic conflict, including ones composed of joiners. Thus, Brazil is coded as not only able to join the Germany-Poland dispute, but also the Germany-US one, among others. This provides for a more realistic picture of the decisions leaders face: they know that taking an issue position affects their relationship with every other state that takes a stance on the same issue. In the First Gulf War, Israel was convinced by the US not to join the conflict precisely because it would dissuade Arab states, including those that strongly disliked the Iraq leadership, from entering the war on the Israeli-American side.

1.3 Theoretical Overview

At the heart of the political process is the desire of state leaders to maximize value from the resolution of issues that are most salient to them. In order to succeed at this objective, rulers have to leverage their control of a limited set of resources for the purpose of resolving issues that those resources are ill-equipped to settle. A leader of a militarily weak but prosperous state might need military assistance against an aggressive neighbor. A ruler of a militaristic state might need aid in keeping afloat their country’s economy. The key to maximizing value is interstate political alignment; by aligning with

6 While determining which state someone wanted to align with would require comprehensive historical knowledge, even ignoring cases where a historical consensus does not exist, the effect of an alignment is not entirely based on this intention. That is, joining a dispute in order to aid country X nevertheless generates hostility with country Y, the recipient of the negative version of alignment. By not allowing states to align with anyone but the original participants, one assumes up front what one intends to prove.
states that are likely to be in a position to help them in the future, leaders are able to use their strengths to overcome their weaknesses.

Alignment, at least of the costly variety, is not for everyone. Leaders need to have sufficient resources to help another state resolve their dispute, and they must gain domestic support – whether from elites or the public – for their involvement. The former provides a possible explanation for the end of the Cold War: the collapse of the Soviet and the succeeding Russian economies reduced the amount of resources available to Soviet and Russian leaders, preventing them from pursuing any alignments, whether against the US or any other state. An implication is that once the Russian economy recovered, as it did in the 2000s, relations between Russia and the US would degenerate.

The domestic support requirement entails a connection to the disputants, whether good or bad. Rulers need to justify their expenditures on international causes, which is where a historical link plays a role. Victims of another state’s hostility or benefactors of their largesse find it in their interest persuade the public of the necessity of intervention. By highlighting events the public is aware of, these groups can help a leader justify a potentially expensive involvement in the other country’s disputes. Thus, European states with weak ties to India and Pakistan steer clear of conflicts between the two rivals.

When leaders do have the domestic and external capacity to get involved in the resolution of someone else’s issue, they do so either as a form of repayment for past services or as a down payment toward a future alignment. Repaying and courting reciprocation are thus a crucial motivation for many alignment decisions. A related factor is the bilateral history of conflict and cooperation between the states. A failure to
support a friend or to oppose an enemy carries with it enormous domestic costs; both risk incensing domestic constituencies that favor the maintenance of the status quo.

If gaining future support is the *sina qua non* for present alignment decisions, then the perception that future aid will not be forthcoming would be extremely detrimental to a state seeking to procure alignment. It follows that markers of unreliability, whether institutional or behavioral, would prevent rulers from being able to obtain alignment. Autocracies are especially vulnerable to being designated as unreliable due to the real risk of the regime being replaced with one that is chosen by a completely different selectorate or being forced to incorporate factions in the government that are hostile to the previous foreign policy direction. This logic is arguably the main reason that Iraq and Iran – both unrepresentative autocracies – have had such poor luck in obtaining support.

The domestic and international contexts of rulers contemplating alignment also play a role in alignment decisions. Leaders that are desperate for international support – whether the salient issue they want to resolve has a domestic or international origin – gravitate toward states that are best positioned to help them. They also avoid antagonizing states that have an asymmetrical advantage against them. The former helps explain Uzbekistan’s turn toward Russia in the wake of the Andijan massacre. The latter does the same for Kazakhstan’s pro-Russian line.

The reciprocal alignment theory presented here generally predicts lengthy cycles of cooperation or similar cycles of conflict. Empirically, that type of behavior is frequent, but not constant. To explain change, the theory looks to the generation of new salient issues and domestic changes. As old issues are resolved or are otherwise removed from the agenda, the rationale for a continuation of past foreign policy behavior weakens.
New issues can provide the impetus for a radical rethinking of foreign policy.

Domestically, as the selectorate of a country undergoes transformation or instability changes the relative importance of various issues, the maintenance of old foreign ties becomes less of a priority. Finally, alignments are not equally effective in guaranteeing future support; alignment decisions are affected by the cost and discernibility of previous alignments, factors that provide a basis for the newly-created measure of alignment.

1.4 Alignment Measure

One of the contributions of this study is the creation of an alignment measure, which places each form of alignment on two dimensions: cost and discernibility. The advantage of using a formal measure instead of using imprecise, unranked categories, like “military”, “economic”, and “political” is that it avoids having to classify complex issues into neat boxes. Instead of making an arbitrary decision as to whether sanctions against Iran are economic or political, or whether a vote in the UN GA can be deemed military if it calls for military action, a measure provides an *a priori* rationale for placing each alignment in a specific part of the measure relative to other forms of alignment.

The cost part of alignment deals with the price a leader must pay in order to pursue alignment on a particular policy. That cost could be domestic, such as when a ruler needs to persuade a key constituency to adopt their preferred position. It could be entirely external, when their state becomes a target for international retaliation. Or the cost could come from both elements. The cost a leader is prepared to pay to align is proportional to the benefit they expect to receive or have already received. For example, Australia has partaken in many US wars because of a perceived need for American military assistance in the future. On the other hand, a lower cost alignment can arise
from many sources, making it difficult to predict. Those reasons can range from a desire
to voice one’s normative views to not being able to afford a costlier form of alignment.

Another way to conceive of the cost dimension is to consider the depth and
duration of an alignment decision. The more expansive the cooperation or the conflict
arising from the alignment, the greater the sacrifices that must be made by the pertinent
ruler. Gaining domestic support for a one-off weapons shipment to a country requires
substantially less effort than arranging wide-ranging military cooperation. Similarly, an
alignment over an issue that appears and disappears within weeks is qualitatively
different than one entailing long-term involvement. This would be the difference
between a ruler condemning Syria’s use of chemical weapons and a ruler actively
involved in getting Syria to destroy those type of weapons.

Discernibility refers to the ease with which other states can know whether a third
state expressly aligned with or against them. If Canada is one of over a dozen states to
send troops against Iraq in 1991, Saddam Hussein could not be certain whether the
Canadian intervention was a part of Canadian hostility toward his state or whether
Canada was merely supporting the United States. When two states find themselves on
the same side of a vote on a UN resolution, they cannot know whether this alignment was
a purposive attempt to take the same side or whether it only reflects common interests, a
problem that pertains to Congressional voting. This lack of clarity makes indiscernible
alignments less valuable to the original disputant, but can also serve as a hedge against ill
will and retaliation. When a leader sees some value in a relationship with a state they feel
pressured to intervene against, they nevertheless have an incentive to make the
intervention as indiscernible as possible, making it easier to mend relations in the future.
1.5 Dissertation Plan

The current chapter of the dissertation provided an overview of political alignment – including its precise definition – demonstrated the importance of the topic, and offered a concise account of an issue-based theory of alignment. Each of the succeeding chapters in this dissertation builds upon the concepts presented thus far, and tests the new explanation of alignment and its theoretical implications in both a quantitative and qualitative manner.

Chapter 2 reviews the dominant theories of alignment, showing how the conception of alignment has changed over time, with each change giving rise to a richer understanding of alignment but also spawning new shortcomings. Chapter 2 will begin by tracing the evolution of alignment theories from the 1600s to the modern period. After deriving some lessons from this classical canon, the chapter analyzes the capability research program, with its derivative balancing and bandwagoning schools of thought. The next section of Chapter 2 deals with the homophily research program, incorporating social field theory and theories of the democratic peace. The last set of theories examined is concerned with the regime security basis of alignment. The chapter does not end with a review of the aforementioned theories; instead, it seeks to utilize the contributions and shortfalls of the existing frameworks to create a list of necessary components for a sounder theory of political alignment.

Chapter 3 starts with the basic question, “what is a social scientific theory”? After tentatively answering that question and indicating what a theory of the social sphere can hope to explain, Chapter 3 derives basic tenets of alignment from the broader issue paradigm. This is followed by a list of assumptions that are necessary for the ensuing
theory to work, along with justifications for those assumptions. Chapter 3 then lays out the theory of reciprocal alignment, focusing on the factors that affect the propensity of statesmen to get involved in other states’ disputes, and the impulses underlying their decision to pick a particular side. The chapter also shows how an alignment measure can be derived from the issue paradigm, and illustrates the relevance of this measure to the issue-based theory of alignment. The last portion of the chapter goes through testable implications of the theory. It provides a list of hypotheses on the basis of the reciprocal alignment and competing theories, which are all tested in future chapters.

The ensuing four chapters seek to empirically test the proposed theory. Chapter 4 comprises the research design. In this chapter, a strategy is put forth to turn theoretical expectations into falsifiable hypotheses. This entails a discussion of the alignment dataset, methods that are appropriate in light of the theory and dataset, and a justification for the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables. Chapter 5 tests the main propositions from the alignment theory. Using war joining as the main outcome variable, I test hypotheses relating to dyadic history, reciprocation, and the reliability of alignment partners. This is buttressed by the examination of context-specific determinants of alignment, and possible causes of breaks in alignment patterns. Chapter 6 continues with the quantitative testing of the theory by adding variation in the cost and discernibility of the alignment options. The chapter aims to demonstrate the importance of not treating all forms of alignment uniformly. The dependent variables in this chapter include the order of joining a war, the order of joining a militarized dispute, and the number of supporters of a sanction regime.
Chapter 7 continues the testing of the alignment theory by providing a qualitative test. The drawback of quantitative tests is that they are not able to fully integrate the complex set of relationships states enjoy with one another, and can only deal with widely-recorded forms of alignments, such as conflicts and formal alliances. Chapter 7 aims to address these concerns with the aid of an extensive case-study, using the method of congruence coupled with limited process-tracing, covering several non-European Union members of the former Soviet Union (FSU) from their independence in 1991 to the present. This chapter examines not only whether dyadic history factors are positively associated with positive alignment, but also whether those exact factors were responsible for driving the alignment decisions.

Chapter 8 serves as the conclusion. The chapter begins by tying the proposed theory to the Iraq and Iran examples mentioned earlier in this chapter. It then summarizes the main findings, before deriving several policy implications from the theory. Lastly, I talk about possible extensions of the reciprocal alignment theory and steps that could be taken to further test the existing hypotheses.

This dissertation has many objectives, but its primary one is to change the focus of alignment theories from one emphasizing general, untestable patterns to one more interested in uncovering the determinants of visible, quantifiable decisions. Through the use of analysis, theory, and data, I hope to change the way this topic is thought and written about. I provide a theory of political alignment, and not the theory of the same name, leaving room for the examination of other aspects of this important concept, including, but not limited to, an explanation of alignment’s effects.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The extant literature on alignment is as varied as it is wide-ranging. The questions “who aligns,” “on what issues,” and “why” rarely receive the same responses across different studies. Nevertheless, there are sufficient similarities between those studies to divide them into three research programs, each basing its explanation of alignment around one central concept: capabilities, homophily, and regime security. For reasons that will become apparent, the three programs are generally tested in distinctive temporal or spatial domains: capabilities in Western Europe, homophily in the post-World War I and/or post-World War II era, and regime security in the third world. Given the heavy emphasis on qualitative work in all but the homophily research program, these differences in empirical domains likely play a fundamental role in selecting the factors each program underlines as being the dominant causes of political alignment.

2.1 Capabilities Research Program

The first, and by far the largest, group of alignment theories is centered on the role of material capabilities – or power, as they are usually called – whether actual or perceived. These theories, commonly operating from a realist framework, assume that states exist in a condition of anarchy and are concerned with matters of security and power (Morgenthau 1978). States are then expected to make their alignment choices with the object of accumulating capabilities or thwarting someone else, usually a potential hegemon, from doing the same. Other factors are ignored or downplayed, except when

7 Theories of reciprocation, developed predominantly by neoliberal institutionalists, will also be examined.
they are used to explain away anomalies. In these cases, either insidious interest groups (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007) or irrational leaders (Waltz 1988) are blamed for ignoring the “national interest” and furthering goals other than “national security”.

The capability research program can be split into bandwagoning and balancing explanations, with the latter further sub-divided into a plethora of objects that states might balance against. The balancing school, whose main claim is that states align against anyone seeking hegemony, is the more popular of the two and has a stronger pedigree. It traces its intellectual roots to late 16th-early 17th century Europe, when the concept was given shape by Francis Bacon of England (Little 1989, 89), Hugo Grotius of the Dutch Republic (Hoard 1925, 262), and Alberico Gentili of what is now Italy (Vagts and Vagts 1979, 559). Balancing became an explicit objective of European great powers with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 (Bull 1977, 35), and was likely a reaction to Spanish and French attempts to create a universal monarchy over the previous century (Boucoyannis 2007, 713).

Then, as now, the balance of power concept was the victim of the twin problems of lack of precision and political misuse. While some did conceive of the term as entailing opposition to the mighty, the balance of power was also used to denote a just equilibrium, which was based not on opposition to a potential hegemon, but rather on great powers respecting each other’s boundaries and working together to prevent unnecessary conflict (Little 1989, 92; Schroeder 1989, 144). In terms of using force for

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8 Though a rough idea of balancing was mentioned by Chanakya over two millennia ago, and was talked about in Italian courts in the 15th century (Maurseth 1964, 120), it did not have a clear meaning or justification at the time. For instance, Machiavelli, who was writing at the turn of the 16th century, was concerned with Italian unification, not balancing against hegemonic pretenders (Boucoyannis 2007, 712).
the purpose of preventing hegemony, balancing was generally associated with the foreign policy of a single state – England. Fearing that a continental hegemon would create a powerful armada and subjugate the British Isles, England consistently strove to weaken the strongest power in continental Europe (Vattel qtd. in Gellman 1989, 159); England, and later Britain, was thus the “holder of the balance” (Bacon qtd. in Maurseth 1964, 123; Morgenthau 1978, 352). To speak of balancing as a law of politics would be to equate the English foreign policy with the foreign policy of the world. Moreover, English balancing was limited to Europe (Sheehan 1989, 128) – likely because that was the only continent where it did not enjoy supremacy (Pollard 1923, 61) – and Britain hedged its bets when dealing with powerful continental foes, such as Napoleon (Rosecrance and Lo 1996) and Hitler (Trachtenberg 2003, 189), attacking only when all other options failed.9

The clarity of the balancing concept is further muddled by the ways in which it was deliberately misemployed, frequently by English statesmen and jurists – a point made repeatedly by Carr (1939). In essence, a balance was any distribution of capabilities that favored the country that claimed a balance was in place. Hence, Britain in the 1880s spoke of an equilibrium in the Mediterranean that really signified British dominance (Schroeder 1989, 140). A few decades earlier, German and Italian nationalists claimed that destroying lesser German and Italian states for the purpose of unification would promote the European balance (Schroeder 1989, 139). According to the latter interpretation, a balance undermined the very object it was meant to protect.

9 This is not to say that Britain did not prepare for war with those states, including by engaging in costly arms races, but it did not strike the targets preemptively.
Modern IR scholars have attempted to increase the precision of balance of power theory, not always successfully. Balancing theorists claim that alignment is guided by the desire to align against the strongest or most threatening state, and assume that such balancing is always in a state’s interest. In a system characterized by anarchy – defined as a lack of a world government – each state must ensure its own security (Mearsheimer 1990). This leads rational states to care exclusively about their relative power. States cannot afford to subordinate their interests to the interests of sub-national groups; nor is there room for friction between domestic groups that might have a different interpretation of the national interest (Grieco 1997). When the use of force is always an option and there is no actor to punish aggression, the only way states can survive is to prevent the rise of a hegemon. The existence of even a benevolent hegemon cannot be tolerated, because it is impossible to know whether the hegemon will remain benevolent (Walt 1985, 5). It follows that any state wishing to preserve its security must align against any state in a position to seek hegemony. Not only does joining the weaker side prevent a state from being dominated in the future, it gives that weaker state more influence over its allies – resulting from its meaningful contribution to the coalition (Walt 1985, 6).

The balancing framework does allow for exceptions. Scholars within this school assert that the polarity of the international system affects the efficiency of the balancing process (Christensen and Snyder 1990, 140). A multipolar system, denoting the existence of more than two great powers, is said to be more inefficient due to a higher potential for miscalculations of relative power and opponent’s resolve (Mearsheimer 1990, 14). States that are weak (Walt 1985, 17) or in a geographically disadvantageous position (Mearsheimer 1990, 15) might find it difficult to balance. Unit-level variables
are added into the equation. States possessing nuclear weapons find it unnecessary to balance owing to their security being ensured (Waltz 1993, 53). Misperception of the relative strength of offensive and defensive military technology creates obstacles for potential balancing (Christensen 1997). The balancing policy can also fail due to successful strategies pursued by the potential hegemon, such as splitting a potential blocking coalition (Crawford 2011) or masking their expansionist intentions (Fiammenghi 2011). Lastly, states can refuse to balance because their rulers are simply irrational, meaning that balancing can fail even if all the conditions for it are present (Waltz 1997; Mearsheimer 2001, 12).

This paints a confusing and, to a large degree, arbitrary picture of the mechanisms by which balancing is supposed to work. This problem is exacerbated by the existence of two major competing balancing theories.

One of the theories, created by Waltz (1979), deals solely with the capabilities of potential opponents. States will generally align against the most powerful state in terms of material power; some might not, but for that, they will pay a price. The potential hegemon need not be hostile or provocative. The very possibility of aggression when combined with the high probability of the potential hegemon’s victory forces every rational ruler to balance as a way to ensure their state’s survival.

Walt (1985) offered an alternative theory, hypothesizing that states align against those that threaten them most, with aggregate material power being only one aspect of a potential threat. Thus, a powerful state can avert balancing coalitions against itself by

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10 Interestingly, many of these scholars have argued for decades that the United States did not follow the dictums of balance of power theory (Payne 2007), a rather large anomaly for a theory concerned predominantly with the behavior of a handful of the most powerful countries in the world.

11 For that reason, Waltz (1997, 915) argues his theory cannot be falsified by a lack of balancing behavior.

12 The other elements of threat are proximity, offensive capability, and offensive intentions (Walt 1985, 9).
behaving non-threateningly on the international stage. Neither Walt’s balance of threat theory nor Waltz’ neorealism are applied consistently, however. A major proponent of Waltz’ theory, Layne (1993, 45) argues that other states will balance against the US if it behaves aggressively, implying that intentions matter. Walt (1985, 15) contradicts his own contention that intentions matter by saying “intentions can change and perceptions are unreliable, it is safer to balance against potential threats than to hope that strong states will remain benevolent”. The clear implication is that states should not wait to be threatened before they balance against the powerful. Essentially, there is a great deal of confusion amongst balance of power theorists about how much of a “law” balancing is and just what states balance against. What all these theorists do have in common is the belief that states act as unitary actors and try to maximize their own security, which cannot be done as long as potential or actual hegemons exist. The causes of this behavior are anarchy and the distribution of capabilities; other factors, including the characteristics of the states involved and the history of their interactions, are of secondary importance. Behaviors that might breed hostility over time are left unexplored (Coplin et al. 1973).

The balancing explanation provides a rationale for states always aligning against the strongest state or perhaps the several strongest states in the system, but tells us little about alignments in which these states are not involved. It ignores the immediate interests of states or their leaders, who are unlikely to have the long shadow of the future that the theory implies. Nor does it differentiate between different types of alignments or justify its assumption that all issue types are treated through a security prism and addressed in a manner consistent with that schema. Instead, proponents of the
explanation would currently expect balancing behavior against the United States by all states on all issues, a prediction that has been indisputably disproven.

The literature on bandwagoning is narrower than the one on balancing. Few claim that bandwagoning is a law of politics or that there is a natural tendency towards it. Walt (1988, 282) defines it as involving “unequal exchange; the vulnerable state makes asymmetric concessions to the dominant power and accepts a subordinate role”. But bandwagoning theorists protest that this definition makes bandwagoning merely a form of capitulation (Sweeney, 2004, 430), and instead define the term as joining the stronger side, not the bigger threat (Schweller 1994, 81). The purpose of balancing is said to be an attempt to minimize losses, while the goal of bandwagoning is the maximization of gains (Schweller 1994, 74). States do not pursue security all or even most of the time, and are instead motivated by profit or reward (Schroeder 1994, 120; Schweller 1994, 79). In “jackal bandwagoning”, weaker states side with an aggressive rising power in order to achieve an unearned share of the spoils (Schweller 1994, 93-5). Historical examples include Mussolini’s Italy allying with Hitler’s Germany and Japan siding with the Triple Entente. The immediate compensation and low cost arising from bandwagoning also makes it the preferred policy of states lacking elite consensus (Schweller 2004, 171).

Bandwagoning theorists do not argue that states always bandwagon; rather, they claim that bandwagoning takes place when security is not at a premium (Sweeney 2004, 444). They do not, however, provide criteria for determining when that is the case. Unlike supporters of balancing, who tend to highlight a handful of balancing wars against aggressive major powers, bandwagoning scholars make use of a greater variety of historical evidence to buttress their position. Schroeder (1994, 117) examines several
time periods between the 17th and 20th centuries and discovers that bandwagoning was used far more frequently than balancing. In fact, he finds that balancing has been rare and only used when all other strategies failed. This is unsurprising given the costs states face when balancing, along with problems of coordination.\(^\text{13}\) If states pursue only their immediate interests, then buck-passing, free riding, and attempts to obtain favors from stronger states should be the norm (Wohlforth 1999, 29; Elman 2004, 563).

Bandwagoning theorists also point out that even states looking to maximize security have reason to bandwagon with the dominant power of the day. Siding with a status quo power, even if it happens to be the strongest state, is entirely rational, as the main sources of danger to status quo states, weak or strong, are revisionist states (Sweeney 2004, 434). By contrast, balance of power theory largely rules out the possibility of states being revisionist, as that would be contrary to their assumption that states seek to maximize security and not power. Some balance of power theorists try to deal with this dilemma by adding an ad hoc assumption. They claim that, despite all leaders knowing that acts of revisionism have always led to the formation of a balancing coalition, some will still choose to go through with those policies because they have “been able to persuade themselves that skillful diplomacy and clever strategy would enable them to transcend the normal processes of balance-of-power politics” (Waltz 1988, 625). However, this bases the efficiency of the balancing process on the rationality of leaders, suggesting that only irrational rulers would violate the theory’s prescriptions, making the theory ultimately unfalsifiable. Proponents of bandwagoning avoid that

\[^{13}\text{Hui (2004, 192) cites Han Fei, a philosopher during the Chinese Warring State period, making the point that states rescuing their weaker neighbors sap their own strength, eventually leading to their own defeat.}\]
pitfall, though they do not provide a priori measures for determining when security is at a premium, a necessary condition for bandwagoning behavior.

The main flaw with the balancing explanation is that it assumes a single-mindedness from a state’s leaders that is unlikely to be found in the empirical world and examines the decision to align in a complete void. Leaders, whose own interests are left unexamined, are meant to ignore every objective other than the prevention of hegemony.

Attempts by great powers to radically increase their capabilities through the use of force are incredibly rare (Wolfers 1952, 137), with the two most recent examples being Nazi Germany and Napoleonic France.\textsuperscript{14}

According to both the balancing and bandwagoning explanations, rulers are meant to ignore the quality of their relationships and the prospect of future cooperation when making the decision to align. They are supposed to align with states with which they have a recent history of intense hostility, and do so against their existing allies. No attention is paid to the complications a leader would face with attempting to convince their constituents, whether in a democracy or autocracy, with the Orwellian rhetoric that the enemy of yesteryear is the friend of today. In fact, there are no instances of a major power fighting a war on the side of a country just to join a war against that country in a 20-year period power since the Napoleonic Wars.\textsuperscript{15} The likelihood of reciprocation is also disregarded. While the weaker state in a dispute might appreciate support more than

\textsuperscript{14} Even if we look at the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, during which the balance of power idea became popularized, balancing stopped being a useful policy by the latter half of the century, as the threat of domination by Hapsburg Spain and Bourbon France receded (Black 1983).

\textsuperscript{15} See Appendix 1 for a list of major powers that had the opportunity to meet these criteria, but did not. Moreover, there are no post-German unification examples of two major powers fighting a multilateral war on the same side and then fighting a multi-lateral war on the opposite side. China’s actions in the Korean War come closest, but China was not designated a major power by the Correlates of War prior to 1950.
the stronger one, this does not mean it will have the ability or willingness to compensate the intervener for their effort. If the intervener and the weaker state also specialize in a similar type of resources, broadly defined, or compete with each other over salient stakes, then the intervention makes even less sense.

2.2 Homophily Research Program

The next two research programs that are examined each deal with one of the above two criticisms: the homophily/similarity explanations take history, though not the shadow of the future, into account, and the regime security theories take a leader’s interests seriously. Nonetheless, neither addresses the flaw tackled by the other, and both have their own shortfalls. The homophily program rejects or minimizes the role of power in alignment decisions, choosing to privilege the influence of similarity, particularly as it relates to regime type. While this school of thought is far more diverse than the capability one, making use of different assumptions and providing diverse causal mechanisms for state similarity’s impact, there is agreement that states choose to align with those that are most like them, whether because it implies homogeneous interests, an affinity toward similar actors, or higher trust in the likelihood of reciprocation.

The homophily explanations attribute the effect of similar institutions on alignment behavior to psychological and/or interest-based causes. For the former, they argue that leaders view states that are similar to their own as being part of an ingroup, and states that are different as part of an outgroup (Hermann and Kegley 1995; Corbetta 2010). A ruler’s perception of states is then colored by the degree of similarity between that state and his own (Werner and Lemke 1997; Maoz 2010). A democratic ruler will reach different conclusions about the same action carried out by an autocrat and a
democrat, which will affect the direction of their state’s foreign policy (Melin and Koch 2010). This line of reasoning was first popularized with Rummel’s adaptation of social field theory to international relations. Rummel (1977) argued that the distance between two actors on key attributes determine their cooperative and conflictual behavior toward one another. This would later act as a starting point for democratic peace theorists.

On the interest side, homophily scholars contend that leaders of states with the same institutions tend to have matching interests, while leaders of states with different institutions having reason to suspect that each is trying to undermine the other. Lai and Reiter (2000) argue that democracies find it easier to credibly commit, making them more reliable alliance partners. Therefore, jointly democratic allies do not have to fear being taken advantage of. Werner and Lemke (1997) make the point that the ability of rulers to stay in power is undercut by a dissimilar state weakening the legitimacy of their political system; history provides many examples of democracies overtly and covertly attempting to weaken the domestic support of autocratic regimes. As a result, similar regimes have a greater incentive to help each other, which explains the disproportionately high number of alliances between democracies (Siverson and Emmons 1991). Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004, 779) do find that democracies are less likely to honor alliances than autocracies, which is seemingly an anomaly for this research program. However, the authors point out that alliances are entered into when the prospect of reciprocation is in doubt, suggesting that democracies generally support each other without the need for a formal agreement.

If we conceive of alignment more broadly, then the democratic peace literature also has something relevant to say about the alignment patterns of states with similar regime types. After all, if democracies very rarely have militarized conflicts with one
another, that should also mean that democracies will not align against other democracies, at least in the type of disputes that have a high likelihood of getting militarized.

Democratic peace theorists provide two sets of explanations for this expectation. The first is a normative one, and asserts states externalize their domestic norms of behavior into the international realm (Maoz and Russett 1993). According to this logic, rulers expect the leaders of other states to treat them as they would their domestic opponents. If the latter are dealt with exclusively with violence and coercion, the odds of the two working together will be significantly smaller. The proponents of the institutional explanation claim that leaders of states with larger winning coalitions have to rely more on good public policy than on paying off supporters, meaning that democracies do not get involved in wars they cannot win (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999). Knowing that democratic leaders try harder, other democrats avoid targeting their states. In terms of alignment, a democratic ruler will think twice about aligning against another democracy as they will not want to end up on the losing side of the dispute.

Unlike authors in the capability research program, similarity theorists provide a concrete set of interests, at both the leader and state level, which should motivate rulers to align with a particular type of states. They provide a less thorough case as to why the effect of certain institutions should be dyadic and not monadic. For instance, unless we assume that autocrats are entirely indifferent about winning conflicts they engage in, they should be less likely to target democracies than they are to target autocracies. Consequently, all states should be more likely to align with a democrat than an autocrat.

The more fundamental problem with this literature is the ambiguity of the very concept of similarity. By focusing on vague or contested concepts like democracy,
homophily theorists are unable to provide a precise causal link between the similarity and alignment behavior. Depending on the definition one uses, democracy can entail everything from simply having competitive elections (Alvarez et al. 1996) to allowing freedom of expression and association (Dahl 1971) to the competitiveness of executive recruitment (Marshall et al. 2011). The commonly used measure of democracy has six components: regulation of executive recruitment and political participation, competitiveness of said recruitment and participation, the openness of executive recruitment, and the degree of executive constraints (Marshall et al. 2011). None refer to the lack of violence against domestic opponents, and a state can be deemed a democracy despite having a narrow winning coalition. The lack of differentiation between states that are labeled democracies is less a problem than throwing all non-democracies into the same regime type category. There is arguably less in common between a monarchy and a military dictatorship than between a state that is barely over the threshold of democracy and one that is slightly under. Some of the biggest challenges to the legitimacy of autocratic rulers have come from other types of autocratic rulers. Illiberal nationalists in Europe delegitimized multiethnic empires, and Arab nationalists overthrew several traditional monarchs. The Saudi royal family is less concerned with US democratization efforts in the Middle East than it is with infiltration by the Iranian theocracy.

2.3 Regime Security Research Program

The regime security literature is more explicit in dealing with the interests of rulers. It starts with the empirical observation that the domestic structure of third world states is frequently closer to anarchy than it is to hierarchy (David 1991, 242). The rulers of those states tend to lack domestic legitimacy and control over their territory – a
consequence of the arbitrariness of most third world borders – which precludes them from commanding the loyalty of their people (Ayoob 1984, 45; David 1991, 239). A related challenge is extracting resources from a people with no national consciousness and a country with little infrastructure. This has a devastating effect on those leaders’ ability to ensure their states’ external security (Barnett 1994, 370). Of greater interest to these rulers, the internal and external sovereignty of their state is likelier to be threatened by internal opponents than external ones (Cooper 2004, 327).¹⁶ Coups claim the careers and lives of far more third world leaders than do external invasions (David 1991, 238; Barnett 1994, 373). If these rulers want to stay in power, they need to employ interstate alignment as a bargaining chip, using it to obtain assistance against domestic opponents (David 1991, 235-236). Whether that requires aligning with a potential hegemon in exchange for equipment or outright intervention, or aligning with a democracy that has the capacity to provide more foreign aid, it is a small price to pay for one’s life.

The key assumption of the regime security literature is that the main objective of any third world leader is political survival (David 1991, 236; Miller and Toristyn 2005, 332). Putnam (1988, 434) suggests that this might be true for all states, as leaders craft their international policy in a manner that will satisfy domestic interests that will keep them in power. Unlike many assumptions in IR, this assumption is easily testable. If regime survival was the main goal of leaders everywhere or even just in the third world, we should see a vast majority of leaders clinging to power through any means necessary. And yet, numerous leaders, in the third world and elsewhere, have been ousted without

¹⁶ Cooper (2004, 335) notes the example of Kuwait, which resisted intelligence cooperation with other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council due to its rivalry with Saudi Arabia, but reversed course in the wake of an attempted assassination of the Kuwait emir.
using all means at their disposal to stay in power. The ones that are unwilling to let go tend to fear for their life or wealth if they were to step down, a situation that is not very common. Instead, it is not inconceivable that leaders have other policy preferences that they rank higher than their personal ability to convert those preferences into policy. The expectation that these preferences are more likely to be attained if the leader relinquishes power is probably behind numerous instances of monarchs and military juntas stepping aside to let others take their place. Moreover, even if some types of rulers were predominantly concerned with survival, the regime security school does not tell us anything about alignments between states that do not have weak, illegitimate leaders, or even weak leaders that are presently not facing a domestic threat. In such instances, regime security proponents tend to defer to balancing theorists.

### 2.4 Flaws in the Literature

Although each of the three research programs reviewed thus far contributed valuable insights into who states might want to align with, none approaches alignment in a holistic manner. First, not one of the explanations deals with the two-stage nature of alignment. Before leaders can decide to choose a particular side in a dispute, they must make the decision to get involved in the first place. The type of states that has the capacity to get involved or might benefit from the involvement is not representative of all states. If only some states or states in specific situations will enter into an existing conflict, then it is a non-random subset of the state population that gets to decide whom

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17 There have been a few exceptions, including Altfeld and Bueno de Mesquita (1979), Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004), Corbetta (2010), Melin and Koch (2010), but their research strategy has generally been overlooked by other scholars of alignment.
to align with. Second, none of the research programs adequately account for different types of alignment. Capability theorists make an arbitrary distinction between security and non-security issues, as if the former are always salient and the latter never are. The others do not even make that point, assuming that whichever type of alignment they examine is representative of all alignments. On the one extreme are capability researchers, who believe that a theory of alignment can be obtained entirely in the context of war (Walt 1985; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Schweller 1994). On the other are some homophily theorists, who believe the same about voting in the General Assembly (Russett 1966; Powers 1980; Voeten 2004).

A third problem with the theories examined is that their empirical predictions are not directly comparable. Capability theorists are interested in the affairs of great powers, and therefore limit their focus to Western Europe. The inexplicable lack of great power wars over the previous half a century also pushes them in the direction of studying pre-World War II European alignments. Homophily theorists go in the opposite direction, though for different reasons. Until the First World War, there was not much diversity in terms of regime types. With a few exceptions, states were ruled by either absolute or constitutional monarchs. Basing alignment decisions on similarity would not be of much use during that time. World War I gave rise to numerous democracies. Many reverted to authoritarianism within a decade, however. It was not until World War II and decolonization before the situation was transformed. Even then, democracy, particularly of the liberal variety, stubbornly remained a predominantly Western phenomenon. As a result, omitted variable bias always lurks when similarity in regime types is used to explain alignment decisions. Regime security authors err in the opposite direction,
restricting their analysis to Africa and the Middle East, where the conditions posited by their theories are mostly likely to exist. In the end, empirical support for one research program does not act as disconfirming evidence for the others.

Beyond the question of empirics, the three research programs are based on shaky micro-foundations. None pays enough attention to what statesmen might hope to gain out of alignment beyond the narrow goal of staying in power. States might not be equally likely to repay benefactors for past support. Rulers might find themselves unable to carry out a preferred alignment policy due to severe domestic constraints, be they a strong domestic opposition, a lack of resources, or more salient domestic priorities. In order to address some of these shortcomings, I turn to the disparate reciprocation literature, dominated by neoliberal institutionalists and area studies experts.

2.5 Reciprocation Literature

The idea that actors help others with the expectation of receiving some form of assistance in return is not a novel one. Over a century ago, Hershey (1905, 60) predicted that cooperation between the US and Britain in the Spanish-American war and cooperation between those two states and Japan in the intervening period would lead to acts of cooperation in the future. A decade later, his prediction was confirmed; all three states fought on the same side of World War I. Notwithstanding this general understanding of reciprocation, the concept was popularized in IR by Axelrod and later Keohane. In his widely-read book *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Axelrod (1984) put forth specific criteria that made reciprocation an evolutionary dominant strategy in iterated games. Using a round robin computer tournament as his evidence, Axelrod established that a TIT FOR TAT strategy is superior to all alternatives. The strategy is
incredibly simple. The player starts with a cooperative move, and then reciprocates every succeeding move from the other player. If the other player cooperates in the first round, so does the TIT FOR TAT player in the second round. If the other player defects in the second round, then the TIT FOR TAT player defects in the third round.

According to Axelrod (1984, 46), this strategy won because of three key characteristics: niceness, forgiveness, and retaliation. A TIT FOR TAT strategy is nice in that it starts with a cooperative move, thus avoiding defection from retaliatory strategies. A TIT FOR TAT strategy is forgiving in that it is willing to cooperate in response to a cooperative move regardless of how many times the other player defected in the past. The strategy is retaliatory as it defects in response to every defection by the other player.

The implication of Axelrod’s work for international politics is that countries should reciprocate behavior good and bad. Any cooperative move should be countered with a cooperative move, and every act of hostility should be responded to in kind. Keohane (1986) pointed out that a strict TIT FOR TAT strategy, or what he called specific reciprocity, can become extremely dangerous for interstate relations. The reason is what Axelrod called “echo effects”: a rivalry that starts has no way of ending (Keohane 1986, 10). A lesser problem caused by specific reciprocity is that exact measurements of exchanged values is rarely possible in the international arena, thereby limiting the ability of a state to respond properly to positive acts by another country (Keohane 1986, 7).

Keohane (1986) was more supportive of another type of reciprocity, which he calls diffuse reciprocity. Under diffuse reciprocity, states reciprocate cooperative behaviors not because it would lead to continued cooperation, but rather to improve the condition of the entire system, of which they are a part (Keohane 1986, 20). This
rationale for cooperation creates mutual trust (Keohane 1986, 21), resulting in a deeper relationship that is unlikely to ever produce a rivalry spiral. NATO and the “special relationship” between the US and UK can be considered examples of diffuse reciprocity. The flaw with this concept is that diffuse reciprocity can only occur in the context of strong international regime links and shared interests, which, as even Keohane (1986, 23) admits, is far from the norm in international affairs. The benefit of diffuse reciprocity is thus unlikely to be shared by much of the world.

The idea that international politics operates on the basis of a reciprocity logic is not without its critics. The main obstacles to reciprocation, and cooperation in general, according to the concept’s critics are cheating and the pursuit of relative gains (Grieco 1988). A state would be hesitant to aid another today if the expected payoff never arrives; a state can, for example, offer to disarm in an act of mutual disarmament but then go back on its word after the other side follows through. Cooperating with a country today can also make it sufficiently powerful to use those newfound capabilities to extract painful concessions from the first state. Maoz (2010) also made the point that non-democracies might exploit cooperation, and demonstrated that only democratic networks regularly make use of the TIT FOR TAT strategy.

The preponderance of evidence has not justified the skepticism of reciprocity’s critics. Using Rummel’s Dimensionality of Nations project, Sullivan (1972) shows that past levels of alignment consistently predict present alignment behavior for great powers and other states active in international affairs. Drury et al. (2005, 466) similarly find that allies – states that cooperate militarily – receive humanitarian aid at a rate seven times as high as non-allies. Numerous case studies provide evidence for a similar pattern of
behavior. Despite opposition to colonialism, Pakistan supported Portugal in its conflict over Goa, an act clearly intended as a retaliatory measure against India (Rastogi 1961, 167). Sri Lanka rapidly improved its relations with the Communist bloc after US foreign aid dried up (Kodikara 1973, 1126). Bilateral reciprocity, of both the cooperative and hostile variety, was also the norm in the behavior of Middle Eastern states from 1979 to 1997 (Goldstein et al. 2001). The key insight that can be gleamed from each of these studies is that the “national interest” can be pursued in a multitude of ways, albeit some constricted by domestic and international pressures. What drives countries away from past alignment partners are not changes in power distribution or sudden realizations that the other state has a different type of regime, but rather a pattern of hostile behavior.

Existing theories of reciprocation are not hampered by many of the theoretical limitations of the capability, homophily, and regime security research programs, but still possess three significant weaknesses. First, a reciprocation strategy would not be able to explain breaks in alignment policies. Both virtuous and vicious cycles of interstate behavior are intermittently broken. A theory of alignment based solely on a reciprocation logic fails to explain those structural breaks. Second, reciprocation ignores all but the most recent past. States are expected to cooperate in year $t$ just because they did in year $t - 1$, even if the two states have a long history of conflict; the same is true in reverse. Yet, politicians and the public have memories, and domestic interests coalesce around a specific foreign policy over a long period of time. A sharp change in the behavior of another state might lead some to reexamine their views and interests, but grievances and gratitude do not disintegrate from one or two unexpected changes in policy.
Third, reciprocation models fail to account for the future; they do not say why countries would want continued cooperation or continued conflict. Joint cooperation might be Pareto efficient within a dyad, but the value of such cooperation must also incorporate the opportunity cost of not pursuing cooperation with another actor. This is particularly true when the cooperation creates dependency and is costly to undo. Correspondingly, a spiral of hostility rarely benefits the participants. Even the possibility of successful general deterrence does not fully explain the need for negative reciprocation. The resources used for continued conflict cannot be utilized elsewhere. The other side might also respond better to carrots than to sticks, despite the existence of moral hazard. Another factor must be present that incentivizes statesmen to maintain a hostile pattern of behavior. With these points in mind, the following chapter uses reciprocation as a motivator of alignment behavior, but attempts to resolve each of the aforementioned shortcomings of reciprocation through the use of an issue paradigm. Briefly, the proposed reciprocal alignment theory deals with the problem of breaks in alignment patterns by emphasizing the rise and resolution of issues, along with domestic changes. It addresses the flaw with using history by allowing past alignment decisions to exert a diminishing effect over an extended period of time. The theory provides a logic for continued cooperation or conflict that is based on the empowerment of domestic interests that push for the maintenance of status quo policies.
Chapter 3 – Reciprocal Alignment Theory

As the previous chapter makes clear, the extant theories of political alignment suffer from a variety of flaws, chief among them being the atomistic manner in the study of alignment and the lack of concern for the history of interaction. The reciprocation literature, which has occasionally been used to explain alignment decisions, avoids most of those shortcomings, but is not without weaknesses either. For these reasons, I create a new theory of alignment that makes heavy use of the issue paradigm and the logic of reciprocation. The new theory, which I call reciprocal alignment theory, integrates a range of alignment explanation into one over-arching theory of alignment. It seeks to explain the rationale for alignment itself, and not just for specific forms of alignment. It does not treat all forms of alignment as identical, but does point to significant similarities between them. In essence, the theory suggests that past behavior structures the schema through which actors view current interactions and creates a set of incentives that push those actors toward maintaining the same type of relations that they have enjoyed in the past. Only under conditions of decisive change do those schemas and incentives diminish, allowing policies that bring about a break from the past.

To summarize the theory, alignment is defined as the stance a state takes on a well-defined proposal that is intended to resolve a stake over which two or more states have conflicting positions; it is a valuable tool to leaders wishing to expand their capacity to pursue a wide variety of interests. Alignment is not without costs, however, and pursuing it is not always a viable or efficient option. State leaders, the actors responsible for their country’s foreign policy, must make two decisions before their state becomes aligned with another. As the first step, they must establish whether they want to take a
concrete position on a stake involving other states. Rulers make this determination on the basis of several factors. They want to make sure they can contribute to the resolution of the stake. They will also find it easier to obtain domestic support for foreign involvement when there is a history of cooperation or conflict with one or both disputants. A lower cost of alignment can nevertheless make a great number of stakes riper for intervention.

In the second stage of alignment, when leaders take sides in disputes, two sets of factors affect all alignment decision, and another two gain importance depending on a state’s present circumstances. The main objective of alignment is to procure future positive alignment and to avoid future negative alignment; this goal is what makes reciprocation the key to alignment behavior. Rulers will align with states with which they have a cooperative history of relations, and against those with whom they have a conflictual history. The willingness to align with a state is negated when the latter is ruled by an unreliable regime, whether because it is unstable or unrepresentative, or because it had reneged on alignment commitments in the past. The uncertainty of reciprocation associated with these regimes makes them ill-suited cooperation partners.

In terms of context-specific correlates of alignment, I focus on situations where a state has a relationship of dependence on another. The ruler of the former will feel strong pressure to align with the latter, regardless of the stake being disputed. Consequently, leaders are pressured into making alignments that they might otherwise prefer to avoid. This is far from the only context where that influences decisions to align, but for reasons of brevity and availability of relevant data, it will be the only one tested here.

The cost and discernibility of the preferred form of alignment play a large role in both phases of the alignment process. Leaders dependent on a state for future assistance
will make their positive alignments with that state as discernible as possible. Conversely, if a leader has to align against a state that can impose a high price for that act, they will make that alignment indiscernible. Unfortunately for these leaders, indiscernible alignments are also unlikely to be reciprocated. The cost component exerts a different effect, allowing states with fewer resources to take part. Nevertheless, past alignments and dyadic history will continue to exert a strong influence on alignment decisions.

3.1 Science and the Social Sphere

The idea of generating theories with falsifiable hypotheses entered the social sciences through a philosophy of science concerned entirely with the natural sciences. This behavioralist approach was responsible for immense contributions to IR by forcing scholars to be clear with their concepts and to state hypotheses relating to those concepts in manner that allows for falsification. Every form of research has its shortcomings, and behavioralism is no exception. Some of those flaws must be accepted as the price for adopting natural scientific methods; others can be addressed or potentially overcome.

The most obvious predicament resulting from the adoption of natural scientific methods to the social sphere is the ability of those methods to incorporate free will. Every factor of importance can show a particular choice to be a bad one, and yet an individual can insist on taking that option. Criminals steal even when the likelihood of getting caught is high, drug addicts maintain their drug habits even when it might cost them their lives, and statesmen start wars they have no hope of winning. The existence of free will has two implications for social scientific research. The first implication is that it rules out the possibility of the type of theories seen in the natural sciences, which must be “cast-iron, generalizable, and amenable to covering law explanations” (Almond and
Genco 1977, 503). Unless the effect of a social variable is vacuously important, it is
unlikely to unfailingly predict another variable. A social scientific theory can posit a set
of constraints, but it cannot hope to explain how every individual will respond to those
constraints. Assuming most people do respond to constraints, the effects of variables in
the social sciences will be probabilistic and not deterministic. Free will does not rule out
the possibility of explanation in the social sciences altogether, as individuals can act
according to certain rules even if they are not driven by nature to do so. For example, we
can hypothesize that someone with a 9 to 5 job will leave their house before 9 AM even
though that person is free to stay at home (Nicholson 1996, 118).

The second implication of free will is that actors can learn from experience. No
two decisions are independent, meaning that observations in cross-sectional or time series
models are not truly comparable. If having tanks improves the probability of victory in a
war, then all states have an incentive to build tanks, annulling the advantage of this type
of weaponry. Though not entirely satisfactory, memory can be incorporated into theory,
and statistical tools, such as ones proposed by Beck et al. (1998), can be used to account
for some of the temporal interdependence.

The social scientific enterprise faces two further difficulties, which it shares with
the natural sciences. The first relates to the production of theory, and the second to its
accuracy. Social scientific theories are based on assumptions that can only be challenged
on logical and philosophical grounds (Shoemaker et al. 2004). The higher the ratio of
assumptions to testable hypotheses in a theory, the less powerful that theory (Shoemaker
et al. 2004). Even if all of a theory’s premises are logically deduced from the initial
assumptions, we can only say that the premises preserve the truthfulness of the
assumptions; deduction does not produce new truths (Chalmers 1999). Flawed assumptions will lead to flawed theory, and an overabundance of assumptions will lead to an explanation that has little relation to the empirical reality. However, even sound assumptions do not tell us whether a theory is a good predictor of the empirical realm.

Provided that assumptions cannot be tested, the utility of a theory must arise from another source. That source is the explanatory power of a theory. A good theory must be able to explain a larger set of phenomena than its competitors (Lakatos 1970). The relationship to competing theories is important because the accuracy of any theory cannot be verified. What could be determined is whether a theory is closer to the truth than its competitors (Popper 1963). An added complication is the trade-off between case-specific precision and generalizability. A theory with enough unique components might be able to perfectly explain a particular case, but would be inapplicable to all other environments (Bueno de Mesquita 1985). If explanatory power is an important indicator of a good theory, then generalizability must take precedence over idiosyncratic description.

This analysis suggests several implications for a theory of political alignment. First, the theory must be probabilistic, focusing on the internal and external constraints faced by leaders. Leaders should usually, but not always, respond to those constraints. Second, it must account for learning. State actions must have consequences. Betrayal or a lack of reliability by a state or category of states should be reflected in future alignment decisions. Third, a theory of alignment must make use of a limited number of assumptions while justifying the inclusion of each one. And fourth, the strength of the alignment theory must be judged not only on the basis of standard statistical tests, but also in relation to opposing explanations.
3.2 Issue Research Program as the Foundation of Reciprocal Alignment Theory

The reciprocal alignment theory presented here takes the issue paradigm as its starting point. The issue paradigm in political science has its origins in the writings of Easton (1965), which moved analysis of politics away from discussion of power and toward contention over issues (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 30). Rosenau later adapted Easton’s framework to the study of international politics, which he believed first required the formulation of a typology of issues (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 30). The new paradigm abandoned the previous emphasis of IR on the struggle for power, and instead used issue generation, proposals for issue resolution, and the determination of issue positions as the bedrock of its positive heuristics.  

Mansbach and Vasquez (1981) followed Rosenau’s pre-theory (1966) with a new issue-based theory of politics, covering every step of the issue cycle, from the genesis of an issue to its removal from the agenda. Within this approach, an issue is a general subject of a dispute; it presupposes disagreement (Diehl 1992). An issue can be narrowed down to specific stakes, which involve concrete attempts to allocate value, and can arise from either the environment or relevant actors (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 74). An actor is relevant if it has the capability to affect an outcome (Shapiro 1973, 39). Abortion might signify an issue over which political actors in the United States disagree, while a piece of legislation requiring parental consent for an abortion would be the stake. Issues that arise over time are not constant, and neither is their salience. During the Cold

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18 See Lakatos (1970) for a discussion of the role a research programs plays in establishing positive and negative heuristics. In brief, positive heuristics tell scientists which questions are worth asking, and negative heuristics provide a list of inquiries that are considered pseudo-scientific.
War, political elites in some states were able to fund terrorist groups without fear of the issue making it on the international agenda. Similar actions in the post-2001 world would lead to a harsh and immediate response. While issues and stakes refer to topics of disagreement, an issue position refers to the stance an actor takes toward any proposal to resolve a stake (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 188). An issue position is two-dimensional: it incorporates both the stance on an issue and the certainty with which that stance is held (Coplin et al. 1973). Once a stake is resolved, it is removed from the agenda, though it could suffer the same fate at an earlier stage if it loses its salience (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 120).

Three key components of this theory will provide the underpinnings of the alignment explanation presented here. The theoretical domain of the latter is by practical necessity limited to one stage of the issue cycle: the formation of an issue position, which eventually leads to the authoritative allocation of value. The three elements are: the use of a stake as the unit of analysis, the privileging of actors responsible for decision-making, and the tripartite basis for issue position decisions. The first two serve as assumptions on which the theory is built; the third, in an amended form, will help answer the question of which side a statesman is pushed to take in the event of a dispute between other actors.

I start with the assumption that states have no interests apart from those attributed to them by their rulers. In a broad sense, a policy might be harmful or beneficial to the long-term security and/or prosperity of a state, but the state is not an entity that can create policy objectives or implement them. That responsibility falls to a state’s leader, and it is that leader who has preferences over how stakes are resolved. To equate the leader with the state would require making several untenable assumptions. The ruler would have to
be entirely altruistic, placing the interest of a collectivity above their own interest or the interest of their family or clan. The leader would need to determine an objective method for divining the interest of the state, and possess complete information about the expected effect a given policy would have on that abstract interest. They would also need to have the unwavering support of most of society in order to implement that national interest, even if doing so would be disadvantageous to parts of that society. In sum, basing a theory on the idea of a national interest requires assuming an all-knowing and altruistic leader, along with an unquestionably loyal and altruistic society.

The emphasis on a leader’s interest entails rejecting the classical realist and neorealist assumptions about states aiming primarily to maximize their power or security. I also reject the contrary notion that the motivation for every governmental policy can be reduced to the desire of a leader to stay in power. Few statesmen want power for power’s sake, especially when the power prevents them from achieving their other objectives. Democratic rulers regularly leave office instead of attempting to subvert the constitution to stay in power. The same is generally true of one-party states, such as modern China and PRI-ruled Mexico. The reason top officials from other autocracies tend to stay in power until forced from office has more to do with what might happen to them or their supporters once they are out of office than with wanting to maintain their position.

Instead of the extreme altruism or power-hunger assumptions, I rely on the logic of bounded rationality. In terms of rationality, leaders act according to their own preferences, though those preferences can take into account the interests of others (Kirchgässner 2004). Those interests are exogenous to the stakes that are being resolved. One ruler might seek to expand the territory of their state, another might wish to spread
Marxism, and yet another to aggrandize himself. Rationality only requires them to consistently pursue those goals, and does not refer to the ends the leaders attempt to achieve.\(^{19}\) What leaders can or cannot do is limited by constraints, whether individual, domestic, or systemic (Forester 1984). The bounded aspect of rationality refers to a possible lack of information regarding the variety of policy choices and the net benefit of the available options. Rationality might also be bounded by various psychological factors, group dynamics, and time constraints during crises.

In the context of an issue paradigm, bounded rationality means a leader ranks stakes in the order of their importance to them and then attempts to get their way on as many as possible, stressing those at the top of the list. The more salient the stake under dispute, the more resources a leader should be willing to allocate to ensure that the final distribution of value from that stake matches their issue position.

Alignment theory is agnostic as to the issues that are salient at any given time and to the preferences leaders have over how those issues are resolved. The main reason for this stance is the reality that issues that are salient for one leader or people are frequently not salient for another.\(^{20}\) This is precisely what Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2009) found in their cross-sectional analysis of the political positions of post-communist political parties. This does not mean that issue salience is random. In the post-communist cases, ethnically divided societies gave a more prominent role to ethnic

\(^{19}\) One implication of this logic is that leaders who favor a certain policy should be willing to pay a higher cost to pursue it, regardless of the national security implications. This is exactly what Croco (2011) finds: leaders who are responsible for starting a war are more likely to see that conflict to its end. If the predominant concern was the “national interest”, all leaders would be equally likely to do this.

\(^{20}\) As an example, when religion was a major source of conflict in Europe, Protestant princes whose domains did not border Catholic ones did not initially treat religion as a salient issue. This changed only when the Holy Roman Emperor began supporting the anti-Protestant Dessau League (Owen 2005, 88).
issues, and democracy was a wedge issue in societies where democratic institutions were not consolidated (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009). State-level variables would thus be necessary for explaining the foreign policy priorities of specific states.

Regardless of the issues that are salient to a particular leader, the ability to pursue them all is limited by scarcity. As much as individuals would like to obtain everything, they have a limited amount of resources to achieve that goal. Instead, actors must make trade-offs. Objects that are more important are obtained before other ones; the quality and price of an item affects one’s willingness to get it. Rulers of states are in the same position, though some have access to vastly greater quantities of resources than others.\(^{21}\) This has a clear implication for alignment: if a leader can obtain value with the aid of another state that they would otherwise be unable to obtain or be forced to pay a higher price to acquire, then they have a strong incentive to request assistance from others.

The lack of an international body with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force means that other states cannot be made to comply with the request for aid. Even when there is an agreement to align – to take the same issue position – this promise cannot always be enforced. Instead, states must rely on goodwill, an ability to impose a cost for non-compliance, and the possibility of the situation being reversed in the future. In a world defined not only by international anarchy but also scarcity, even the leaders of the strongest states have to prioritize the allocation of resources. Consequently, alignment is both a valid and valued strategy. The two most common methods of getting others to align with one’s issue position are to provide them with an immediate inducement or to

\(^{21}\) Gilpin (1981) makes similar assumptions in his work. He argues that states operate on an indifference curve, facing a trade-off between security and welfare. The slope of that curve varies from society to society, and the curve itself shifts outward for states with greater resources (Gilpin 1981, 20-23).
promise to reciprocate. The former is frequently an impractical option: the price of gaining someone’s support could cost more than the value generated by this alignment. Furthermore, many state leaders cannot afford this strategy. The United States might be able to provide Palau and Micronesia with enough carrots to obtain their votes on UN GA resolutions and China might be able to buy recognition from Vanuatu and Macedonia, but states like Sweden or Kenya are rarely in the same position. The main option at the latter’s disposal is the promise of reciprocation: helping a ruler of another state obtain a preferred outcome on one stake in exchange for doing the same on another stake. That promise is based not only on the leaders’ ability to deliver on their promise, but also on the perception of delivering by relevant actors. The logic of alignment will therefore differ depending on a leader’s ability to create that perception.

A related issue is one of credibility. A leader cannot credibly threaten to disavow future cooperation in retaliation for a negative alignment on an inconsequential UN GA vote. They also cannot expect military support from all friendly states during a costly military conflict. The type and amount of resources that a leader can use to gain outside support is therefore not constant. This variation poses a dilemma for any theory of alignment: if rulers cannot use the same strategies to obtain alignment on all issues and have varying expectations about the kind of assistance they can obtain in different situations, then is it possible to have a single theory of alignment?

The general approach in the alignment literature has been to either pretend that this problem does not exist or to separate important issues from non-important ones, usually along the military-economic divide, and to proclaim that a given theory only applies to the former. While the second strategy is preferable to the first, it not only
provides an arbitrary distinction between issue areas, but also relies on the implicit assumption that non-economic issues are never salient and military issues always are. As a result, variation within each issue area is ignored both theoretically and empirically. An alternative approach is to create a theoretically-informed measure of alignment, which would allow us to explain not only decisions to align, but also what form that will take.

Though the issue paradigm does not currently incorporate an alignment measure, it does provide an indirect solution toward locating dimensions on which such a measure can rest. Specifically, Mansbach and Vasquez (1981, 192) offer three calculi that are meant to determine issue position: cost-benefit, participant interdependence, and participant affect. A different calculus is said to apply to different types of stakes and inter-actor relationships; the cost-benefit calculus is assumed to be used for highly valued stakes for instance (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 193). I use a somewhat different approach and conceive of these calculi as providing bases for comparing and contrasting available alignment options. The cost dimension tells leaders how expensive a given policy would be, and lets them decide whether the future benefit of alignment outweighs its immediate cost. The participant interdependence calculus can be thought of as distinguishing the discernibility of an alignment. Some forms of alignment make it obvious whom a state is predominantly aiding or harming; in others, that determination is harder to make. The willingness to make a more discernible alignment and the likely reaction to that willingness are an integral part of a leader’s decision-making process. The last calculus, participant affect, will be dealt with separately as a cause of alignment.
3.3 Alignment Measure

Given the significant variation in the forms of alignment and the steps statesmen take to obtain it, we should not expect all types of alignment to be driven by the same factors. The problem is figuring out a foundation for an alignment measure. Creating a measure based on issue areas is not a suitable solution – there is too much variation within each issue area. An alignment measure needs to be sensitive to two challenges. It needs to account for the ability of a leader to observe the strength and resolve of actors who seek to resolve a common stake. It also needs to provide a way for a leader to determine that a given actor is indeed providing assistance, instead of providing it to someone else or choosing the same issue position incidentally. The former notifies a leader of the extent of cooperation; the latter of its purpose. The rationale for sending different signals and using disparate forms of resources is unlikely to be the same.

I place alignments on two dimensions: cost and discernibility. The cost dimension refers to the price, both domestic and international, that a leader must pay to enter an alignment. This cost can be based on the domestic opposition an issue position is likely to generate, the resources a state must allocate to the particular stake, and reputational costs an alignment can be expected to create. Similarly, the deeper and longer the alignment, the higher the cost a leader must pay to sustain it. Table 3.1 provides some examples of alignments with different costs: a vote at the UN GA is unlikely to produce any of the three costs mentioned, while joining an ongoing war would impose high costs in each of the arenas. The higher the cost someone is perceived to pay in order to align, the more that cooperation is valued. The corollary is that states should be unwilling to offer this kind of alignment barring exceptional circumstances.
The discernibility dimension is more abstract, and refers to the ease with which another actor can determine whether the first state is specifically aligning with someone or making a general statement about their issue position. Discernibility does not refer to the difficulty in figuring out a state’s issue position; rather, a low degree of discernibility makes it unclear who a state is aligning with in a multilateral dispute. As a general rule, the more states involved in a stake and the later a leader takes a concrete position, the harder it is to establish whether one state’s issue position is meant to support or oppose any specific country. That complicates any future demands for reciprocity.

Discernibility is frequently the mechanism through which countries are allowed to save face in order to deescalate a dispute. Any country taking a stance on a salient issues risks retaliation from countries finding themselves on the opposite side of the issue. Depending on the history of interaction and other factors, the ruler of the latter might find himself in a position where anything short of severe retaliation would lead to significant domestic costs. As a result, a state that wishes to avoid putting adversary’s ruler in such a position would strive to act indiscernibly, allowing that ruler a way to deescalate the situation. Israel frequently makes use of this strategy to bomb alleged arms convoys in nearby states. By not openly admitting to these attacks, Israel provides cover for the rulers of the affected countries to do nothing, avoiding a potentially costly confrontation.

Table 3.1. Alignment Measure Based on Cost and Discernibility Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Level</th>
<th>Discernible</th>
<th>Semi-discernible</th>
<th>Indiscernible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low cost</td>
<td>Treaty of friendship</td>
<td>UN SG voting</td>
<td>IL convention, UN GA voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium cost</td>
<td>Early joiner in low-level MID or sanction regime</td>
<td>Free trade area</td>
<td>Multilateral alliance, accession to WTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost</td>
<td>Early joiner in war</td>
<td>Regional customs union</td>
<td>Joining war as part of a large military coalition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1 provides a non-exhaustive list of alignment policies and shows approximately where they fall on the cost and discernibility continuums. The table illustrates several important points about the alignment measure and the concept of alignment in general. First, we see that a more discernible alignment is not necessarily a more costly one. It does not cost more to sign a treaty of friendship than it is to vote a certain way in the Security Council, but everyone will know precisely which states are cooperating only in the former case. If nine states vote “yes” in the Security Council, it is difficult to make the case that any state was aligning with or against any other specific state; it is equally hard to determine whether a ruler voted a certain way out of loyalty to another state, or if they was acting in their narrow self-interest.

Second, the alignment dimensions are not coterminous with issue areas. Getting domestic approval for a preferential trade agreement can be as complicated and costly as getting support for a military alliance. It was certainly a more arduous task for the US government to gain elite and popular support for the North American Free Trade Agreement than it was to gain support for drone attacks against Pakistan and Yemen.

Third, the table clarifies the relationship between alignments and alliances. The latter are considered one possible expression of the former. Unlike other forms of alignment, alliances require a present or anticipated enemy against whom the use of force is directed (McGowan and Rood 1975, 860). They are a narrower category than alignments, which include expectations over behavior on a multitude of issues (Wilkins 2012, 56). Given that members of an alliance pledge to aid each other in the event of war

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22 Based on the definition of alignment used here, a treaty of friendship can only be considered a form of alignment if another state opposes the signing of such a treaty.
(Holsti et al. 1973, 4; Snyder 1997, 4), we can say that alliances have a significant cost. However, we know that between 25 to 94 percent of states do not come to their allies’ defense – depending on the type of military dispute and alliance (Smith 1996; Leeds et al. 2000; Leeds and Gigliotti-Labay 2003; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2004)23 – and many alliances are never invoked, which makes the cost lower than of an actual military intervention. Additionally, not all alliances are the same: the US alliance with South Korea is qualitatively different to NATO. Both can also incorporate multiple alignment decisions over a long period of time, whether those are to maintain an alliance in the face of threats or to somehow alter it. Thus, alliances are instances of alignment that could fall within different parts of the discernibility axis.

A potential concern with the alignment measure is that it implies that states do not substitute in terms of different alignment forms. For example, a state might choose not only whether or not to align, but also the method through which it aligns. According to this logic, a state might demonstrate alignment by signing a military alliance, which might then make a free trade pact unnecessary. Although there are undoubtedly instances where alignment substitution took place, there are generally a limited number of proposals that are put forth to distribute the value of a given stake. One state might provide limited or extensive assistance to another state in the event of war, or perhaps vote to support that war at the UN GA or UN SC, but it could hardly declare that it would demonstrate its alignment by signing a treaty of friendship. Nevertheless, one must be

23 Smith (1996) finds that only 25 percent of states come to their ally’s defense during a war; Leeds and Gigliotti-Labay (2003) show that 35 percent of democracies honor their relevant alliances compared to 57 of autocracies; Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004) come up with 6 and 16.3 percent for the same categories, based on a different operationalization of alliance reliability.
cautious in interpreting a lack of one form of alignment in case two states cooperate on the same issue in another forum. This task is outside the realm of this study, however.

### 3.4 First Stage of Alignment

The first step to appreciating why states align is to identify the interests and the constraints of the actors responsible for making these decisions. When presented with an opportunity to align, statesmen need to make two separate, interrelated judgments. They must determine whether they should take a stance on a disputed stake; at this stage, they choose between alignment and non-alignment. If the leaders decide to get involved, they must consider whose side to take. The first evaluation must be conducted before the second, though the factors influencing both stages of the alignment process overlap.\(^{24}\)

To grasp why leaders make sacrifices to align with other states, we must look at the global context in which they co-exist. As economists frequently point out, we live in a world defined by scarcity. No ruler, regardless of how powerful, is in a position to successfully pursue all of their goals at once. Difficult choices need to be made. Though rulers have some leeway in resource allocation, they have a strong incentive to concentrate on those resources that enable them to obtain optimal outcomes on issues of the greatest salience to them.\(^{25}\) These moves are not made in a vacuum. There is a high

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\(^{24}\) The decision to treat these two decisions as sequential is an analytical and methodological one. The methodological rationale is simpler: one cannot choose which side to join in a dispute without first having taken a side. There must, by necessity, be more observations in the initial stage. Analytically and game theoretically, one can make an argument that states work backward: deciding whether they want to support a particular disputant before making the choice of joining or not joining a dispute. Though that logic is a reasonable one, it presupposes the conclusion to be true, namely that past alignment matters a great deal. In effect, a country like Australia is not going to join a war on the opposite side of the US, making the choice the get involved the primary decision. However, the reason Australia would not consider joining the war against the US is precisely because of past or anticipated alignment behavior.

\(^{25}\) One way to think about issue salience is to consider what portion of their time a leader spends dealing with the particular stake (Coplin et al. 1973, 78).
domestic cost for attempting to alter the status quo, whether due to bureaucratic or interest group resistance. This path dependence means that once state resources are shifted in a certain direction, any attempt by a leader to radically change the pattern of allocation is going to be contentious and costly.\textsuperscript{26} For example, a ruler with several claims against their state’s territory knows that a strong military is necessary in case of an attack. Consequently, they will dedicate a significant portion of their state’s resources toward the military. Once those resources are allocated, however, it becomes difficult to shift the funding for another purpose, even if the territorial threats diminish.

Alignment is a possible solution for leaders caught in the above trap. They want to gain the ability to maximize the value from a particular type of stake, but have limited domestic means of accomplishing that objective. Instead, diplomats make a bargain with a foreign counterpart: in exchange for that state providing assistance with resources in which it has what might be termed a comparative advantage, the first state will reciprocate on a stake in which it has that same influence. An oil-rich state like Saudi Arabia might offer to provide economic assistance in a future stake to a state in exchange for military assistance against Iraq. The United States, which has extensive military capabilities, can then accept that offer, knowing that it can fight a war at a relatively low cost, and might find ways to utilize Saudi Arabia’s non-military assistance in the future.

One implication of this argument is that leaders will join disputes to whose resolution they can materially contribute. A leader of a state with a weak military would face a high risk and a low reward for getting involved in someone else’s military conflict:

\textsuperscript{26} See Pierson (2000) for an overview of the role of path dependence in politics. A key insight from Pierson’s work is that policies become harder to reverse the longer they are in place, meaning that exceptional circumstances are usually required before a state can reverse its past policies.
the reward would be low due to the low contribution, and the risk is high due to the real possibility of military defeat. In economic matters, poor states do not have the capacity to provide financial assistance to others, as doing so risks worsening their own situation.

The above provides an international story of alignment. Yet, leaders are no less constrained by domestic factors than they are by external ones. Domestic actors have to be convinced that allocating resources to resolve other countries’ issues is a worthwhile endeavor. These domestic actors have less information at their disposal about both the foreign actors and the stake over which they quarrel than their state’s leader. They are also likely to be single-issue constituents, whether that issue is trade, support for or opposition to a specific ethnicity, or revanchism. Accordingly, these domestic interests develop cognitive shortcuts and base their support or opposition foreign entanglement on past relations. It is important to note that the role of history at this stage of the alignment process is not to decide which side to support, but rather to determine whether the potential intervener has a sufficient connection to the disputants to warrant action.

The mechanism through which dyadic history exerts an effect relies on the relative power of domestic hardliners and accommodationists, and their ability to impose constraints on their country’s leadership. A recent history of conflict between states empowers hardliners in both states, who are resolute in their opposition to cooperation. Any ruler urging compromise risks the wrath of those hardliners, which might lead to the leader’s removal from office. We see this situation in Turkey today. Reaching an acceptable agreement with either the Turkish Kurds or with Cyprus would be political suicide. Similarly, a Pakistani leader who resolves the status of Kashmir or an Israeli leader who gives up eastern Jerusalem is likely to have a short tenure. That is not to say
this kind of agreements will never be made. A ruler might view the resolution of a long-standing dispute as their top priority. They might be willing to jeopardize their career to obtain this goal. Sadat and Rabin gave up their lives to make peace with Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, respectively. The world has few such leaders.

To summarize, the choice of alignment over non-alignment is most strongly influenced by two factors. First, statesmen are more likely to get involved in a dispute in which they can make a difference. Otherwise, the participation might be infeasible or underappreciated. Second, leaders will favor alignment on stakes involving countries with whom they have a history of interaction, whether positive or negative. They do this as a consequence of domestic constraints on foreign policy-making. Without a convincing story as to why a friend should be helped or an enemy punished, rulers will be unable to justify the cost of intervention to a domestic audience that is generally skeptical of foreign spending. Fear, loathing, and obligation can all be used to override that doubt.

This logic leads to two straightforward hypotheses. The first is that rulers will take part in alignments where their state can influence the resolution of the stake. In the case of a military dispute, this could mean affecting the military outcome or decreasing the cost of conflict to alignment partners and increasing it for opponents. The latter aspect might entail helping legitimize an attack or delegitimize an enemy’s moves. Without having that ability, their help would not be appreciated or they would be using up scarce resources to benefit an outside power. The second hypothesis is derived from the fact that obtaining domestic support for foreign entanglement is not easy. In order to persuade the public at large, or elites in autocracies, that sacrificing scarce resources for foreigners is a worthwhile endeavor, a country’s ruler must have domestic constituencies
that could be counted on to support such actions and a memory of past interactions that could be used to generate public feelings of hostility or friendship. Both would shift the political cost of intervention from the leader to groups that are willing to bear it. The rationale for past cooperation or conflict is less important than the fact they took place.

\textbf{H1: Leaders will partake in alignments in which their state has the capacity to materially affect the outcome.}

\textbf{H2: Rulers will be more likely to get involved in disputes in which they have a substantial history of cooperation or conflict with one or more of the participants.}

\section*{3.5 Second Stage of Alignment – Dyadic History and Reciprocation}

The logic of the second stage of alignment extends that of the first stage. The leaders’ motivation remains similar: attempting to court positive alignment, dissuade negative alignment, and gauging the likelihood of either. In order to reach this phase, a leader must have made the decision to get involved in the resolution of a stake. This means they believe they can materially contribute to the resolution of a dispute and have some history of involvement with one or more of the actors involved in it. What is distinct about this stage of alignment is the importance of the original disputants. The decision to join side A or B must be conditional on the intervener’s relationship with those actors, particularly as it relates to future reciprocation. The most direct consideration is the recent history of conflict and cooperation between the states seeking alignment and the state providing it. The second element is the urgency with which the intervener themselves needs assistance. Third, the potential intervener needs a method for discerning the likelihood of obtaining that future assistance. Finally, a dynamic component is added to explain breaks in alignment patterns. With the goal of theoretical clarity, I initially assume that all alignments are the same, being influenced by identical
factors. Later, that assumption will be relaxed, to show how the logic of alignment changes as the cost and discernibility of an alignment decision are allowed to vary.

The obvious reason for a statesman to align with or against another state is because they have a direct interest in how a disputed stake is resolved and their issue position is closer to one of the conflictual parties than to the other. If Switzerland wants a resolution to the Doha Round of WTO negotiations that is similar to the position of the US, it would not be surprising to see it back the US bloc. This rationale for alignment is not very informative. To expect leaders to act in opposition to their own interests would be to assume that they are not rational in any sense of the word. The focus here is broader, exploring alignments that are made with a wider set of objectives in mind.

The starting point for investigating the determinants of the second stage of alignment is the role of reciprocity. If the main objective of alignment is reciprocation, then most instances of alignment should themselves be the result of that policy. Given the benefit of obtaining positive alignments and avoiding negative ones, leaders have a strong incentive to unequivocally reciprocate both forms. Building up a reputation for reliability means aiding those states that have helped you in the past, even if there is no pattern of hostility against the other disputant. An added benefit of responding to positive alignments is that it creates goodwill and domestic constituencies for continued cooperation in the other state.

The role of reciprocity in specific alignment decisions is complex and is based on factors relating to the dyadic, monadic, and individual-level preferences and constraints. For instance, the utility of future reciprocation can depend on the time horizon in which that reciprocation is expected to take place – particularly as it relates to the present ruler
still being in power when that future alignment should be made – along with the importance of the issue for which assistance is required and the substitutability of this country’s assistance. A ruler might generally value a country’s support, whether because it is powerful or exceptionally reliable, and help that country today with the expectation that some new issue will arise whose resolution could be aided by this country.

Major powers might also conceive of reciprocation in terms different to that of weaker states. While the latter might want future assistance in an international dispute, the former might prefer to gain influence over the weaker state’s foreign policy. This influence can be used to prevent the minor power from acting in a way that would require costly assistance down the line; major-minor military alliances frequently serve this purpose. This does not mean that the major powers do not want reciprocation, however. They still value the legitimacy that they can obtain from the minor power’s diplomatic support and are in a better position to influence that state’s foreign policy if that state’s government does not attempt to resist it every step of the way.

Next, reciprocating by not abnegating agreements is important because a refusal to do so might provide a short-term benefit but poisons relations with the affected states. There is little benefit to having a reputation as a spoiler, as the United Kingdom does in the European Union, or as a pariah state, like post-Cold War North Korea. That is not to say leaders will always reciprocate. Sometimes their assistance is not needed. At other times, it would be counter-productive – the reason Israel was dissuaded from joining the
US in the first Gulf War. On balance, leaders who were aided by another state in the past will be more likely to support that state than rulers of states with no similar experience.27

There is also a personality-driven component to reciprocation. For a leader to stay in power, they must care not only about the current dispute but also the next one, and that means compensating supporters for their past services. This is a valuable skill not only for the leaders of states but also politicians and military officials who are striving to gain control of a state, whether through democratic procedures or not. Elites who ignore this lesson are unlikely to reach the top of their country’s political structure or to stay there once they attain that goal. The elites who do come to power can therefore be expected to be skilled at obtaining alignment from other actors. Moreover, there is considerable anthropological evidence pointing to reciprocity being a constant in virtually all human societies (Singer 2011, 37). It would be fallacious to argue that states will reciprocate solely because individuals who make up those states do so in their private lives. However, it is reasonable to expect statesmen to not be entirely immune from such a fundamental element of human nature.28

Leaders need to not only reward positive alignment, but also penalize those of the negative variety.29 Even though punishing negative alignment with negative alignment

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27 The same logic applies to the domestic sphere. Heaney (2004) shows that one of the strongest determinants of interest group cooperation in Wisconsin is a history of cooperation. This holds even when a group has a short-term advantage in allying with someone else. Jou (2010) reaches the same conclusion for coalition politics in New Zealand and Japan, where the experience of working together in past coalitions increases the likelihood of parties joining forces in future ones, even absent pre-electoral agreements.

28 One reason why the interstate reciprocation described here might be less effective than most instances of inter-personal reciprocation is because the former is more calculated; humans tend to think less of assistance that arose neither spontaneously nor out of a desire to do what is right (Singer 2011, 43).

29 As Singer (2011, 39) points out, “repay benefits” and “revenge injuries” are viewed as being inseparable elements of reciprocity.
can create a spiral of hostility, many leaders do not believe they have another choice. A ruler who is first to end this cycle risks being called weak on defense by domestic opponents, a charge that can cost them significant public and elite support when the other state is viewed as a rival. Ignoring negative alignments can also send a signal of weakness to other states; they would have nothing to fear from ignoring this leader’s interests in the future.

Just as leaders react to past positive and negative alignment, they respond to direct acts of conflict and cooperation. When given a chance to join a dispute on the side of a friend or on the side opposite that of a recent enemy, rulers will not hesitate to take the opportunity. As was noted in the description of the first stage of alignment, hostile actions against an enemy or cooperative actions with a friend are relatively easy to justify domestically. In fact, a leader not doing so risks paying a significant domestic cost.

On a psychological level, past negative alignments generate negative affect, which feeds mutual antagonism. Relations between such states are less a function of reciprocation than of retaliation. Negative affect makes actors less interested in the inherent costs and benefits of a given alignment and more interested in paying a state back for past wrongs. Every action by the actor is viewed with suspicion and intentions are assumed to be negative (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981, 196). Any move that could conceivably be construed as targeting an actor will be interpreted in that manner. As each act of hostility reinforces each side’s impression of the other as being aggressive, the end result is a breakdown in trust and an unceasing cycle of violence (Dreyer 2010).

30 In fact, most conflicts are preceded by less intense acts of hostility (Corbetta and Dixon 2005, 42).
The effect of dyadic history is not limited to factors that are measurable and observable; it is also a function of the unobserved causes of past and present conflict and cooperation. The factors that steered states toward specific behavior on a specific issue in the past will, in all probability, be present in the future. We are unlikely to measure and operationalize all of those factors. Instead, recent history can serve as a proxy for the unobserved factors that produced positive or negative relations in the past and might do so in the future. It would not be surprising to see a country that fought a war with its neighbor siding against that neighbor in a future conflict. This negative alignment might be made not just because of past hostility, but also because the issue over which the original conflict was waged was not resolved. In this case, past conflicts can be seen as reflecting opposing interests over a salient issue. Two hypotheses follow from this logic:

**H3**: A ruler will align with the disputant with whom their state has a stronger recent history of positive alignment and against a disputant with whom it has a stronger recent history of negative alignment.

**H4**: A ruler will align against the disputant with whom their state has a history of conflictual relations and with a disputant with whom it has a history of cooperation.

### 3.6 Context-driven alignment

Beyond the universal rationales for alignment, the willingness of a ruler to align with another state is most strongly affected by context-specific factors that significantly revise the expected benefit from alignment. One of the dominant factors is the ability of one of the main disputants to inflict severe harm for a lack of alignment. Rulers in this

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31 As an example, past colonial ties is one of the best predictors of foreign aid. A state that is undemocratic, mismanaged, economically-closed, and a former colony of a donor is more likely to receive aid than a non-former colony that shares none of those traits (Alesina and Dollar 2000, 33). It is probable that a colonial experience creates unquantifiable ties that lead to a continuation of cooperation after independence.
situation are dissuaded from aligning against a state due to an asymmetric relationship of
dependence, including in the ability of the latter to have a material effect on the political
process of the former. The rulers are thus unwilling to align against someone who can
inflict more damage to them than can the other side.

The classical domestic rationale for the relevance of relationships of dependence
is when a ruler’s ability to stay in power is in doubt. Few rulers are immune from
domestic pressure, and most face a non-zero probability of getting removed from office at
any given moment.\textsuperscript{32} However, incumbency has its advantages, and the proportion of
rulers likely to get overthrown is rarely high. The ones who do face an acute risk of
losing power are willing to form alignments that they otherwise would not consider.
With the emphasis being on staying in power, these rulers will have a strong incentive to
align with states that have the biggest influence over their political systems and have the
greatest capacity to affect the leadership struggle in the former’s state.\textsuperscript{33} They might then
change sides when the domestic situation stabilizes, putting into question their reliability
as alignment partners – a factor that will be examined later.

Recent examples of unstable regimes opting to support a strong or influential
neighbor include many of the states in Latin America. In exchange for generous financial
assistance and ideological support, the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia,

\textsuperscript{32} In parliamentary systems, prime ministers have to be concerned with their party or coalition losing their
majority in the next election. Otherwise, the logic is the same.
\textsuperscript{33} Barnett and Levy (1991) make a similar argument, though they do not take into account the external
state’s influence over the potential aligner’s domestic system. The authors note that Egypt became more
inclined to back the Soviet Union after Egypt began to face severe internal and external threats in the wake
of the 1967 war against Israel. What should be added is that once the Egyptian leader, Nasser died, and his
successor, Sadat, purged the country of pro-Soviet officials in 1971 (Qureshi 1982, 130), the reduced
Soviet influence over Egyptian domestic politics allowed Sadat to become notably less pro-Soviet.
Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have joined the Venezuelan-led Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas. 34 This grouping of states mainly provides diplomatic support for Venezuela’s international initiatives, and includes a smaller economic component. While an argument can be made that these states align with Venezuela against the United States, and occasionally Colombia, due to shared ideological interests, it is equally probable that at least several of the leaders of these states play up their ideological similarity with Venezuela in order get resources that help stabilize their regimes. Even though the United States is stronger and more prosperous than Venezuela, the latter has more influence over these states’ political systems and can act as a domestic ally or spoiler depending on how it is treated by them. Similarly, Ukraine faces constant obstacles in disentangling itself from Russian foreign policy objectives due to Russia’s deep penetration of Ukrainian society (Wohlforth 2004).

The motivation for offering alignment as a reward for assistance is no different when that assistance is on an international issue. No state has the capacity to dedicate sufficient resources to all salient international issues. This leads to specialization and a dependence on other states for assistance in issue areas in which the state does not specialize. It follows that a ruler’s choice of alignment partner will depend on whether there is an international stake they are deeply interested in. If such a stake exists, the decision will likely be based on the ability of one of the disputing states or blocs to bring the leader close to obtaining the best possible resolution of that stake. For example, a revanchist Italy allied with Prussia/Germany in order to reclaim Austria’s Italian

34 Cuba is also a member that receives extensive financial support from Chavez’ Venezuela, but it grants ideological support to Venezuela and not vice versa.
possessions. Similarly, South Korea sent a total of several hundred thousands of troops to Vietnam to fight together with the American military with the expectation that the United States would continue to protect it against a militaristic North Korea (Kim 1970).

Even when a ruler is not in immediate need of assistance, they can nevertheless be compelled to align with a state because of an unequal relationship of dependence. A state that depends on another for defense, as Micronesia and Palau do vis-à-vis the United States, dare not jeopardize that relationship by turning against their sponsor. The same is true in the economic arena, where states that are more dependent on continued trade with a trading partner than that partner is with them will be loath to endanger the well-being of their economy for the sake of assisting someone else with their issue.

Accordingly, rulers will avoid aligning against states that impose a severe cost for their negative alignment. Rulers are concerned not just with the resolution of one stake, but also of the resolution of other ones that might come up in the future. Antagonizing someone that would be in a strong position to sabotage those efforts is rarely intelligent policy. The stronger the dependence of the aligner on one of the disputants, the more the former will have to lose. As a result, they will have little choice but to ignore their own short-term preferences in order to be in a better position for future conflicts.

*H5: Given an asymmetrical relationship between a potential aligner and an original disputant, the leader of the former will align with the latter.*

### 3.7 Perceived Reliability of Alignment Partners

The next part of the alignment story deals with types of domestic institutions and conditions that are widely perceived to undermine the prospects of future reciprocation. I focus on two frequently witnessed situations: when a regime faces significant obstacles in
responding to positive alignments, and when a regime faces similar impediments in countering negative alignments. In the former instance – generally entailing an unrepresentative or unstable regime – the rulers might not compensate others for alignment because they are no longer in power or are forced into sharing power with previously disenfranchised groups that might resent the support other states have given their own when they were not part of the selectorate. The rulers might also be deemed unreliable because they broke alignment agreements in the past. In the second case, a leader is confronted by numerous salient problems, and cannot dedicate enough resources to resolve all of them favorably. This is the case for states with multiple rivalries, who are thus not in a position to respond to every provocation as it is made. Whether a ruler cannot reciprocate positive or negative alignments, the lower expected value of a cooperative or conflictual response minimizes the likelihood of that state obtaining positive alignment or deterring the negative variety.

The more frequent handicap faced by statesmen is of being unreliable partners for cooperation, especially if their regime is unrepresentative or unstable. States can be unrepresentative in two respects. They can be unrepresentative because incumbents place severe barriers against anyone seeking to challenge them, as is the case in most autocracies. This type of state has a greater than average chance of reversing its policies with a change in leadership. While democracies have previously been accused of being unreliable allies, several important democratic attributes have been overlooked.

35 One interesting manifestation of this resentment is that autocratic states that receive extensive American assistance end up becoming strongly anti-American as they begin to democratize (Ratner 2009).
36 Leeds et al. (2009) find that leadership turnover in itself does not lead to abrogation of alliance commitments; rather, it leads to termination of alliances only when it happens in nondemocratic states.
37 See Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004) for one of the latest restatements of that argument.
Democracies are better able to commit future rulers to current policies due to a stronger respect for the law (Gaubatz 1996, 117). Democracies tend to have stable foreign policy bureaucracies, which augurs well for continuity (Gaubatz 1996, 118). Democracies also find it difficult to mobilize support for change, leading states with this type of regime to respect treaties, even when doing so comes at a cost (Gaubatz 1996, 121).

Furthermore, new rulers of an unrepresentative state are not likely to be chosen by the same selectorate, whether due to a coup or an expansion of the selectorate after democratization. Even when the old leaders are not overthrown, but instead pressed into forming a more representative government, foreign policy reversal might very well be a condition of the moderation in opposition demands. This is particularly troubling to leaders aligning with a state when that alignment might be viewed as being supportive of the other state’s leaders and not its “people”. Conversely, aligning against a democratic state that chooses its leaders through competitive elections will be perceived as an alignment against the “people” and not just the leader, with the people having a far longer institutional memory than their rulers. Leaders come and go, but popular grudges remain to be stirred by political entrepreneurs over the long term (Brubaker and Laitin 1998).

States can also be unrepresentative because they systematically exclude citizens from the political process on a sectarian basis. Minorities that are left out of this process are unlikely to favorably view past alignments with their state’s leaders, and can be expected to not just ignore but retaliate against states providing these alignments. The Tutsi rebels who overthrew the Hutu regime of Rwanda did not appreciate past French

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38 I focus here on competitive executive elections and not democracy itself due to the former providing a clear link between institution and alignment behavior. Seeing as the argument here is not a normative one, the quality of rule is not of great relevance to the subject matter.
alignments with Rwanda. Equally, the Shia-dominated regime of Iraq looks positively upon Iran’s history of negative alignment against the former Sunni-dominated Iraqi regime. The uncertainty over the type of future responses one might expect from sectarian regimes makes leaders hesitant to sacrifice their limited resources for what might end up a negative alignment. To the extent that alignment might still be forthcoming to states with this institutional arrangement, it is likely to come from leaders of states that share the identity of the ruling ethnic or religious group. In these cases, the latter are likely responding to domestic pressure for support of “ethnic kin” and might decide that the domestic cost of abandoning their “ethnic kin” might outweigh the cost of negative alignment if that “kin” is ever removed from power.

Rulers tend to avoid not only states with unrepresentative regimes, but also those with unstable ones. Instability can lead to an about-turn in a state’s foreign policy direction or at least great variation in the latter.39 The more unstable a regime, the less likely it is to view the reciprocation of international favors as a priority. Unstable regimes are also more likely to collapse than stable ones, which leads to the same quandary faced by states considering aligning with states that are sectarian or lack competitive executive elections.

A state’s perceived unreliability is a function not only of its institutions but also of its behavior. States that did not fulfill their commitments in the past are unlikely to fulfill those obligations in the future.40 A leader that reneges on their alignment commitments

39 Maoz (2000, 126) shows that domestic instability increases the likelihood of alliance termination, though the operationalization reflects regional instability more than it is does monadic instability.
40 Gibler (2008) finds that leaders who violate their alliance obligations are less likely to find alliance partners in the future.
to one state is unlikely to obtain positive alignment from any state, not because the latter might be friendly to the former’s victim, but because it might later be in that state’s position. No one wants to put their well-being in the hands of a “traitor”.

The mechanism through which the aforementioned institutional and behavioral characteristics undercut the ability of that state’s rulers to obtain alignment relates to the uncertainty over the regime’s future or its reliability, and therefore its ability or willingness to reliably respond to positive overtures. This means that even leaders of states with these same characteristics will tend to avoid aligning with such states, though they might be more sympathetic than those not in the same situation. States that are deemed best able to reciprocate will find themselves with more support than those that are not. Even states with unrepresentative regimes will prefer to align with states that do not share this characteristic.

The reverse logic applies to states that have their hands full of rivalries. Instead of being unlikely to respond to positive alignments, such states are not in the position to reciprocate negative ones. A statesman might be unhappy over a rival acting in a hostile manner or helping another state do the same, but the desire for action has to be weighed against the possibility of other rivals getting involved in the same dispute. By shifting one’s resources to punish one rival for their conflictual policies, a leader creates a cost-effective path for other rivals to get their way on other issues of importance. Thus, when Iran’s Khomeini broke relations with the United States over America’s assistance to the previous Iranian ruler, Shah Pahlavi, he simultaneously invited an invasion by Iraq. Hussein, the Iraqi leader, believed that Khomeini’s hostility toward the US would preclude any US assistance for Iran and require Iran to use scarce resource to prepare for
the possibility of a conflict with America. Though Hussein ultimately miscalculated Iran’s capabilities, the war with Iraq cost Iran a significant amount of blood and money.

In short, leaders cannot afford to waste resources. They never have the capacity to accomplish each of their objectives. Prioritization requires those leaders to be selective in their foreign entanglements, and the best criterion for choosing those foreign partners is to focus on ones that are likely to return the favor. Any time there are doubts about the ability or willingness of another state’s regime to positively reciprocate in the future, there is a strong disincentive to avoid assisting them to start with. The same is true in reverse. If a leader can obtain their objective on the cheap, they will choose that option. When that leader has a strong reason to suspect that the object of their negative alignment might not have the ability to retaliate, their decision is made all the easier.

\textit{H6: Rulers are less likely to align with states that are unlikely to reciprocate positive alignments and less likely to align against states that are likely to counter negative ones.}

3.8 Breaks in Alignment Patterns

A careful examination of the alignment-inducing factors might lead one to question how alignment patterns can ever change. If positive and negative alignments get reciprocated, and certain types of states are consistently denied alignment, then the same states could consistently be aligning with and against each other. There is some truth to this analysis. Maintaining strong relationships with the same states is generally less costly than constantly looking for new partners. Cooperation with a given state creates domestic constituencies for continued cooperation, just as conflict with a state produces constituencies for continued hostility. For less important relationships, bureaucratic inertia precludes change. Bureaucrats maintain the policies of their predecessors and are
loath to do anything differently unless explicitly ordered to do so by their superiors. There are also reputational motivations for maintaining traditional ties. A state that frequently changes sides will not be viewed as being reliable.

Despite the many reasons for continuity in alignment patterns, change does occur. Alignment theory provides several mechanisms through which old alignments can fracture and new ones formed. Each of the mechanisms was implicit in the previous section. To start, many of the governments that are unrepresentative eventually democratize or at least remove sectarian limitations on political participation. As the state’s selectorate expands, so do foreign policy demands made by the newly enfranchised groups. As domestic peace takes precedence over foreign policy continuity, either the liberalizing regime or the one that replaces it face strong incentives to change course. This was the case for numerous Latin American states after their military rule.

A shift in a state’s alignments can also result from an increase in domestic instability. Rulers who suddenly see their grasp on power weakened or those who seize power themselves will be less focused on foreign policy issues than on consolidating their rule. This means reversing foreign policy decisions when necessary. This reason and the previous one point to another cause of a shift in alignment patterns: the ascendance of new stakes and the resolution of old ones. One leader aligns with another because he believes the latter can help him achieve an important objective. If the objective changes, the other state might be less able to provide the same assistance they did in the past. For instance, the ruler of a state in a deep recession might attempt to get
loans to stabilize their country’s economy,\textsuperscript{41} and the states willing to provide these loans might not be the same ones who helped this ruler in the past. The new stakes themselves do not appear out of nowhere; they usually appear in response to the rise of new critical issues. These critical issues produce a series of crises until the relevant actors figure out a way to handle and eventually resolve them.\textsuperscript{42}

Just as new stakes can lead to fractures in previous relationships, they can help mend ties with former rivals. As stakes over which states disagree disappear or become less salient, the rationale for hostility between those states starts to dissipate. Occasionally, these stakes are replaced by other ones in which former enemies now have common interests or common adversaries. Hence, the rise of the Nazi threat led to an alignment between anti-imperialist and anti-communist United States, imperialist Britain, and communist Soviet Union. Likewise, the deteriorating relations between Turkey and Israel are creating opportunities for cooperation between Israel and Greece.\textsuperscript{43}

\emph{H7: As a state becomes more representative, its leader will be more likely to change its alignment behavior toward previous alignment partners.}

\textsuperscript{41} Leaders facing large deficits also spend less on foreign aid – unless the media raises the political cost of not helping foreigners in need (Drury et al. 2005, 467) – which hurts their ability to pursue international objectives, because it presumably affects their ability to pursue more salient domestic objectives.

\textsuperscript{42} See Mansbach and Vasquez (1981, 110-3) for a more thorough discussion of critical issues.

\textsuperscript{43} The hypothesis relating to the rise of new critical issues and stakes would require a substantial amount of space to properly operationalize and test. For that reason, it will not be directed tested in this dissertation.
Table 3.2. Overview of Alignment Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment Factor</th>
<th>Relationship with State A/ Changes within State I</th>
<th>Alignment Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic history</td>
<td>History of cooperation (conflict); Recently received positive (negative) alignment from A</td>
<td>Align with A (against A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asymmetry favoring A</td>
<td>Align with A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of reciprocation</td>
<td>A unlikely to reciprocate to positive (negative) alignment</td>
<td>Align against (with) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks in alignment</td>
<td>I becomes more representative; I becomes less stable</td>
<td>&amp; from previous behavior; &amp; from previous behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.9 Role of Cost and Discernibility

The analysis thus far assumed that all forms of alignment were the same, and that only the motivation for alignment differed. This simplifying assumption was necessary for theory development, but is clearly at odds with the empirical world. States can align through, inter alia, joining wars, forming alliances, signing trade agreements, and voting at the United Nations. They can also quickly join military conflicts or wait until they are all but over; they can help create an international organization or become the 190th member. The determinants of one type of alignment are unlikely to be the same as the determinants of the others. I now relax this assumption and show what happens when leaders are faced with a more complex reality.

In the first stage of alignment, the cost dimension moderates the importance of secondary factors, namely a state’s potential contribution to the resolution of a dispute. A lower cost of alignment allows weaker states to get involved. The role of dyadic history remains constant across alignments of different costs. There are a substantial number of issues for a statesman to get involved in at any given time, and some connection to one or more of the original disputants is a necessary for an issue to make the agenda. Given
finite time and material resources at their disposal, leaders have no choice but to stay away from disputes involving parties whose amity or enmity they do not desire. This is even true for low-cost situations, where reliable information about the issue might be at a premium, and leaders need to feel comfortable working with a specific state or have a grudge against it before they get involved.

*H8: The importance of being able to contribute to the resolution of a dispute decreases as the cost of alignment decreases.*

Unlike cost, discernibility plays no role in the first stage of alignment, because the choice of sides is not yet considered. The same is not true of the second stage, where statesmen have to take a specific position on the resolution of a stake. Rulers, like academics, cannot definitively tell whether another state aligns with them incidentally or purposively. The weaker the indications of the alignment being of the purposive type, the less compelled leaders will be to reciprocate. In general, indiscernible alignments are less likely to be reciprocated, precisely because they are indiscernible. This makes it easier for leaders to align with states with which they do not have friendly relations, as was the case with Arab states during the first Gulf War, and to align against states they do not wish to offend. Thus, on the occasions that leaders do align with non-friendly states or against neutrals or friends, they will do as indiscernibly as possible. Italy’s late entrance into World War I against its old German ally is a classic example of this.

Discernibility also modifies context-specific alignment strategies. A leader barely grasping onto power cannot afford to send ambiguous signals to potential saviors. When aligning with the latter, the rulers can be expected to be as discernible as possible with their actions, making sure that the other state knows that they are the explicit target of that assistance. The South Vietnamese leaders, for instance, knew that they had to openly
and convincingly support America’s initiatives if they wanted support against local and North Vietnamese groups attempting to overthrow them.

Leaders interested in future alignment for international reasons will make their own alignments as discernible as circumstances demand. They will err on the side of high discernibility when they anticipate needing assistance on a salient issue or when the specific state is particularly equipped to help them in resolving an issue. The rationale is straightforward: discernible alignment risks alienating the state being aligned against, and this risk is only worthwhile if the benefit is sufficiently large. A ruler attempting to join a major international organization, for example, will make sure their positive alignments with states that can veto this membership are as clear as possible. A leader looking for rhetorical support in a less important arena will be more comfortable with a less discernible alignment policy.

When it comes to discernibility with negative alignment, the rationale is similar. Rulers do not want to needlessly antagonize states that can inflict severe damage in retaliation, especially if that reprisal comes on an issue of importance to them. As the potential for a menacing response increases, the likelihood of a discernible alignment moves in the opposite direction. A country like Afghanistan, embroiled in a civil war that pits the government against externally funded insurgents, being too explicit in opposition to politically important states like the US, Pakistan, or Iran carries significant risks. Not unreasonably, the Afghan government is rarely at the forefront in opposing the actions of those states, even if it has publicly disproved of their policies.

Given the visibility of a discernible alignment, the beneficiaries of that alignment face pressure to reciprocate by both the domestic public and the state providing the
original alignment. When an alignment is made quietly, on the other hand, there is less likely to be outrage over a refusal to respond in kind. This applies equally to positive and negative alignments. If indiscernible alignments are less likely to be reciprocated, then leaders in need of future alignment face a strong incentive to make their own alignment as visible as possible, raising the stakes for the actor on the receiving end of that support. Similarly, a ruler that wants to negatively align against another state without raising tensions would seek to minimize its public role in that alignment, allowing the opposing state to save face without feeling the need to retaliate.

H9: Less discernible alignments are less likely to be reciprocated.

H10: Leaders will make their positive alignments more discernible if they are dealing with states whose help is likely to be necessary in the future, and will make their negative alignments less discernible as the potential damage caused by retaliation increases.

In essence, cost and discernibility either amplify or mitigate the importance of a specific manifestation of alignment, but do not completely reverse the posited direction of a theoretical relationship. At the upper end of each of the two measures of alignment, the effects of the theoretically relevant factors are usually magnified. At the lower end of that measure, the effects should be small or non-existent. In some instances, including the entire first stage of alignment, discernibility does not impact alignment decisions at all. In most cases, it is hypothesized to have a pronounced effect. The cost dimension of alignment, the easier to measure of the two, has more notable effect on the first stage of alignment. Where the cost is high, leaders of some types of states will be “priced out” of the market. They may nevertheless feel compelled to engage in costly alignments when they are desperate for the other country’s cooperation on other salient issues.
3.10 Alternative Hypotheses – Balance of Power and the Democratic Peace

The capability research program is premised on several empirical claims and assumptions that cannot be reconciled with reciprocal alignment theory. In particular, the capability program assumes that two states’ history of relations does not affect their policies toward one another - statesmen care about maximizing power or security right now, not who aided or hindered them from achieving that objective in the past – and that the best policy to pursue in the event of a war between other states is to support the weaker side, which is termed balancing.

Balancing is at the center of the realist school of thought, which is situated within the capability program. Though some realists allow for bandwagoning – supporting the stronger side – in some situations, few would dispute the balancing logic when the potential intervener is a major power and the two combatants are evenly matched. A failure to balance in that situation would cast doubt on other core realist claims.

Scholars concerned with the role of capabilities in promoting or preventing war pay minimal attention to the history of dyadic relations. States are assumed to be rational, unitary actors whose main objective is to either maximize power or security. Domestic actors are assumed to be supportive of whichever foreign policy path their leaders benevolently choose. There is thus no one to prevent countries from siding with their past enemies or turning against their former friends.

HR1: Given a lack of power preponderance between disputants, the leader of a major power will intervene on behalf of the weaker disputant.

HR2: Rulers will frequently switch sides in successive disputes.

Chapter 2 went over the main aspects of the homophily research program, of which the democratic peace is an integral component. The key proposition of the
democratic peace theory is that democracies do not fight one another. Of greater interest to alignment theory is the question of why that is the case. Democratic peace theorists offer several explanations. The institutional variant argues that the ability of a democratic leader to use force is checked by other institutions. As a result, force will only be used when it is widely supported. Even then, obtaining such support is a cumbersome and time-consuming process. This delay would allow a leader to resolve their disputes with other countries before hostilities are initiated. If both disputants are democracies, then the odds of a non-violent resolution to the conflict is said to be even higher. As an example, supporters of the institutional explanation of the democratic peace might point to the need of the US president to gain congressional support for a large-scale military action, and such support takes a long time to secure.

The normative explanation is the other major mechanism used by democratic peace theorists. According to this logic, leaders externalize their domestic conflict-resolution norms. In democracies, domestic disputes are resolved peacefully, without any threat of force. The same is not true for autocracies. Thus, democratic leaders will seek to resolve international disputes peacefully, while autocratic ones will not. In a conflict between a democracy and an autocracy, both will play by the rules of the latter.

Both of the explanations stress the importance of joint democracy for peaceful resolution of disputes. If a democracy does enter a military conflict, it should be against an autocratic adversary, as those are the countries that lack the institutional restraints and democratic norms to reach agreements without resorting to violence. However, democratic peace theory is ambiguous as to the course of action pursued by autocracies. Authoritarian regimes are said to be more violence-prone, but that need not be directed
against democracies. They might have sympathy for other non-democratic regimes, but it is not clear if that should lead to military support for those regimes. What is clear is that democratic peace theorists do not expect autocracies to support democracies.

*HD1: Rulers of democratic regimes will be more likely to align with other democratic regimes, while rulers of undemocratic regimes will not.*

### 3.11 Conclusion

In summary, alignment is a two stage process. In the first stage, a leader decides whether to take sides in an ongoing dispute. The main criteria used by leaders at this point are: a connection to the disputants and an ability to make a difference. If a ruler decides that they are willing to join the dispute, they have to make a new calculation regarding the specific side to take. At the heart of this decision is the need to obtain future alignment on issues that are deemed salient. In some circumstances – when the potential intervener has a highly cooperative or highly conflictual relationship with one of the disputants – the ruler faces severe constraints and will join on the side of the state that is supported by domestic interests. The ruler will also be concerned with a reputation for reliability and reciprocate past alignments when there is an opportunity to do so.

Being concerned with reciprocation, leaders will think twice about siding with rulers that might not be in power or have the ability to do their own part in the future. Specifically, statesmen will rarely align with rulers of unstable or unrepresentative states or those who have a reputation for reneging on alignment commitments. Leaders of each category of states can get overthrown, forced to make major foreign policy concessions to domestic opponents, or otherwise be too preoccupied with domestic problems to play an
active role in international affairs. In the end, these rulers find it difficult to obtain positive alignment, even from other leaders that find themselves in the same situation.

3.12 List of Hypotheses

The following are a list of hypotheses that provide the basis for alignment theory. Each refers to either an integral element of the theory or causal mechanism that will be tested in chapters five, six, and seven of this dissertation. The first set of hypotheses is derived from the first stage of alignment, which looks at factors that encourage a leader to get involved in a dispute between other states. The second group stems from the second stage, relating to the choosing of sides after an initial decision to align is already made. Both will be tested quantitatively in Chapter 5. The remaining hypotheses incorporate the cost and discernibility dimensions of alignment types. The accuracy of these hypotheses will be examined in chapter six. Using the post-Cold War former Soviet Union as a case study, Chapter 7 will examine the causal logic of the main hypotheses relating to the role of dyadic history and past alignments in current alignment decisions.

Stage 1 Hypotheses

H1: Leaders will partake in alignments in which their state has the capacity to materially affect the outcome.

H2: Rulers will be more likely to get involved in disputes in which they have a substantial history of cooperation or conflict with one or more of the participants.

Stage 2 Hypotheses

H3: A ruler will align with the disputant with whom their state has a stronger recent history of positive alignment and against a disputant with whom it has a stronger recent history of negative alignment.

H4: A ruler will align against the disputant with whom their state has a history of conflictual relations and with a disputant with whom it has a history of cooperation.
H5: Given an asymmetrical relationship between a potential aligner and an original disputant, the leader of the former will align with the latter.

H6: Rulers will be less likely to align with states that are unlikely to reciprocate positive alignments and against states that are likely to reciprocate negative alignments.

H7: As a state becomes more representative, its leader will be more likely to change its alignment behavior toward previous alignment partners.

Cost and Discernibility Hypotheses

H8: The importance of being able to contribute to the resolution of a dispute decreases as the cost of alignment decreases.

H9: Less discernible alignments are less likely to be reciprocated.

H10: Leaders will make their positive alignments more discernible if they are dealing with states whose help is likely to be necessary in the future, and will make their negative alignments less discernible as the potential damage caused by retaliation increases.

Alternate Hypotheses

HR1: Given a lack of power preponderance between disputants, the leader of a major power will intervene on behalf of the weaker disputant.

HR2: Rulers will frequently switch sides in successive disputes.

HD1: Rulers of democratic regimes will be more likely to align with other democratic regimes, while rulers of undemocratic regimes will not.
Chapter 4 – Research Design

The current chapter bridges the gap between the theory and the empirical findings. The previous chapter presented a new theory of alignment. The theory emphasizes the direct role of reciprocity, as well as the pitfalls faced by states that are not deemed to be reliable in providing that reciprocity. It does so in the context of an alignment measure, which places all forms of alignment on two axes: cost and discernibility. From that alignment theory, the previous chapter derived eleven testable hypotheses. Three hypotheses from alternative explanations were laid out in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I outline a plan for testing those hypotheses.

Before turning to matters of model specifications and variable operationalizations, I am faced with the challenge of deciding on which of the many methods that are used in the field of IR is best-suited for testing the theory of alignment. In the literature review, it was noted that most of the research on this topic has been of a qualitative nature, relying either on theory alone or theory coupled with case studies. Only the homophily research program relies predominantly on statistical analysis.

I take a different approach and start with two quantitative chapters, each with a separate objective. The goal of the first chapter is to establish the importance of past alignments and dyadic history in present alignment decisions. That purpose is best accomplished by looking at a large sub-set of alignment cases. For reciprocal alignment to be a viable theory of the phenomena it deals with, it must be able to explain more than a handful of cases. This requires examining as many cases as available data allows, a task not suited for qualitative analysis. The goal of the second quantitative chapter is to gauge the accuracy of hypotheses relating to the cost and discernibility of alignment.
Given the large number of possible alignment types and the significant variation between the costs and variability of different form of alignment, a thorough investigation of the two concepts would require examining a large number of cases.

The downside of using most forms of statistical analysis is that they do a poor job of establishing internal validity: evidence that the observed outcome occurred as a consequence of the hypothesized explanatory variables. Internal validity has three components: temporal precedence, covariation between the cause and effect, and the ability to rule out alternate explanations. The first two components are easily dealt with by standard regression designs, but the last component is a troublesome one. There is always the possibility that a confounding variable is really responsible for the observed relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Furthermore, concepts in IR are notoriously difficult to measure. This is especially true for concepts like alignment, democracy, and capabilities. Without the ability to measure those concepts directly, IR scholars have no choice but to use proxies and arbitrary thresholds. While the reliability of these measures is rarely in doubt given the frequent use of the same datasets and variables, validity is always a concern. There is simply no way to determine how closely the variables approximate the concepts they are meant to represent. This is particularly problematic if the measurement is systematically biased, something that is not unlikely in light of much of the data relying on governmental sources that have an incentive to twist the truth. A government might, for instance, assert to its citizens that it is more powerful than it is, using that as a justification for entering a war. There is no easy solution to this problem.
A secondary quandary rests on the ability to interpret complex statistical models when using many of the above-mentioned indirect indicators. As Achen (2002) has steadfastly pointed out, including more than three variables in a regression model severely hinders the researcher’s ability to adequately understand the relationships between each of the explanatory variables and between those variables and the outcome measure. Including too few variables causes concerns for an opposite set of reasons, chief amongst them the possibility of omitted variable bias. Though this criticism might be easier dismissed when investigating a thoroughly examined topic, it must be taken more seriously when looking at an under-investigated area of research.

I take several steps to address some of the shortfalls with quantitative methods. To avoid creating arbitrary measures of alignment, I construct those variables on the basis of the work of Crescenzi and Enterline (2001), allowing for minor adjustments for reasons of theory. Achen’s apprehensions with the use of too many variables are addressed in two ways. First, I minimize the number of control variables, avoiding the inclusion of any variable that is not of theoretical interest and not theoretically linked to both the independent and dependent variables. Second, I use contingency tables where possible to demonstrate the face validity of any proposed statistical relationship, before moving on to more complex statistical models.

Without the ability to run an experiment or quasi-experiment on the topic of interest, I attempt to go beyond simple statistical correlations by incorporating a detailed case study. The two methods address each other’s weaknesses. Large N studies do a

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44 Clarke (2009) nevertheless warns that adding extra variables to a model does not necessarily reduce bias, but could actually increase it.
good job of providing generalizable explanations, but a poor job of establishing causality. Small N studies face problems with generalizability, but do a better job of demonstrating causal mechanisms (Back and Dumont 2007). Hence, I supplement the two quantitative chapters with a qualitative chapter, which uses a combination of the congruence method and process tracing to show that the causal mechanism postulated to explain the results in the quantitative chapters is really at play in a small sample of alignment cases.

4.1 Introducing the Dataset

The most basic issue that needs addressing when creating a dataset is what exactly is being investigated. That is no easy question when it comes to alignment, a concept that has been incredibly difficult to pin down in the extant literature. However, I have earlier provided a definition of alignment, which serves as the basis for identifying the unit of analysis and observation, namely: the stance a state takes on a well-defined proposal that is intended to resolve a stake over which two or more states have conflicting positions. This definition rules out several possibilities. The unit of analysis cannot be a general foreign policy direction as the emphasis is on specific stakes over which states dispute. The unit of analysis also cannot be the initiation or participation in a dispute as that would violate the “more than two states” criterion. Instead, I use a position on a stake as the unit of analysis. This involves two states disputing some value and the leader of a third state deciding whether to intervene, and if so, which side to take.

The question is intervene into what, and that is a question without an easy answer. Ideally, it would be possible to quantify all forms of alignment, create an index on the basis of each form’s cost and discernibility, and then attempt to explain variations in that index with the variables of interest. Unfortunately, that is not possible for a variety of
reasons. A lot of the alignments are not codified, many are not directly comparable, and there is a systematic bias in terms of which kind of countries are able to keep detailed records of their alignments. These complications shorten the list of potential alignments.

One possibility would be to follow the joining literature and use only MIDs or wars as the sole form of alignment. That would risk conflating all forms of alignment with one very costly kind, however. It would also restrict the domain of alignment to the military sphere. Instead, I use four forms of alignment – wars, dangerous MIDs, non-dangerous MIDs, and sanctions – as a compromise. There is sufficient variation in the cost dimension between the four alignment types, and there is variation in discernibility within each form of alignment. Data for these events is readily available and compiled by independent researchers, not governments. Though the operationalization of each event contains a degree of arbitrariness – a war requires 1,000 battlefield fatalities for example – it still does a solid job of representing the underlying concepts.

The unit of observation used in the statistical analysis is the potential intervention into an ongoing dispute. This leads to two further questions: who can join and when. One can conceivably come up with a countless number of criteria for selecting potential interveners. One strategy would be to include only the neighbors of the disputants. Doing so would entail deciding a priori the determinants of the first stage of alignment. It would also exclude the numerous instances of states getting involved in faraway disputes. Another strategy would be to only include those states that have a reasonable likelihood of aligning with one of the disputants, what would be the equivalent to politically relevant dyads. This solution, however, faces the same pitfall as the one above: we would be assuming up front what needs to be proven. The only way to avoid
this problem would be to include the entire population of states that exist at the time of the dispute. Every state can plausibly intervene, even if we know that a vast majority will not. I thus follow in the footsteps of Corbetta (2010) and Melin and Koch (2010) by allowing any state to intervene in the first stage of alignment. The existence of a distance variable at both stages of alignment ameliorates the effect of observations where alignment is unlikely to take place for loss of strength gradient reasons.

The second issue is deciding when the intervention is empirically allowed to take place. The two studies mentioned in the previous paragraph allow an intervention only into new disputes. The intervention, in turn, can only take place against the two initial participants in that dispute. Hence, everyone joining World War I was aligning with Austria-Hungary or Serbia and no one else. Similarly, all alignments in World War II were either pro-German or pro-Polish. Yet we know that many of the countries that did eventually join those conflicts did not make that choice – assuming they were not themselves attacked – solely on the basis of the original participants. A country like Brazil would clearly not willingly join a war involving two distant European powers.

In light of the problem outlined above, I allow states to intervene into every new dyadic dispute. I will illustrate this strategy using the Crimean War as an example. The initial disputants to that conflict were the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Thus, every state in existence in 1853 other than the two combatants – all 38 of them – is merged into the dispute dyad, leading to 38 initial observations. Out of those 38 observations, 3 – Italy, France, and the United Kingdom – are coded as having aligned with one of the

45 The list of states in existence during every year is obtained from COW’s State System Membership data.
participants, all aligning for the Ottomans and against the Russian Empire. The coding does not end there. France and the UK joined the Crimean War before Italy. What this means is that France forms a dispute dyad with Russia, as does Britain. For each of those dispute dyads there are a potential 38 interveners – every state in the world, including Ecuador which entered the system in 1854, minus the Ottomans, Russia, and the state in the dispute dyad with the Russian Empire. As the UK and France joined the conflict simultaneously, each is allowed to align in the other’s dispute dyad. Thus, France and Italy are coded as aligning with the UK in the UK-Russian dispute dyad, and the UK and Italy are coded as aligning with France in the French-Russian dispute dyad. The Ottoman Empire is not included because its decision to enter the conflict took place before British and French involvement. Lastly, Italy – the last joiner – gets its own dispute dyad with Russia. Two more states, Iran and Egypt, enter the system by the time of that intervention, but there are no alignments with either Italy or Russia at this point.

There is one major limitation to strategy adopted above, which is that states are forced to align with or against every other state that was involved in a conflict at the moment of the state joining it. Consequently, Mongolia, which entered World War II four days before the conflict’s conclusion, is coded as aligning against Germany and Japan – the only Axis Powers still in the War in August 1945 – and aligning for Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, South Africa, the Soviet Union, the UK, and the US. A case can be made that Mongolia did not intend to support or oppose each of those countries. But this intention does not change the fact that it indeed formed the alignments. At the heart of alignment theory is that alignments get reciprocated, regardless of the reason for the initial decision to enter a dispute. The Mongolian
alignment might matter less than the British one in 1939, but this factor is already incorporated theoretically through the discernibility dimension of alignment.

To summarize, the unit of analysis is the intervention into an ongoing dispute. This unit allows the investigation of the determinants of specific alignment decisions instead of arguing about the highly ambiguous concept of foreign policy direction. The unit of observation is every potential intervention into a dyadic dispute, which means allowing every state in the world that has yet to take a side in the dispute to join that dispute. This step allows for examining the characteristics of the intervener and its relationship with the states that are already taking part in the conflict. The intervention need not take place in the original dispute; countries are given an opportunity to join both the initial dispute dyad and every succeeding dispute dyad that is formed by other states entering the dispute. This allows countries to align with states that were themselves joiners, as was the case for Brazil’s alignment with the US in World War II. When a state is coded as joining a dispute, it joins it either on the side of or the side against every other state that is already party to that dispute. Though not perfect, this procedure is consistent with the theoretical assumption that alignments will be reciprocated whether they are made purposively or incidentally.

4.2 Methodology

This dissertation attempts to explain why leaders take part in interstate alignments and whose side they take when they do become involved. Given that the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable, a logistic regression is used in a majority of the statistical models. The first stage regression models attempt to explain entrance into an ongoing dispute, and the second stage models explain the choice of sides.
One of the assumptions of regression models is that the observations are independent of one another. In IR research, that would mean that there is no temporal or spatial interdependence. In practice, such interdependence is frequently present and researchers are normally advised to take concrete steps to minimize its impact. I treat temporal interdependence as part of the explanation of alignment decisions, and not a problem to be solved. Several independent variables, including the past alignment variable, incorporate a history component.

Another issue relates to spatial interdependence. The interdependence is a function of results within a class of units being correlated with one another, and ignoring the interdependence frequently leads to inflated standard errors. Those inflated standard errors, in turn, make it easier to achieve statistical significance. The class of units within this study where this could be an issue is the triad. The intervening state might have a long-standing relationship with the two disputants and its alignment decisions for each of their disputes would thus not be independent of one another. One possible solution is to use fixed effects, which is essentially adding each class, as a right-hand side variable. However, that is impractical in this case due to the low number of observations within each cluster.\textsuperscript{46} Instead, I use robust standard errors that are clustered around the triad.

Selection is also a concern in this study, as it is in most research in IR. The same factors that empower states to enter into alignments might make those same states prefer a specific side in the ongoing dispute. For example, it has been hypothesized here that

\textsuperscript{46} A relatively low intra-class correlation of 0.18 was obtained by running a random effects model that included all of the independent variables and used war joining as the dependent variable. A Hausman test, recommended by Green et al. (2001) as a way to decide between the use of fixed and random effects, is not able to run due to the low number of observations within each cluster.
high military capabilities should increase the likelihood of a state taking part in a military alignment. It is conceivable that those same capabilities might also make a state side with the weaker party in the dispute, on the basis of balancing logic.

The standard response to selection in IR is to use a two-stage model, usually a version of a Heckman selection model. This is true despite many flaws with the Heckman Correction. These include a poor performance in the presence of collinearity issues, inefficiency in the face of high selection bias, and a general inferiority to full-information maximum likelihood estimators (Puhani 2002). However, Monte Carlo simulations show that a Heckman estimator is only slightly less efficient than the alternatives when the collinearity and high selection bias problems are absent (Puhani 2002, 65). The estimator is also valuable for exploratory statistical analysis (Heckman 1979, 160), though perhaps not as the main source of results. For these reasons, a Heckman probit is used in an initial model in order to determine whether selection bias is an issue that needs to be addressed in further analysis.

One set of models in the dissertation do not have dichotomous outcomes. The models testing hypothesis 10, which deals with the causes of discernible alignments, use an integer as the outcome variable. It is an integer indicating the number of states that had entered a dispute before the current intervener. The variable is truncated in that it can take no value smaller than one. An OLS regression would be inappropriate due to the variable not being continuous. Instead, a truncated negative binomial regression model (Hilbe 2011, 346-53) is used to test the discernibility hypothesis. As is the case with the other statistical models, the standard errors are clustered around the triad to control for any traits unique to a specific set of states.
The temporal domain for this dissertation is 1816 to 1999. That comprises nearly the entire modern era in international relations, starting from the post-Napoleonic era to the end of the millennium. More recent years are not used due to the unavailability of post-1999 data for one of the independent variables. As a partial compensation for ignoring the present in the statistical analysis, most of the qualitative chapter focuses on alignments made in the previous two decades, including one in 2013.

4.3 Dependent Variables

This dissertation employs eight core dependent variables, four at each stage of alignment. Those variables are war joining, dangerous MID joining, non-dangerous MID joining, and participation in a sanction regime. The war variable is taken from the Correlates of War (COW) Interstate War 4.0 dataset. To be classified as a war, a conflict must involve at least 1,000 battlefield fatalities. To be considered a participant in a war, a state must contribute at least 1,000 troops to the war effort or suffer at least 100 battle-related deaths. The two MID variables are derived from Maoz’ Dyadic MID dataset, based on the COW Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset. An MID is a dispute between states that involves the threat, demonstration, or use of force. All wars are MIDs, but most MIDs are not wars. I differentiate dangerous MIDs, which involve fatalities or are fought over territory – which can be expected to increase the salience of the conflict – from non-dangerous MIDs, which do not meet either criterion.47 The final dataset used to

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47 Though it is possible that a leader might intervene in an MID without knowing whether it is “dangerous” or not, it is not very likely given the two criteria. Leaders should be aware what the issue under dispute is long before they make the decision to commit their state to the conflict. Additionally, while it is possible that a ruler can agree to join a conflict not expecting any casualties, it would make little sense to commit troops to a dispute and not expect some casualties to result from it.
create the outcome variables is the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions Dataset, which defines sanctions as “actions that one or more countries take to limit or end their economic relations with a target country in an effort to persuade that country to change one or more of its policies” (Morgan et al. 2006). All the data is directed.48

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Observations</th>
<th>Stage 2 Observations</th>
<th>Percent involving Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War intervention</td>
<td>51,650</td>
<td>3,476</td>
<td>6.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous MID intervention</td>
<td>242,206</td>
<td>3,446</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dangerous MID intervention</td>
<td>467,196</td>
<td>8,532</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction joining</td>
<td>249,266</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These variables were chosen for a variety of reasons, primary among them being the variation in the cost of alignment between them. Wars are obviously more costly than MIDs. Dangerous MIDs are clearly more costly than other MIDs. The latter make use of different tools from economic sanctions, though the costs of the two are usually not very different. Sanctions were also included to diversify the issue areas over which alignment takes place. A theory of alignment should not be limited to the military sphere.

The other main reason for these choices was, unfortunately, data availability. Problems arose from two sources. First, many forms of alignment do not lend themselves well to being quantified, at least not in a time series cross-sectional design. This served as the main impetus for including a qualitative chapter in this dissertation, which should

48 Directed data consists of directed dyads. For example, in the Crimean War, there is a Russian-Ottoman and an Ottoman-Russian dispute dyad. Directed data creates a symmetry in the data between the two disputants, which makes it possible to examine the correlates of joining state A.
be able to get at the many types of alignment that are more context or issue-specific. While the ideal dependent variable for alignment would include all sorts of multilateral agreements formed by states, which are much more frequent than military disputes and sanctions, there is no relevant comprehensive data available. Even if there was such data, determining which states had the opportunity to join would be a highly problematic task.

The other obstacle to having a wider range of alignment types is the sheer inability of most international events to satisfy the criteria for alignment. Most meetings between heads of state or their representatives do not result in a well-defined proposal to resolve a particular issue. When agreements are made, a sub-section of them, usually relating to sensitive matters, are not made publicly available. These agreements cannot be considered a form of alignment as there is no opportunity for domestic constituencies or other states to feel encouraged or slighted by the outcome. An even larger segment of agreements is bilateral, and intentionally so. Other states could not be said to have remained non-aligned on a stake on which they were not allowed to make their preferences known. Finally, many agreements, especially those reached through some international forum, do not have two more conflicting sides. In the UN GA, for instance, a vast majority of resolutions pass by consensus. Trade agreements are frequently regionally-based, meaning that extra-regional states are not allowed to join them, and nearly all states within the region are party to the agreements. An argument could be made that alignment should not require opposition; states might be considered aligned with each other even if they are not aligning against anyone else. However, the definition of an issue requires there to be disagreement. If everyone agrees on the resolution of an
issue, that issue ceases to exist. As a result, it is inappropriate to label entirely cooperative behavior as being a form of alignment.

The hurdles outlined above point to the advantage of using wars and MIDs as dependent variables. The data for each is readily available. Considerable research has been carried out using those variables, giving them a high face value. Military disputes by definition require at least two sides. They are rarely carried out entirely in secret. Based on past experience, we also know that any state can potentially join a military dispute, even if most states do not have the opportunity or willingness to take that step.

4.4 Alignment Independent Variable

The main explanatory variable in this dissertation is the one representing past alignment. Rulers that do not reciprocate past alignments face a severe penalty both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the supporters of the status quo, who are usually numerous, would do their best to prevent an about-turn in their country’s foreign policy direction. They tend to be invested in current positive and negative relationships, and do not look kindly on politicians that aim to undermine those relationships. Internationally, a refusal to reciprocate positively is viewed as a betrayal, which undermines a ruler’s ability to obtain alignment from the same state in the future. A lack of negative reciprocation makes one an easy target for potential foes.

The underlying mechanism for generating the alignment variable is taken from Crescenzi and Enterline (2001), who create a variable to represent a dyad’s history of interaction. Their variable is composed of multiple elements. First, the authors change the interaction score whenever an event occurs in a dyad. That score is influenced by the severity of the event and the amount of time since the last such event took place. The
more severe the event and the lower the duration between the current event and the previous one, the larger the change in the interaction score.

Crescenzi and Enterline (2001) further create a decay function, which lowers the interaction score over time. The decay is based not only on the passage of time, but also the amount of activity that preceded the initiation of the decay. The interaction score of dyads that had a greater amount of cooperation or conflict decays at a slower rate than of states with fewer previous interactions. The score is bounded between -1 and 1.

I leave the basic structure of the variable, but make several changes to make it more consistent with the concept of alignment introduced in this dissertation. The first difference is that dyadic events are replaced by past alignments. Instead of using an MID between the states in a dyad as the basis for coding the conflict aspect of the variable, I do the same with one of the states in the dyad aligning for or against the other state in a dispute in which it was not an original participant. The state that aligned in the past is either state A or state B, meaning that the potential intervener, state I, is responding to that past alignment.

The second change is that the severity aspect of the variable is created on the basis of the previous alignment type and not the severity of the MID. The original variable used the hostility level of the MID as the proxy for severity. The severity therefore ranged from 2 to 5 depending on whether the MID involved a threat of force, a demonstration of force, a use of force not involving 1,000 battlefield fatalities, and a use of force that resulted in over 1,000 battlefield fatalities. I code an alignment into a war as producing a severity level of 3, an alignment into a dangerous MID as producing a severity level of 2, and an alignment into a non-dangerous MID or a sanctions regime as
producing a severity level of 1. This is more consistent with the cost of alignment concept than the version used by Crescenzi and Enterline (2001).

The last change to the variable is to include a discernibility component. Every alignment has its score multiplied by a factor of 0.04 depending on how late the alignment took place. The first state to take part in an alignment has its score multiplied by 1, the second state by 0.96, the third by 0.92, etc. Due to the sanctions dataset not including the timing of the sanction initiation, I instead use the number of sanctioners to denote discernibility. The greater the number of sanctioners, the less discernible the alignment. The number of sanctioners ranges from 2 to 5. A state that was part of a 3-state alignment would see its alignment score multiplied by 0.92. That number decreases to 0.84 for a four state alignment, and 0.76 for a five state alignment. The purpose of this step is to reduce the importance of alignments that were made less discernibly.

4.5 Operationalization of Other Independent Variables

Some form of the other theoretically important factors is available in other studies of the subject, and their operationalization is thus more straightforward. To start, the two factors hypothesized to affect the likelihood of a state joining an ongoing dispute is the ability to make a material contribution to the resolution of that dispute and a connection to the disputants. The latter plays a key role in persuading a leader’s winning coalition to support their spending of resources on international objectives, something that is rarely domestically popular. I use two variables to operationalize the first factor: military capabilities and proximity to the disputants. The latter allows a state to employ their resources in a dispute, and the former determines how many resources they can employ. Specifically, the military capabilities variable is coded as a state’s amount of military
personnel, as determined by COW’s National Material Capabilities dataset. The proximity variable is a count of the number of states in the dispute dyad that are within 100 miles of the potential intervener.

Two variables are used to denote a connection to the disputants. The connection can be either positive or negative. The first counts the amount of states in the dispute dyad that are allied to the potential intervener, using the data from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions Project (ATOP). The second counts the number of countries in the dispute dyad that fought an MID with the potential intervener within the previous five years. The five year span is the same as the one used to construct the alignment variable. Using behavioral proxies for ties is also consistent with alignment theory, which argues that past behavior of other states affects the relative strength of domestic hardliners and accommodationists as it pertains to the foreign policy toward those states.

I now turn to operationalizing the factors hypothesized to affect the second stage of alignment. The coding rules for the past alignment variable have already been discussed. The dyadic history factor, central to hypothesis 4, is split into two parts. The hostility aspect is operationalized as a dyadic version of the past alignment variable. It is calculated on the basis of Crescenzi and Enterline’s (2001) conflict interaction level variable. That variable is coded on the basis of the severity of MIDs in a dyad, moderated by the frequency of interaction in the dyad, the amount of time between disputes, and the amount of time since the last dispute. I make one change to this variable, replacing the severity of MIDs with my measure of dispute severity. Hence, instead of the severity taking the values 2, 3, 4, or 5 on the basis of the hostility level of the MID, it takes the value 3 for a war, 2 for a dangerous MID, and 1 for non-dangerous
MID and sanctions. The final version of the variable is calculated as the intervener’s score with state A minus its score with state B.

The cooperative side of the variable is coded in terms of the intervener’s alliance ties with the two disputants, on the basis of the ATOP database. To get the maximum value for this variable, the intervener has to be allied with state A but not state B. For example, if a war is being fought between Britain and Germany, the US is allied to the former but not the latter, and the US is considering joining the war, the variable would have the maximum value. To get the minimum value, the reverse must be true.

The fifth hypothesis deals with asymmetry. Rulers want to avoid offending states whose continued cooperation matters more to the intervener than to the other state. One of the most obvious examples of this form of a relationship is when there is an asymmetrical trade relationship. Using COW’s International Trade Data 3.0 dataset, a sensitivity to country-specific trade is calculated for State I vis-à-vis states A and B. The higher the portion of state I’s exports and imports to State A as percentage of its GDP compared to the reverse relationship, the more dependent State I is on the continued goodwill of state A. The same figure is calculated for State I’s trade ties with state B, and this number is then subtracted from its IA counterpart. Due to the lack of availability of GDP statistics before 1950, this variable does not take any values before that year, meaning that any model using this variable also examines the time period from 1950.

The sixth hypothesis is crucial to alignment theory and claims that states that are assumed to be unreliable at reciprocating positive alignment will fail at obtaining that form of alignment, and states unlikely to reciprocate negative alignment are very likely to end up with the negative variety of alignment. The first form of unreliability is captured
by variables denoting the representativeness and stability of a country’s ruling regime. An easy way of operationalizing the former would be to use a ready-made democracy variable, such as widely used Polity score. However, that variable and others like it consist of many components, many entirely unrelated to the perceived reliability of the state’s ruler. What matters for alignment theory is whether the selectorate for the executive office is likely to expand in the future, thereby leading to a reversal in foreign policy priorities. The variable that best approximates this situation is Polity IV’s Competitiveness of Executive Recruitment variable. According to this variable, an executive could be selected through a non-democratic process, elected through a fair election, or be somewhere in between. To be deemed reliable, a state’s executive must be chosen democratically. Other forms of regimes risk being overthrown by factions with other foreign policy goals or being expanded to include those same groups. One is added to the representativeness variable if State A has the maximum executive recruitment score of 3, and one is subtracted if the same is true for state B.

Operationalizing the instability variable is a more complex task. There are no available variables that directly measure the concept. Instead, the instability variable is a composite of two factors that stoke instability: whether the state is experiencing a civil war and whether the state is newly independent. COW’s Intra-State War Data is used for the former and COW’s State System Membership is used for the latter. One is added to a state’s instability score if it is experiencing a civil war and if it obtained independence in the previous five years. As is the case with the other stage 2 variables, the instability score for State B is subtracted from state A’s score to form the final variable.
I also use a behavioral version of reliability, which looks at whether a ruler had reneged on their alliance commitments with both the potential intervener and all states in general. It is a marked difference from the previous two reliability variables, which were concerned with the functioning of a country’s institutions or lack thereof. The alliance reliability variable is borrowed from Crescenzi et al. (2012). The variable is coded in a very similar manner to the dyadic history one. Rulers can lower their state’s reliability score by not carrying out their alliance commitments to either the intervener or any other state in the system. The score is weighed toward alliance decisions with states that are similar to the intervener. The reliability score decays over time, and the decay is more rapid for states with fewer alliances. The final version of this variable subtracts state B’s alliance reliability vis-à-vis the intervener from the same score for state A.

To code the distraction variable that precludes states from reciprocating negative alignment, I count the number of Thompson strategic rivals a state possesses in the given year excluding a possible rivalry with the intervener. The greater the number of rivals, the less able is a state to retaliate for any specific rivals’ negative alignment. Responding to every slight risks creating an opening for other rivals; it also uses up resources that can be better used to deter the other rivals from pursuing their objectives more aggressively.

Variables relating to discernibility are coded in a manner similar to past alignment. The earlier a state joins a dispute relative to other interveners, the more discernible is their alignment. Leaders that join disputes late can reasonably claim that

49 See Thompson (2001) for the coding scheme used to generate the rivalries. The reason this rivalry measure is used instead of Klein et al.’s (2006) enduring rivalries is due to the latter being defined in terms of MIDs. That variable can therefore not be used to predict MIDs. The Thompson rivalry variable, on the other hand, is based on psychological factors and therefore avoids this quandary.
their entrance was less a function of their opposition to the state they aligned against than as a favor to one of the states on the other side. Historically, states that joined conflicts later did not become victim of the same kind of victor’s justice that the primary combatants ended up dealing with. The coding of discernibility makes use of a count measure, and corresponds to the number of states that were involved in the dispute before the particular state’s alignment. A higher number corresponds to a less discernible form of alignment. The coding rules apply to the war and MID variables; sanction variables are treated differently for reasons outlined above. A more discernible alignment for those cases is one where there are fewer parties to the sanction regime.

Two control variables, which correspond to a leader’s opportunity and willingness to get involved in a dispute, are used. One is the distance between the intervener and the two combatants. A positive value denotes that the intervener is geographically closer to State A than to state B. A negative value does the opposite. The main reason this control is included is due to its potential role in generating selection bias: proximate states are more likely to have extensive contact with their neighbors, which might lead to both alliances and conflict with interveners on one the hand and intervention into those disputes on the other. In terms of methodology, this variable and the next one were partially included because they were not strongly correlated with any of the independent variables, which would otherwise complicate the interpretation of the latter’s effects.

The second control variable is the similarity in alliance portfolios (Signorino and Ritter 1999) between the disputants and the intervener. The variable, also called the S-Score, is traditionally used as a proxy for interest similarity. The thinking is that if two states have similar allies, they also share common interests. If we take this claim at face
value, then controlling for this variable blunts a possible attack against the alignment variable, namely that states align due to similar interests and not past behavior. Including this variable would remove another potential source of omitted variable bias. This variable, like most of the other ones in this section, is coded by subtracting the S-Score for the IB dyad from its IA counterpart. Accordingly, if the US is looking to intervene in a conflict between India and Pakistan, and has an S-Score of 0.5 with India and 0.1 with Pakistan, the value for this variable would be 0.4. The coding rules for the other variables are detailed in the results section.

Table 4.2. Summary of Concepts and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First stage alignment</td>
<td>Joining a war</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable denoting whether a country joined an ongoing dispute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joining a dangerous MID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joining a non-dangerous MID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joining a sanction regime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage alignment</td>
<td>Taking sides in above</td>
<td>Joined on side A: yes or no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to issue</td>
<td>Military personnel</td>
<td>Number of military personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolution</td>
<td>Distance from disputants</td>
<td>Less than 100 miles to how many sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to disputants</td>
<td>Recent MIDs</td>
<td>MIDS within 5 years and ongoing alliances with how many sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing military alliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past alignment</td>
<td>Recipient of alignment</td>
<td>Past recipient of positive or negative alignment, adjusted for the cost, discernibility, and decay over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic history</td>
<td>Recent MIDs</td>
<td>MID within 5 years with A – B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing military alliance</td>
<td>Ongoing alliance with A - B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>Economic dependence</td>
<td>Trade as proportion of GDP with A- B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliability</td>
<td>Unrepresentative</td>
<td>How is executive chosen (Polity IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Civil war or newly independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unreliable behavior</td>
<td>Reneged on alliance, decay over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unlikely to retaliate</td>
<td>Number of Thompson rivalries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>War &gt; dangerous MID &gt; other MID = sanctions</td>
<td>Refers to alignment type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discernibility</td>
<td>Order of joining dispute</td>
<td>Number of states joining dispute first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking part in sanctions</td>
<td>Number of states involved in sanctions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Hypothesis Testing

In Chapter 5, I begin the testing of alignment theory by examining the descriptive statistics for each dependent and independent variable. This is followed by a set of contingency tables, pitting first stage alignment variables on one side and the first stage alignment dependent variable on the other. The goal is to see whether there is a sufficiently clear association between the two groups of variables to continue with more formal statistical models and hypothesis testing. Once that is taken care of, a logistic regression is used to determine the effectiveness of the first stage independent variables in explaining the variation in alignment joining. Those variables are military personnel and contiguity, used to denote a state’s ability to make a difference in a dispute, and the existence of alliance ties and recent military conflicts with the disputants, used to denote a connection to the conflictual parties.

Following the logistic regression for the stage one variables and predicted probabilities that assess the substantive effect of those factors, the same is done for the second stage of alignment. The three variables used to represent the history of relations are past alignment, recent dyadic conflict, and ongoing alliance ties. Each signifies an element of diplomatic relations that would strengthen domestic forces in the intervening state that would push toward involvement in the dispute. These variables are examined in contingency tables, before they are included in a probit regression. These factors are joined by variables used to denote a state’s unreliability in reciprocating positive or negative alignments, and a variable indicating a dependence of the intervener on the
disputants. With no sufficiently similar research in existence to justify omitting some of the variables from the model, they are all included in the same probit regression.50

After investigating the separate effects of the first and second stage variables on alignment decisions, the two sets of variables are included in the same Heckman probit selection model. The object is to see whether errors in the two stages of alignment are correlated, thereby representing the existence of selection bias. If selection bias is present, future statistical models need to take that factor into account.

Finding no selection, I re-examine the previous model under unfavorable conditions to see how robust it is to model specifications. A logistic regression is used in models that exclude the world wars – which comprise a large portion of the data – and split the empirical domain into the pre and post 1945 time periods. This is followed by the examination of the seventh hypothesis, dealing with changes in alignment behavior due to changes in regime characteristics, through the use of a contingency table. A more advanced analysis is not possible given the lack of relevant observations.

I conclude Chapter 5 by looking at critical tests that seek to isolate the empirical predictions of reciprocal alignment theory from those of balance of power and democratic peace theories. Critical tests against both competing explanations of alignment make use of a combination of contingency tables and logistic regressions. In both cases, one model performs the test under neutral conditions, while at least one other model does so under conditions favorable to the alternative explanations of alignment.

50 A probit is used instead of a logit in these models to make the results more comparable to the ones obtained in the Heckman probit model.
The first half of Chapter 6 expands upon the results of Chapter 5 by including non-war dependent variables in every table. Instead of gauging the impact of the alignment and unreliability measures on only one form of costly alignment, the chapter broadens the scope of the testing to alignments of a lower cost. Thus, most of the tables have four separate dependent variables – the joining of wars, dangerous MIDs, non-dangerous MIDs, and sanction regimes – whose correlates are examined with the aid of logistic regressions. The same is true for the critical tests that compare reciprocal alignment theory to the competing frameworks. The only difference from the previous chapter is that the theories are tested for each of the four types of alignment instead of just on wars.

One difference from Chapter 5 is that the theoretically relevant variables are used to individually predict alignment decisions. Using 50 percent as the baseline probability, I check how much the predictive power of a logistic regression model improves with the inclusion of the individual variables. For example, does including only the past alignment variable in a model lead to predicted probabilities of alignment that are more consistent with the historical record than could be expected through pure chance.

Lastly, the discernibility hypothesis is examined with the help of a zero-truncated negative binomial regression. The dependent variable in these models is the order of a state’s intervention into a dispute. According to the proposed theory, the earlier the intervention, the more discernible it is perceived to be, and the more likely it is to be reciprocated. The models are zero-truncated because the number counting the order of intervention cannot be zero or negative. A negative binomial model is used because it examines count data and that data is over dispersed, meaning there is greater variation in the dependent variable that would otherwise be expected. This is the case because in
every multilateral war, some country will be the second to join the dispute, while only a handful of disputes are large enough to allow a country to join eighth or tenth. These models look at whether theoretically important variables affect the order of intervention.

4.7 Former Soviet Union Case Study

In Chapter 7, I tentatively test the causal mechanism of the reciprocal alignment theory through the use of case studies. When proposing a new theory, as is the case here, it is insufficient to demonstrate a statistical link between the independent and dependent variables. It is also necessary to show that the proposed causal mechanisms have real explanatory power. This requires eliminating the possibility of the mechanism being spurious or vacuously true. Case studies are adept at addressing these shortcomings.

Case studies do face the challenge of external validity. Explanations that fully explain a few cases might not be generalizable onto a wider population. A related issue is the degrees of freedom – a researcher tries to explain a single or a few cases with multiple variables – which is part of a bigger problem of indeterminate research designs. In those designs, evidence can be consistent with an infinite number of potential explanations (George and Bennett 2005, 30). A small-N weakens one’s ability to rule out those potential explanations.

One way to expand the number of observations within a few cases is to use a within-case analysis. By examining the same country at different points in time, a researcher can eliminate many confounding variables. Though history is always messy, making it impossible to isolate the effects of a single variable even within a single case, within-case analysis minimizes the effect of omitted variables, thereby leading to a more efficient estimate of the explanatory variables’ effects.
The specific case study method that will be used in Chapter 7 is the method of congruence. It aims to determine whether an outcome is congruent with the hypothesized explanation for it (George and Bennett 2005, 181). For instance, if one is testing balance of power theory, the Soviet alignment against Nazi Germany in 1941 – a major power siding against the stronger side in a war - would be congruent with the claims of that theory. For reciprocal alignment theory, a positive past alignment coupled with a reciprocated alignment by the other side would be evidence of congruence. Two states with a negative history of bilateral relations would be expected to negatively align against each other when given the opportunity. A failure to do so would suggest incongruence.

A major weakness with the congruence method is that it does a poor job at eliminating alternative explanations for the same phenomena. The outcome might be congruent with the proposed theory, but also be congruent with other explanations. We would thus have no way of determining which of the theories have greater explanatory power. In the Soviet-Nazi Germany example, it is obvious that the reason the Soviet Union aligned against Germany was because it was attacked. Congruence does a poor job of ruling out such vacuous explanations. One way around this problem is to couple the congruence method with process-tracing, investigating whether proposed causal mechanisms were responsible for the outcome (George and Bennett 2005, 183).

The relative simplicity of the causal mechanism in the reciprocal alignment theory does not entirely allow us to dismiss other possible explanations of alignment even if the causal mechanism did lead to the hypothesized result. To rectify this flaw, the alignment theory is tested against two alternative explanations: balance of power and homophily, operationalized in terms of regime type. Thus, for every alignment decisions, two steps
are taken. First, I check whether the outcome is consistent with the theoretical
expectations of reciprocal alignment theory and those of the balance of power and
homophily theories. Second, I determine whether the congruence can be attributed to
spuriousness. If the latter is true, then the congruence cannot be considered evidence in
support of a given theory (George and Bennett 2005, 185).

The congruence method is sensitive to the possibility of selection bias. If cases
are chosen in a manner that favors the hypothesized link, then any potential congruence
can easily be attributed to the research design rather than to a legitimate causal link
between the independent and dependent variables. Consequently, the cases need to be
chosen on the basis of clear criteria that does not privilege some explanations of
alignment over others. What those criteria are depends on the subject matter and the
characteristics of the proposed explanations for the outcome variable.

To take advantage of the strengths of the congruence method, case studies must
be chosen that limit the potential number of explanations for a given phenomenon. One
way of accomplishing this objective is to choose countries that did not yet have an
opportunity to develop a complex set of relationships with a multitude of states. Having
fewer relationships means having fewer actors attempting to influence the relevant
decisions. It would also be useful to choose countries with a limited exposure to the rest
of the world. By limiting the number of interconnected issues that could influence a
specific outcome, it becomes easier to isolate motivations for the taking of specific issue
positions. Both of these criteria lessen the impact of equifinality.51

51 The concept of equifinality holds that there are multiple casual paths, which can be used to produce
multiple explanations for the same outcome.
The non-European parts of the former Soviet Union meet both of the criteria. Most of the states in that region do not have a history of independent rule, and only obtained their current independence in 1991. As a result, they did not have an opportunity to build up many international relations and are less intertwined in global decision-making. The lack of history all but eliminates alignment explanations on the basis of ancient grievances, especially when many of the nations in the region have only recently been imagined. The recent independence also limits the number of actors that care sufficiently about the region to attempt to influence foreign policy outcomes there.

Using states that are landlocked and/or are far away from the centers of international politics makes it easier to eliminate a wide range of potential explanations for the alignment decisions. Few issues are handled entirely independent of one another, and the fewer issues a country is concerned with, the less complex will be the determinants of its foreign policy behavior. Central Asian states in particular rate highly on this criterion given their landlocked status, their distance from Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific, and their limited opportunities for joining a wider bloc of states, whether the EU or ASEAN.

From the subset of possible post-Soviet cases, I looked for cases that showed within-case variation on the independent variables and cases that provided multiple points in time to revisit the same decision. Both factors would maximize the amount of leverage that could be gained from analyzing a low number of cases. Lastly, I tried to avoid alignment decisions that were not salient and did not have much written about them. The purpose was to isolate cases where the proposed causal mechanism was clearly present and there was sufficient data to determine its effect on the outcome.
The criteria above led me to choose two widely-reported cases of alignment. The first involved Uzbekistan’s policy on the Collective Security Treaty (CST). The case provided one of the few instances in the region of a clear alignment that took place in the middle of two decisions on the same issue. The alignment involved Russia’s refusal to withdraw its troops from Uzbekistan’s neighbor, Tajikistan, after the latter’s civil war came to an end. With the aid of process-tracing, it would be possible to isolate the effect of that negative alignment decision on Uzbekistan’s future decisions regarding the CST.

The other case – Kyrgyzstan’s policies pertaining to the Manas military base – was chosen due to the variation on the dyadic history independent variable. Kyrgyzstan’s rulers received significant economic benefits each time they aligned with Russia, benefits that the US was unable or unwilling to match. This gradual progression toward the creation of strong pro-Russian constituencies should generate clear differences in Kyrgyz alignment behavior over time. Like the Uzbek case, the case involved multiple decisions on the same issue, and was sufficiently salient to produce a sizable amount of news reports and academic articles on the topic.
Chapter 5 – Correlates of Political Alignment

The main objective of this chapter is to establish that reciprocation lies at the heart of alignment decisions. Each of the statistical models in this chapter is intended to tie back to this conjecture. Reciprocal alignment theory is tested against two other theories that deal with alignment. It is first tested against two predictions of realism: that states balance against the stronger side in a dispute, particularly if the intervening state is a major power and neither disputant has preponderance in capabilities, and that states turn on allies and side with past enemies if doing so happens to be in their interest in a given conflict. Alignment theory is also tested against a claim frequently made by democratic peace theorists, namely that the reason democratic states do not fight one another is because of a similarity in their regimes. Alignment theory suggests that the reason has more to with the reliability of democracies as alignment partners.

This chapter only examines the determinants of aligning with disputants in an ongoing war, an enormously costly form of alignment. This is consistent with the traditional study of alignment, which focused on high profile events. The results obtained here would thus be most readily comparable to other theories and empirical studies on the subject. Chapters 6 will broaden the scope of alignment to include less costly interventions, and differentiate alignment on the basis of discernibility; that chapter will build upon the results obtained here.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the key variables will be briefly reintroduced, and hypotheses relating to the first stage of alignment will be tested. This will be

52 This test is similar to the one used by Jones (1994), who found evidence for the balancing hypothesis.
followed by a two-stage model that incorporates the first stage results and includes all of the key variables. These include the dyadic history variables, variables relating to unreliability, and a variable denoting an asymmetrical relationship. Several robustness checks are then undertaken to determine whether the effect of the variables is limited to a specific epoch or type of wars. Next, I check whether states that are unstable or unrepresentative are indeed unreliable alignment partners. Lastly, alignment theory is tested against two competing theories, realism and the democratic peace – taken from the capabilities and homophily frameworks, respectively. In all stage 2 models, intervention into an ongoing war is the sole dependent variable. This is changed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Results – First Stage

A cursory look at the war intervention dependent variable shows that states join wars very infrequently. States had 51,650 opportunities to join ongoing wars. They openly joined the military effort in only 3,476 of those cases. The latter number is somewhat inflated by interventions into large wars counting as alignments with or against all other dyads that were already fighting. If the range of cases is reduced to those involving at least one war participant who borders the potential intervener, the probability of intervention increases from 0.067 to 0.250, highlighting the importance of proximity.

In the second stage of alignment, when states get to choose which side to join, the mean of all the variables is zero, due to the directed nature of the dataset. The dependent variable in the stage 2 models is whether the intervener joined side A. As a result, most of the independent variables subtract B’s value of the original variable from A’s. For instance, the difference in dyadic alliances variable takes the value -1 if the intervener is
allied with state B, but not state A. The alignment variable takes its maximum value if state A recently sided with state I in a dispute, and State B sided against state I.

Table 5.1. Descriptive statistics of the War Intervention dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1 variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War intervention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s military capabilities*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximate to disputants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent conflict with disputants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied to disputants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2 variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of sides (IA)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dependence (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1099.67</td>
<td>1099.67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*to improve the ease of interpretation, the military capabilities variable is divided by 1,000

I now test the first two hypotheses, both relating to the first stage of alignment. They put forth two conditions that make intervention more likely. First, a state must have the ability to affect the outcome of the dispute. Otherwise, the intervention might not be valued or uses up scarce resources. Second, rulers will partake in disputes in which they have a history of conflict or cooperation with the disputants. Only under these circumstances can a leader expect to gain sufficient domestic support for involvement.
Table 5.2. Cross-tabulations for First Stage Alignment and Dyadic History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 Enemies</th>
<th>1 Enemy</th>
<th>2 Enemies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not take part in alignment</td>
<td>38,594</td>
<td>3,480</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took part in alignment</td>
<td>2,084</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,678</td>
<td>4,454</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 2100$, pr. $\chi^2 = 0.00$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 Allies</th>
<th>1 Ally</th>
<th>2 Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not take part in alignment</td>
<td>38,282</td>
<td>4,840</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took part in alignment</td>
<td>1,966</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,248</td>
<td>5,690</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 3100$, pr. $\chi^2 = 0.00$

Before turning to complex statistical tests, I run a simple cross-tabulation of the dyadic history variables and entrance into a war. If dyadic history plays a major role in the decision to choose sides, then there should be a large observable difference in the incidence of alignment when varying the extent of a potential intervener’s relationship with the warring parties. This is indeed the case according to Table 5.2. Observations where the potential intervener has recently engaged in MIDs with both disputants make up 1.1 percent of the population of cases, but 4.7 percent of the cases in the alignment category. Thus, in this situation, the country was nearly six times more likely to intervene than to remain on the sidelines. The alliance statistics paint a similar picture. A potential intervener was allied with both war participants in 1.8 percent of the cases, but that category was responsible for 12.6 percent of the interventions.
Table 5.3. Determinants of the Decision to Intervene in a War, 1816-2001

| Model 1 |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Intervener’s military capabilities | 0.66 *** |
| Proximate to disputants | 0.74 *** |
| Recent conflict with disputants | 0.84 *** |
| Allied to disputants | 1.10 *** |
| LR $\chi^2$ (df = 4) | 2591.66 *** |
| Pseudo R² | 0.173 |
| N | 41,902 |

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

Table 5.3 uses a logistic regression to test the first stage hypotheses. The results are strongly consistent with those hypotheses. Military capabilities of the intervener, as well as proximity to the conflict make intervention into that war more likely. Positive and negative relations with the disputants are both associated with intervention, as expected. One might argue that, individually, these variables reflect common knowledge in conflict studies, not providing any unique insights. However, the tendency of past research is to study these concepts in isolation, either including a few of the above variables or not having a coherent story about how they work together. As an example, Venezuela under Chavez promoted close economic, political, and military ties with Russia. Yet when Russia got into a military conflict with Georgia in 2008, neither Venezuela nor Russia expected Venezuela to get directly involved in the dispute. This is partially because Russia did not expect great resistance from Georgia, but also because the Venezuelan leader did not have a capacity to affect the resolution of the dispute and would not be able to obtain domestic support for such an undertaking. Next, I examine the substantive effects of the specified variables.
Table 5.4. Predicted Probabilities of the Decision to Intervene in a War, 1816-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline probability</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s military capabilities (50th percentile)</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s military capabilities (95th percentile)</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>+51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximate to neither disputant</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximate to both disputants</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>+284%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent conflict with neither disputant</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent conflict with both disputants</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>+352%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied to neither disputant</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied to both disputants</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>+585%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment-suppressing combination</td>
<td><strong>0.030</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment-inducing combination</td>
<td><strong>0.909</strong></td>
<td>+2,930%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main entries are predicted probabilities derived from Model 1; in the baseline model, all variables are set at their means (there are no dichotomous variables).

Table 5.4 provides the predicted probabilities for the first model. The baseline probability of war-involvement is 0.046, or one in twenty-two. This number differs from that in Table 5.1 due to missing data for some of the variables. Changing each of the variables from the minimum to the maximum, or from the 5th percentile to the 95th percentile for the military capabilities variables, substantially increases the probability of joining a war. The dyadic history variables increase the probability of intervention by at least 350 percent. This table does not tell us whether the intervener took the side of their ally or fought against their rival, but it is clear that some connection to the disputants is necessary before a statesman would entertain the notion of a costly intervention.

However, whenever there is an ability to contribute, in terms of having sufficient military resources and being proximate to the disputants, and a strong connection to the disputants, the probability of joining an ongoing war shoots up to 0.909, making the intervention all but certain. I now turn to the second stage of alignment.
5.2 Results – Second Stage

Before turning to formal hypothesis-testing, I examine cross-tabulations of the dyadic history variables and choice of sides in alignment decisions. If interveners are more likely to support someone with whom they have a positive history and support the opponent of anyone they have a negative history with, then they should align with their ally and against their military enemies greater than half the times; they should also help those states that aligned with them in the past. Table 5.5 provides tentative support for that logic. When an intervener was allied with state A but not state B, it opted to align with the former over 70 percent of the time. Similarly, the intervener sided against their military enemy, defined in terms of recent MIDs, 71.3 percent of the time. In situations where the alignment difference was positive, meaning that A was more supportive of the intervener than was B, the latter obtained positive alignment 58.6 percent of the time. In these simple tests, past relations seem to matter a great deal when making decisions.

Table 5.5. Cross-tabulations for Second Stage Alignment and Dyadic History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opposed A</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Favored A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not align with A</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned with A</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 55.3, pr. χ² = 0.000
Table 5.5 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enemy B</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Enemy A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not align with A</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned with A</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 286.3, pr. χ² = 0.000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ally B</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Ally A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not align with A</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned with A</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2,372</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 286.3, pr. χ² = 0.000

Table 5.6 directly tests hypotheses 3 through 6, relating to the effect of past interactions, reliability of alignment partners, and asymmetrical dependence. Model 2 tests all but the asymmetry hypothesis. Model 3 includes the asymmetry variable, which unfortunately sharply reduces the N. Model 4 makes use of a Heckman probit model to verify whether a two-stage model is necessary for future tests. A statistically significant ρ would indicate that the error terms in the two stages are correlated, suggesting the existence of selection bias. If the term is not significant, then including both stages of alignment in every model would become unwarranted. A Heckman model is used instead of alternative specifications for theoretical reasons: the two stages of alignment are viewed as taking place sequentially, not simultaneously. The latter would require replacing a Heckman model with a multinomial probit.
Table 5.6. Probit and Heckman Probit Models of War Intervention, 1816-1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y₁: War involvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s military capabilities</td>
<td>0.37 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximate to disputants</td>
<td>0.41 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent conflict with disputants</td>
<td>0.44 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied to disputants</td>
<td>0.56 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y₂: Choosing of sides</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1.31 ***</td>
<td>-1.47 ***</td>
<td>-1.41 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.15)</td>
<td>(.41)</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>0.75 ***</td>
<td>0.62 **</td>
<td>0.68 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.23)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>1.29 ***</td>
<td>5.06 *</td>
<td>1.17 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.22)</td>
<td>(2.32)</td>
<td>(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>0.56 ***</td>
<td>0.97 ***</td>
<td>0.60 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-1.08 ***</td>
<td>-0.63 **</td>
<td>-1.05 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>2.23 *</td>
<td>-18.36 **</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td>(5.58)</td>
<td>(.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.12 ***</td>
<td>-0.64 ***</td>
<td>-0.11 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dependence (IA – IB)</td>
<td>0.23 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.07 ***</td>
<td>-0.17 ***</td>
<td>-0.06 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.33 ***</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.37 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.30)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ρ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR χ² (df = 9, 10, 9)</td>
<td>729.49 ***</td>
<td>186.56 ***</td>
<td>657.81 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (uncensored obs.)</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>41,878 (2,724)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses
Model 4 makes clear that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the error terms are uncorrelated. There is no obvious selection bias, and it is sufficient to use one-stage models instead. To make for an easier comparison of the three models, Models 2 and 3 use a probit. The results do not appreciably change from one model to the other. In all three, a recent history of conflict increases the likelihood of being aligned against, while a recent history of positive dyadic relations or alignments has the opposite effect. Both sets of results are consistent with the alignment theory, and provide a strong reason to include a dyad’s history when attempting to explain conflict. The entire reciprocation rationale can partially account for the moderation of revolutionary regimes. States that refuse to compromise on most issues because of ideological rigidity would end up aligning against potential friends even when they gain little concrete advantage from doing so. In the end, they are not able to get support on issues that are salient to them. Eventually, and sometimes too late, comes the realization that the success of the revolution depends on some degree of outside support. This, in turn, leads to a more moderate foreign policy.

The variable representing regime type increases the likelihood of positive alignment. The broader the selectorate in a state, the more likely is its leader to obtain outside assistance. It will later be shown this is not entirely a consequence of democracies supporting democracies, but rather because a representative regime is more likely to ensure foreign policy continuity than one where leaders are chosen by narrow cliques. Just as states are unwilling to back unrepresentative regimes due to uncertainty over future policy, they are loath to support unstable regimes. The more unstable a regime, the less it can count on external support. The flip side of the same hypothesis also gains support: the more rivalries a disputant is engaged in, the less able they are to
counter negative alignment. They are thus more likely to be the negative aligned against. One can conceive of Turkey’s attempt at a “zero problems with neighbors” policy as an attempt to make use of this insight; by limiting the hostility emanating from most of its neighbors, Turkey would be in the strongest position to take on its chief rival, Greece.

Dependence, proxied by the portion of the intervener’s trade with a disputant relative to the portion of the disputant’s trade with the intervener, is shown to have a statistically significant effect on alignment decisions. Rulers consistently align with states on whom their own country is dependent, knowing that they will face severe consequences for failing to do so. Kazakhstan, for instance, might have an interest in opposing Russia’s annexation of the Crimea because of the precedent it sets and its own vulnerabilities. Yet precisely because of this vulnerability vis-à-vis Russia, Kazakhstan has no choice but to remain neutral or even provide some implicit pro-Russian support.

The effect of the control variables is mixed. The distance control variable has a negative effect on being aligned with, meaning that interveners are likelier to side with the disputant they are geographically closer to. The S-Score variable, which is meant to signify common interests as a function of common alliance ties fails to increase the likelihood of positive alignment in each of the models. The implication is that states with common allies cooperate with one another only if they also have positive relations with one another; having a similar set of friends is not sufficient, evidenced by the strains in the Turkish-Israeli relationship despite both states being reliable US allies.

53 The result is consistent with Gartzke and Gleditsch’s (2004, 788) finding that a state is more likely to defend its ally if it is geographically contiguous to that ally.
The one major difference between the models is the effect of a state’s reputation for maintaining alliance commitments. The variable has the posited effect in the full probit model, but does not behave in accordance with the hypothesis in the truncated dependence model and in the Heckman probit. On the face of it, this finding is difficult to reconcile for the negative effect for instability and the positive effect for having a representative regime. However, unlike the latter two variables, the reputation variable is concerned only with alliances. It seems that alliances have become less important over time to the extent that violating them is no longer considered a cardinal sin. This point will be examined further when the sample is split into the pre and post-1945 era.

Table 5.7. Predicted Probabilities of the Decision to Align with Side A, 1816-1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts, favoring A (95th percentile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A allied with I, B is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments, favoring A (95th percentile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A has maximum competitive executive recruitment, B does not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A less stable than B (95th percentile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference alliance reliability, favoring A (95th percentile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A has more other rivals than B (95th percentile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment-inducing combination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main entries are predicted probabilities derived from Model 2; in the baseline model, all variables are set at their means (there are no dichotomous variables).

Table 5.7 provides the predicted probabilities for Model 2 from the prior table. The baseline probability of a state intervening on behalf of State A is 0.5. Any increase
in the likelihood of support for State A must, by definition, lead to an equivalent decrease in the likelihood of support for B. Each of the variables has a sizable effect on the choice of sides in a war. Interveners join on the side of the disputant which has been much more hostile to them only 20 percent of the time, and side against countries with five or more rivals more than two thirds of the time. States that are stable or have competitive elections for their executive face no difficulty in obtaining alignment, especially if their opponents do not share those traits.

As a result of a sizable majority of the observations in the dataset having no recent alignments and not wishing to inflate the effect of the alignment variable, I use the 95th percentile of that variable instead of the maximum value. The alignment score at the 95th percentile is 0.32, out of a maximum score of 1.51. At that value, the probability of support for A is 0.664, 0.164 over the baseline probability. Figure 1 shows the predicted probabilities of this key variable at values ranging from the variable’s minimum to its maximum. At each tail, positive or negative alignment is nearly guaranteed, but the variable rarely takes values close to those extremes.
In addition to examining the effects of each individual variable, it is useful to see the extent of their combined impact on alignment decisions. When each of the theoretically important relevant variables is set at their alignment-detracting value, the likelihood of being aligned with falls virtually to zero. Setting the same variables at the levels at which they are supposed to promote alignment all but ensures a favorable intervention. What this demonstrates is that the key variables can by themselves explain numerous alignment decisions, even when the values of some of those variables are not set to their extremes. The next step is to check the robustness of the results.

Due to the manner in which observations were coded, the two world wars have a disproportionately large influence on the results, making up nearly a quarter of all the observations. For that reason, Model 5 re-runs Model 2 without the world war.
observations. The results do not greatly differ. All the variables remain significant and in the same direction as they were before. Interestingly, the S-Score variable not only does not have a positive effect on gaining alignment, but rather has a negative one. This casts doubt on the usefulness of the concept as a proxy for common interests.

Table 5.8. Robustness Checks for Stage 2 War Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 5 No World War</th>
<th>Model 6 ≤ 1945</th>
<th>Model 7 &gt;1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-4.10 ***</td>
<td>-2.28 ***</td>
<td>-2.56 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.99)</td>
<td>(.29)</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>1.51 ***</td>
<td>1.19 ***</td>
<td>1.57 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.24)</td>
<td>(.15)</td>
<td>(.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>2.54 **</td>
<td>2.23 ***</td>
<td>13.24 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.77)</td>
<td>(.38)</td>
<td>(4.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>2.15 ***</td>
<td>0.78 ***</td>
<td>1.78 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-1.33 ***</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>-1.70 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>131.43 ***</td>
<td>3.53 *</td>
<td>-10.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40.99)</td>
<td>(1.60)</td>
<td>(24.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.56 ***</td>
<td>-0.15 ***</td>
<td>-0.93 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.28 ***</td>
<td>-0.09 ***</td>
<td>-0.35 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1.36 *</td>
<td>-0.47 **</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.34)</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
<td>(.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR χ² (df =9, 9, 9)</td>
<td>350.47 ***</td>
<td>266.83 ***</td>
<td>287.51 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>2,262</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

An argument can also be made that the post-World War II era is qualitatively different than the one that came before it. This could be due to the bipolarity that marked most of the post-1945 period, the creation of the United Nations, the proliferation of states from the third world, or a host of other factors. Existing theories of alignment do not limit themselves to one epoch, and the theory proposed here follows their lead.
Though the coefficients show considerable variation, the overall results in Models 6 and 7 provide support for most of the hypotheses examined thus far. The only variables that do not have the hypothesized effect are instability in the pre-1945 model and the alliance reputation variable in the post-1945 period.

Though the reason for the first disparity is not entirely certain, it is likely a consequence of the low variation in instability prior to the post-World War II period. The variable takes the value 0 in 51 percent of the cases post-1945, but in nearly 92 percent of the cases beforehand. The second disparity, relating to alliance reputation, is consistent with the above suggestion that alliances have lost their importance over time. Dyadic ties are no longer defined entirely in military terms. Though the US might get offended that its NATO allies are not pulling their weight when it comes to issues of international peace and security, it will not retaliate against them, which would worsen strong ties.

**Table 5.9. Democratization and Changes in Alignment Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Democratizing</th>
<th>Democratizing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Alignment change</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment change</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 7.49, \text{ pr. } \chi^2 = 0.006 \]

Table 5.9 provides a simple test for the hypotheses relating to changes in alignment behavior, a change from hypotheses that generally expect friends to remain friends and foes to remain foes. To be coded as an alignment change, a state has to side with and against the same state in successive wars within a twenty year period of time. The low N precludes a more thorough examination of the relationship between
democratization and changes in alignment. We can draw a tentative conclusion that states whose executive recruitment recently became more competitive are much more likely to change their alignment behavior. Half of an admittedly small number of such regimes decided to turn on their previous partner, compared to less than 10 percent for all other regimes. As a result, this hypothesis will be reexamined in the following chapter in the context of MID alignment, where the N is much larger.

Having tested all the hypotheses not relying on cost or discernibility or requiring a qualitative component, I now turn to examining alignment theory in light of alternative explanations for the same phenomena. I focus on two opposing theories: realism and the democratic peace. Unlike reciprocal alignment theory, realism assumes the existence of rational, unitary states which subordinate all objectives to the pursuit of security or power. One of the central predictions of realism is that states, particularly major powers, will balance against the stronger disputant in a war. They do this because they are “more appreciated and safer there” (Waltz 1979, 126-7). Balancing might, however, fail if one side in a war has an overwhelming advantage in capabilities.

5.3 Results – Alternative Explanations

Table 5.10 provides raw data for the realist claim that states – at least powerful ones – will opt to support the weaker side in a war. This argument would receive support is state A was more likely to obtain support when it was the stronger state in the dispute dyad. Only observations where the intervener is a major power and neither disputant is substantially stronger than the other are included, consistent with balancing theory. The contingency table does not provide evidence supportive of that theory. The weaker state
in a dispute dyad obtained alignment only 49.4 percent of the time, slightly better than it would do through pure chance.

Table 5.10. Cross-tabulations for Balancing Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A weaker</th>
<th>A stronger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not align with A</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned with A</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 0.1$, pr. $\chi^2 = 0.820$

Table 5.11 tests the balancing hypothesis in a model with all of the variables central to the reciprocal alignment theory. The empirical domain of Model 8 is limited to dyadic wars where neither state is more than three times as powerful as the other; in Model 9, the potential intervener is also a major power, identical to Table 5.10.

Table 5.11. Testing the Balancing Hypothesis on Cases with no Power Preponderance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 8 All States I</th>
<th>Model 9 Major Power I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CINC A &gt; CINC B</td>
<td>0.33 (.17)</td>
<td>-1.19 ** (.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-2.31 *** (.47)</td>
<td>-5.69 *** (.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>1.68 *** (.23)</td>
<td>4.32 *** (.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>2.78 *** (.74)</td>
<td>7.64 *** (1.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>1.06 *** (.15)</td>
<td>1.82 *** (.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-1.69 ** (.27)</td>
<td>-0.21 (.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>1.79 (2.50)</td>
<td>38.35 * (16.83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sign for the balancing variable is negative in Model 9, whose empirical domain is closer to the one generally discussed by realists, but not in Model 8, which includes minor powers. The implication is that balancing theory might apply only to the narrow major power group of cases. This finding would make the results consistent with the claims of some prominent realists, but of limited use in a world composed predominantly of states that are not now and have no hope of becoming major powers. Despite the small sample size and a theoretically uninformative empirical domain, only some of the unreliability variable fail to achieve statistical significance in either of the models. The alignment variable and dyadic history variables all have the hypothesized effect. The same cannot be said for the balancing variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.11 (cont.)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.26 ***</td>
<td>-0.68 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.14 ***</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.93 ***</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.24)</td>
<td>(.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR χ² (df = 10, 10)</td>
<td>236.45 ***</td>
<td>94.58 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.339</td>
<td>0.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses.
Though Model 9 shows that major power interveners tend to join wars on behalf of the weaker of the disputants, it does not tell us how often this is the case. Figure 2 graphs the predicted probabilities for the variable in a model whose sample is limited by the two conditions described above and one that includes the entire population of war-joining cases. The graph shows that interveners support the weaker state in a dispute about 59 percent of the time. This result provides some support for realism, but it is unlikely that most realists would be satisfied with major powers bandwagoning 41 percent of the time. The probability is even less impressive when compared to that of

54 These results are not atypical of the recent empirical literature. Levy and Thompson (2005, 23) find that great power adversarial alliances aimed at the lead state were formed in 190 out of 445 cases. Valeriano (2009, 197) shows that great powers joined wars on the side of the weaker coalition in 16 instances, and on the stronger side 13 times. Corbetta (2010, 75) similarly finds that interveners neither balance nor bandwagon reliably. The qualitative evidence points to the same conclusions. Healy and Stein (1973) show that most of the great powers of the time supported France during the Franco-Prussian War when France was winning, and then supported Germany when Germany gained the upper hand. Bismarck’s Germany itself did not balance against Russia when the latter looked to be in the ascendency, and did not balance against Britain despite Britain’s naval superiority (Gellman 1989, 177). The case for balancing is even weaker in the Chinese Warring State period, which saw 51 expansionist wars initiated by the Qin, but only 8 attempts at balancing this aggressive power by the other warlords (Hui 2004, 191). In the most ambitious qualitative study of balancing, Wohlforth and eight co-authors (2007) find that systemic hegemonies regularly form and when they do not, it is rarely because of balancing behavior.
the alignment variable. The latter increases the probability of being aligned with to nearly .90 at its 95\textsuperscript{th} percentile, a result obtained in a sample highly favorable to realism.

Table 5.12. No Permanent Friends Hypothesis: Alignment in Successive Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kept Alignment</th>
<th>Changed Alignment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous MID</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(territory or fatalities)</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dangerous MID</td>
<td>2451</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another claim frequently made in the realist literature is that states have no long-term friends. For that reason, the “no permanent friends, only permanent interests” quote by Palmerston is viewed favorably in realist circles. Even alliances are transitory, being formed to address a joint threat and disintegrating shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{55} The substantive effect of the past alignment variable in previous models already provided some evidence against this hypothesis. Table 5.12 examines every set of consecutive alignments that happened within a short period of time of one another.\textsuperscript{56} It provides a count of the number of times the intervener aligned on the same side and the number of times it aligned with and then against the same state or vice versa. Though there is no hypothesis test, the data shows that interveners choose the same side in successive disputes over 90 percent of the time. While it is conceivable that states might occasionally work together

\textsuperscript{55} This was the rationale for the realist claim that NATO would disappear shortly after the end of the Cold War, with no common enemy to unite the United States and its Western European allies.

\textsuperscript{56} The alignments had to take place within 20 years for wars, 10 years for dangerous MIDs, and 5 years for non-dangerous MIDs and sanctions.
for a prolonged period of time because of a persistence of a common threat, that factor is unlikely to produce numbers as extreme as those seen in Table 5.12.

Table 5.13. *Cross-tabulations for Democratic Peace Hypothesis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A less democratic</th>
<th>Equally democratic</th>
<th>A more democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not align with A</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligned with A</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 136.7$, pr. $\chi^2 = 0.000$

Reciprocal alignment theory does not expect outcomes vastly different from that of the democratic peace theory when it comes to the role of regime type. Democracies are expected to avoid other democracies in wars, though not for the reasons expected by the democratic peace theorists. The two main strains of the democratic peace theory are the institutional and normative branches. The former expects democracies to not side against other democracies in wars because they have domestic institutions that make it difficult to initiate a war, a factor that is presumably recognized by both sides. The latter explanation argues that as long as both sides in a dispute are democracies, they each adopt the same methods of peaceful conflict-resolution in the international sphere as they do domestically. Both branches of the democratic peace theory expect democracies to side with other democracies, and expect non-democracies to be either indifferent toward other regime types or to support fellow autocracies. Reciprocal alignment theory takes a different view. It suggests that states governed by unrepresentative regimes make for unreliable alignment partners, whether for democracies or non-democracies. The
expectation is that all types of regimes will refrain from siding with unrepresentative regimes, even ones that are themselves unrepresentative.

Table 5.13 look at whether non-representative states have historically been more likely to support similar countries or whether preferred supporting other regime types. The empirical domain is thus limited to alignments where the intervener did not have a representative regime. As can be seen from the table, that autocratic aligner sided with the more democratic regime two thirds of the time, providing a strong indication that the pragmatic need for future alignment outweighs the importance of regime similarity.

Table 5.14. Democratic Peace Hypothesis: Democracies Supporting Democracies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 10 Xrcomp I=3</th>
<th>Model 11 Xrcomp I&lt;3</th>
<th>Model 12 Polity I&lt;6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-9.93 *** (1.64)</td>
<td>-1.89 *** (.26)</td>
<td>-2.04 *** (.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>0.32 (.40)</td>
<td>1.33 *** (.13)</td>
<td>1.20 *** (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>6.17 *** (1.68)</td>
<td>2.36 *** (.42)</td>
<td>2.39 *** (.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>1.23 *** (.29)</td>
<td>0.81 *** (.10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in Polity democracy (A – B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.69 *** (.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-2.64 *** (.40)</td>
<td>-1.70 *** (.22)</td>
<td>-1.56 *** (.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>10.63 ** (3.51)</td>
<td>3.20 (1.67)</td>
<td>3.33 * (1.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.33 *** (.06)</td>
<td>-0.17 *** (.02)</td>
<td>-0.19 *** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.23 *** (.04)</td>
<td>-0.10 *** (.02)</td>
<td>-0.12 *** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.07 (.31)</td>
<td>-0.74 *** (.14)</td>
<td>-0.81 *** (.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df = 9, 9, 9)</td>
<td>250.05 ***</td>
<td>340.32 ***</td>
<td>367.62 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R$^2$</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>2,202</td>
<td>2,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses
Table 5.14 provides a critical statistical test between the two sets of explanations. In Model 10, where the intervener has a representative regime, each theory expects the regime variable to be positively associated with supporting state A. The result is thus consistent with both theories. In Models 11 and 12, however, the intervener is not democratic, whether based on the executive recruitment or overall Polity score. This leads to opposing expectations for alignment and democratic peace theories. The result provides strong support for reciprocal alignment theory: non-democracies are more likely to side with democracies than they are with non-democracies. Thus, any regime that is concerned with not obtaining reciprocation for a costly intervention is likely to stay away from regimes that might not be around or be forced into major policy concessions.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided empirical support for the primary quantitative hypotheses of reciprocal alignment theory. It showed that history plays an integral part in alignment decisions, that institutional determinants of unreliability stifle attempts to obtain positive alignments just as being overstretched attracts alignments of the negative variety, and that the results are more consistent with alignment theory than with either the balancing logic of realist theory or the democratic peace.

The history variables received strong support throughout the chapter. Past alignment consistently predicted future alignment, whether for all wars, wars pre-1945, wars post-1945, or wars between states without an enormous capability disparity. The variable denoting a history of conflict delivered the hypothesized outcomes in each model. These results are not surprising to historians of the Anglo-American alliance,
NATO, or the Holy Alliance, but might be to those who assume that all statesmen are clones of von Bismarck or Cardinal Richelieu.\textsuperscript{57}

Part of the reason for those consistent results is the undesirability of appearing an unreliable ally. This mechanism is tested more directly by looking at regimes that are either not representative or unstable. Both characteristics make a state less likely to reciprocate their present alignments, and thus to obtain those alignments in the first place. The results generally bear this out. The regime type variable remains significantly associated with alignment in each of the models, even when the intervener is itself autocratic. The results for the instability variable are more mixed. Though instability leads to negative alignment in the main models, it is shown to have no effect in the pre-1945 era and in the realism model that only looks at major powers interveners. The related alliance reliability measure has similarly mixed results.

The results for states that are not in a position to retaliate are more straightforward: they are shown to be targets of negative alignment in every model. In numerous tests, states that have an overabundance of rivals find themselves to be on the wrong side of alignment decisions. Time and time again, leaders find it convenient to align against countries that are not in a position to retaliate. The opposite is true of states that benefit from an asymmetrical relationship with a potential intervener. Knowing the damage the former can unleash if aligned against, rulers find it in their interest to support these types of states. “Selling out” is viewed as being preferable to the alternative.

\textsuperscript{57} It might surprise some adherents of realpolitik that Bismarck himself was not a fan of abstract principles, and preferred to deal with every situation as they arose (Ford 1905, 198).
In several critical tests, alignment theory is shown to outperform realism and the democratic peace. In the stringent balancing model, past alignment is shown to make alignment more likely, while the capabilities of disputants seem to have only a moderate effect. Rulers are shown to support former friends, contrary to Palmerston’s beliefs. Tested against the democratic peace expectation that only democracies support other democracies, the alignment theory prediction that all regimes types will opt to support the latter receives strong support. One does not need to be a democrat to realize that despite the rapid rotation of executives, representative regimes offer more long-term continuity than those with a metaphorical Sword of Damocles hanging over their heads.

A word of caution about the results in this chapter: nearly all relied on war intervention as the dependent variable. As the theory chapter makes clear, war is far from the only type of alignment that states engage in. For that reason, Chapter 6 removes the assumption that all alignment types are the same, and investigates the role of cost and discernibility in bringing about alignment. Several of the hypotheses that received mixed support in this chapter are also reexamined in light of different forms of alignment.
Chapter 6 – Effect of Cost and Discernibility

This chapter continues where the previous one left off. Whereas Chapter 5 was concerned with only one form alignment – intervention into ongoing wars – Chapter 6 seeks to show that alignment theory is applicable across many alignment types. Furthermore, it aims to highlight the importance of cost and discernibility in producing alignment decisions. Despite the change in emphasis, the underlying rationale for alignment decisions remains the same. All forms of alignment are pursued for broadly similar reasons, but some factors make states less or more hesitant to follow through on the reciprocity-oriented logic of alignment described in the previous chapters.

Throughout the first half of this chapter, most of the Chapter 5 hypotheses – including those related to reciprocation and the reliability of alignment partners - are retested. Unlike the previous chapter, this one makes use of four dependent variables: war, dangerous MIDs – military conflicts fought over territory or those involving fatalities – non-dangerous MIDs, and sanction initiations. The expectations over the previously introduced variables do not greatly differ. In the first stage of alignment, leaders still need to have the ability to make a difference and have some connection to the disputants before they are willing to take part in other countries’ disputes. However, the amount of resources necessary to make such a contribution decreases along with the cost of alignment, allowing weaker countries to take part in the less costly alignments.

In the second stage of alignment, domestic, leaders still expect to be rewarded for past alignments, meaning that the effect of that variable should remain undiminished across different alignment types. Given that leaders do not want to use scarce resources toward unproductive ends, they will still be hesitant to align with states that face strong
constraints on future reciprocation. Just as in Chapter 5, these explanations are tested against several realist and democratic peace hypotheses. The purpose of this first half of the chapter is to demonstrate the robustness of reciprocal alignment theory by showing that it is applicable across vastly different forms of alignment in marked contrast to other theories of alignment that tend to focus one type of alignment.

The second half of the chapter concerns the discernibility dimension of alignment, the last component of the alignment theory to be quantitatively tested. Discernibility provides a mechanism for interveners to demonstrate the depth of their support or to allow a regime that is aligned against to save face without retaliation. By making their alignments less discernible – in practice, this means being one of the later states to join a dispute or joining a large-scale sanction regime – leaders decrease the amount of credit they would receive within the political arena of the state they are supporting. Conversely, they do not create as much negative effect within the state they are aligning against.

I consider two scenarios where rulers would be strongly tempted to either increase or decrease the discernibility of their involvement. In the first, a leader is aligning with a state whose assistance will be needed in the near future. Due to the necessity of that assistance, the alignment will be made as discernibly as possible. In the second situation, the intervening state cannot afford to be retaliated against by the state it aligns against, whether because of the intervener’s weakness of the disputant’s unique influence over the former’s political system. In either case, the incentive is to align indiscernibly.

In sum, Chapter 6 retests each of the major hypotheses while varying the cost of the potential alignment. This is done both to demonstrate the similarity of all alignments and stress the role of cost in mediating or moderating the effect of some determinants of
alignment. This task is accomplished by using four different types of alignment as dependent variables instead of just one. Chapter 6 concludes by testing the discernibility hypotheses and interpreting the quantitative results from chapters 5 and 6.

6.1 Results – First Stage

Most of the independent variables used throughout this chapter are identical to their Chapter 5 counterparts. What does change is the outcome variable. Instead of relying entirely on intervention into wars, this chapter uses four dependent variables to test most of the cost and discernibility hypotheses. The four variables are intended to represent four different costs of alignment decisions. The first outcome variable is war intervention, which is the same variable used in the previous chapter. For obvious reasons, it is deemed the costliest option. The second alignment type that is used to test the proposed hypotheses is dangerous MID; these are MIDs that are either fought over territory or involve fatalities. Based on the literature, these kinds of disputes are assumed to stir greater domestic and international passions than other types of militarized disputes. The third alignment type is non-dangerous MIDs, which includes all MIDs that do not meet the dangerous MID criteria. The last form of alignment examined in this chapter is sanction initiation, viewed as costly as non-dangerous MIDs but in a different manner.

For the discernibility hypotheses, I look at the order of a state’s intervention into a dispute. The first state that takes sides in an ongoing dispute is considered to have made the most discernible alignment. The same applies for all but the sanction models. Due to a lack of data over the timing of the sanction joining, the discernibility variable is based on the total number of states that imposed sanctions; the more states do so, the less discernible is each of their actions.
I start by retesting the hypotheses relating to stage one, but also add a cost component to the calculations. The results in the previous chapter confirmed that states need to have the capacity to make a difference to the resolution of a dispute and have a connection to the disputants before it will partake in alignment. By adding lower-cost alignment outcome variables, I aim to show that states do not need the same amount of resources to join a low-cost dispute as they would a high-cost one.

Table 6.1. Determinants of the Decision to Intervene in a War across Alignment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1 War</th>
<th>Model 2 Dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 3 Non-dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 4 Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s military capabilities</td>
<td>0.60 *** (.04)</td>
<td>0.10 *** (.02)</td>
<td>-0.06 *** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervener’s economic capabilities</td>
<td>0.29 *** (.06)</td>
<td>0.09 (.05)</td>
<td>0.36 *** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximate to disputants</td>
<td>0.69 *** (.05)</td>
<td>0.03 (.06)</td>
<td>0.12 ** (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent conflict with disputants</td>
<td>0.88 *** (.05)</td>
<td>1.93 *** (.04)</td>
<td>1.79 *** (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied to disputants</td>
<td>0.97 *** (.04)</td>
<td>0.80 *** (.03)</td>
<td>1.08 *** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df = 5, 5, 5, 5)</td>
<td>2,379.37 ***</td>
<td>5,064.54 ***</td>
<td>8,641.03 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>0.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>41,388</td>
<td>228,826</td>
<td>441,288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

The results in Table 6.1 broadly support hypothesis 8, which relates to the amount of resources necessary to take part in alignments of differing costs. As Model 1 shows, military and economic resources, as well as proximity to the disputants – all factors that improve the quality of a state’s contribution to a dispute – positively affect intervention into a costly war. As the cost of intervention decreases, some of those variables stop being important. When it comes to dangerous MIDs, neither economic resources nor proximity predicts dispute joining. The limited nature of MIDs increases the range of
leaders that can join them without stretching thin the resources of their country. Military resources are still necessary for dangerous MIDs due to the elevated risk arising from fatalities and territorial issues present in such MIDs. In the event of a future military conflict between Iran and Israel, we can thus expect different states to get involved depending on the severity of the dispute. A dispute that escalates to a war would likely see the participation of only those states with substantial military capabilities, such as the United States or perhaps the United Kingdom. If the dispute is at a much lower level of hostility, however, we can expect economically-strong but militarily-weak states like Germany or Canada to seek a role in the dispute’s resolution.

Non-dangerous MIDs are at a very lower chance of escalating to war;\textsuperscript{58} unsurprisingly, states are in less of a need for military resources to participate in them. In fact, the relationship between military resources and MID joining is negative, suggesting that states with smaller militaries are most likely to join these less dangerous MIDs. It is unclear why this would be the case. The results for sanctions are more consistent with expectations: a state does not need military resources to engage in a low-cost alignment that is unlikely to degenerate into a full-blown war, while the lack of economic resources would make sanctions ineffective, making a certain level of wealth a precondition for the joining of a sanction regime. Domestically, each form of alignment needs a justification to ensure public and/or elite support, and this means that a conflictual or cooperative history with the disputants is necessary to enable a leader to make a strong case. With the empirics largely supporting the stage one hypotheses, I turn to testing second stage ones.

\textsuperscript{58} See Senese and Vasquez (2008) for substantial evidence for this assertion.
6.2 Results – Second Stage

For the variables in Table 6.2, the theoretical expectations are the same as for their Chapter 5 equivalents. Leaders are still hypothesized to be unwilling to align with states that are unrepresentative or unstable, and quite willing to align against states with many rivals. With several exceptions, the results bear out the relevant hypotheses. In the four models, only one marker of unreliability is not associated with negative alignment, that being the alliance reliability variable in the MID model. Rulers are still unwilling to align with states that are unstable or unrepresentative even when doing so carries a large cost. Leaders also target states with multiple allies for negative alignment.

Table 6.2. Logit Models of Intervention across Alignment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 5 War</th>
<th>Model 6 Dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 7 Non-dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 8 Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-2.40 ***</td>
<td>-2.95 ***</td>
<td>-3.22 ***</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.27)</td>
<td>(.25)</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
<td>(1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>1.31 ***</td>
<td>1.69 ***</td>
<td>2.61 ***</td>
<td>8.88 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.13)</td>
<td>(.11)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(2.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>2.47 ***</td>
<td>3.77 ***</td>
<td>4.48 ***</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.41)</td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(.52)</td>
<td>(2.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>0.95 ***</td>
<td>0.90 ***</td>
<td>1.58 ***</td>
<td>6.86 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(1.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-1.90 ***</td>
<td>-1.67 ***</td>
<td>-0.46 ***</td>
<td>-2.39 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>(.15)</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>3.80 *</td>
<td>4.29 **</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
<td>222.62 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.67)</td>
<td>(1.28)</td>
<td>(.66)</td>
<td>(94.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.19 ***</td>
<td>-0.22 ***</td>
<td>-0.27 ***</td>
<td>-1.37 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.12 ***</td>
<td>-0.15 ***</td>
<td>-0.07 **</td>
<td>-0.45 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.60 ***</td>
<td>-0.43 ***</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>3.18 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.13)</td>
<td>(.11)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df = 9, 9, 9)</td>
<td>635.38 ***</td>
<td>750.54 ***</td>
<td>1,516.18 ***</td>
<td>46.13 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>3,230</td>
<td>8,294</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses
The exceptions to the supportive results are in the sanctions model, which covers a much narrower time frame – 1971 to 1999 – and is coded in different manner. In that model, history of conflict and alignment variables fail to reach statistical significance. Part of the reason is the low number of observations in the sample. This is supported by the signs for both of the non-significant variables pointing in the proper direction. It is also possible that military dimensions of alignment and dyadic history do not do a good job of predicting non-military alignments. This would explain why the same variables that are not significant in the sanctions model are significant in the MID model.

The previous chapter established the substantive effect of the alignment variables by examining the differences in predicted probabilities when the values of those variables were changed from the minimum to the maximum or the 5th percentile to the 95th. In this chapter, I use a different approach, and attempt to ascertain how much adding those same variables to a model improves the latter’s predictive power. Given that an intervener has only two options – join state A or join state B – a random model would be able to predict 50 percent of the cases accurately. The question is how much the predictive power of the model improves by adding each of the variables separately.

Table 6.3. Percentage of Correct Alignment Predictions across Alignment Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment Variable</th>
<th>War</th>
<th>Dang. MID</th>
<th>Non-dang. MID</th>
<th>Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline model</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment variable</td>
<td>59.95</td>
<td>63.93</td>
<td>73.42</td>
<td>77.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic history variables</td>
<td>63.13</td>
<td>81.25</td>
<td>90.17</td>
<td>86.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability variables</td>
<td>72.04</td>
<td>79.77</td>
<td>85.15</td>
<td>81.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to retaliate variable</td>
<td>72.58</td>
<td>76.44</td>
<td>83.88</td>
<td>68.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All variables</td>
<td>80.26</td>
<td>86.71</td>
<td>93.06</td>
<td>98.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A prediction is correct if the predicted value for an observation is > .5 and the observed value is 1 or if the predicted value is < .5 and the observed value is 0.
As Table 6.3 makes clear, each set of variables does a good job of improving the predictive power of their associated statistical models. The alignment variable by itself moves 10 percent of the observations from the “wrong” column to the “correct” column. When all the variables from Model 5 are placed together, the model is able to accurately predict over 80 percent of the war alignments. The results are even more impressive for the other alignment types. For sanctions, the variables in Model 8 were able to correctly predict the outcome in 393 out of the 398 observations. The implication of these findings is that reciprocation-oriented variables are sufficient to explain a vast majority of interstate alignments, though there might be other variables that can improve the model.59 Running similar models for individual wars shows that the full alignment model is able to correctly predict which side three quarters of the joiners took in the Crimean War and is accurate for every joiner in the first Gulf War.

Table 6.4. Democratization and Alignment Behavior across Alignment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War</th>
<th>Not Democratizing</th>
<th>Democratizing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Alignment change</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment change</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 7.49, pr. χ² = 0.006

59 The predictions for stage 1 results are roughly as accurate. Models incorporating all the variables from that stage are able to predict 76 percent of alignments into wars, 93 percent of the MID alignments of both categories, and 96 percent of the sanction alignments.
Table 6.4 (cont.)

Table 6.4 examined whether leaders are reasonable in assuming that unrepresentative states are likelier to alter their alignment behavior than other states. Table 5.9 in the previous chapter examined that assertion for war intervention, finding moderate support. Table 6.4 here adds to that evidence. Whereas less than 9 percent of states not underdoing democratization change their alignment partners in successive
dangerous MIDs, the same is true for double the number of democratizing states.\textsuperscript{60} For non-dangerous MIDs, the difference is even starker: when given the chance to align with the same state as before while undergoing democratization, rulers are more likely than not to align against their former alignment partner. Non-democratizing regimes engage in the same kind of actions only a sixth of the time. No conclusion can be drawn about the role of democratization in reversing alignments for sanctions due to the non-existent sample of democratizing regimes having the opportunity to change sides. I now turn to testing the alignment explanations against competing theories, starting with realism.

6.3 Results – Alternative Explanations

The previous chapter provided evidence that major powers “balance” against the stronger disputant in less than 60 percent of the cases. That substantive effect was far lower than that exhibited by the other variables in the model. Model 9 reproduces those results, while Models 10 and 11 extend that assessment to dangerous and other MIDs.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} One possible mechanism through which this takes place can be seen in the work of Leeds and Savun (2007). The authors find that changes in domestic political institutions increases the likelihood of alliance termination. A lack of an alliance, in turn, weakens constituencies supporting continued cooperation. If the proper situation presents itself, this could ultimately lead to a change in alignment partners.

\textsuperscript{61} There are insufficient observations to run a sanctions model.
Table 6.5. Testing the Balancing Hypothesis across Alignment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 9 War</th>
<th>Model 10 Dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 11 Non-dang. MID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CINC A &gt; CINC B</td>
<td>-1.19 **</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.42)</td>
<td>(.42)</td>
<td>(.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-5.69 ***</td>
<td>-5.33 ***</td>
<td>-3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>(.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>4.32 ***</td>
<td>1.57 **</td>
<td>1.97 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td>(.60)</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>7.64 ***</td>
<td>1.57 ***</td>
<td>2.56 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.40)</td>
<td>(.60)</td>
<td>(1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>1.82 ***</td>
<td>1.18 **</td>
<td>0.89 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.47)</td>
<td>(.32)</td>
<td>(.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-2.36 ***</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.58)</td>
<td>(.56)</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>38.35 *</td>
<td>-45.09 ***</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.83)</td>
<td>(10.65)</td>
<td>(1.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.68 ***</td>
<td>-0.57 ***</td>
<td>-0.24 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.14)</td>
<td>(.12)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.12)</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>1.76 **</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.74)</td>
<td>(.66)</td>
<td>(.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df = 10, 10, 10)</td>
<td>94.58 ***</td>
<td>98.79 ***</td>
<td>237.15 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>0.649</td>
<td>0.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

The outcome is even more lopsided. In both MID models, the standard errors for the balancing variable are larger than the coefficients. Thus, balancing does not provide an empirically accurate account of alignment behavior in the examined model. The truncated sample does remove the statistical significance of several alliance reliability measures, though the dyadic history and past alignment variables consistently have the hypothesized effect. Next, Table 6.6 examines the democratic peace hypothesis.
Table 6.6. Testing the Democratic Peace Hypothesis across Alignment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 12 War</th>
<th>Model 13 Dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 14 Non-dang. MID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic conflicts (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-1.89 ***</td>
<td>-2.80 ***</td>
<td>-3.40 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in dyadic alliances (IA – IB)</td>
<td>1.33 ***</td>
<td>1.67 ***</td>
<td>2.36 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in past alignments (IA – IB)</td>
<td>2.36 ***</td>
<td>7.26 ***</td>
<td>4.34 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in executive recruitment (A – B)</td>
<td>0.81 ***</td>
<td>0.32 *</td>
<td>1.12 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in instability (A – B)</td>
<td>-1.70 ***</td>
<td>-1.55 ***</td>
<td>-0.46 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliance reliability (A – B)</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.98 **</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in other rivals (A – B)</td>
<td>-0.17 ***</td>
<td>-0.22 ***</td>
<td>-0.22 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.10 ***</td>
<td>-0.11 ***</td>
<td>0.15 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.74 ***</td>
<td>-1.17 ***</td>
<td>-0.72 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df = 9, 9, 9)</td>
<td>340.32 ***</td>
<td>424.93 ***</td>
<td>710.31 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R$^2$</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>0.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2,202</td>
<td>1,896</td>
<td>3,184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001; ** p-value < 0.01; * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

Model 12 is a copy of Model 11 from Chapter 5, examining whether unrepresentative regimes are less likely to support their representative counterparts during wars. The two subsequent models inspect the same hypothesis when the dependent variables are dangerous and non-dangerous MID; there are an insufficient number of observations to run the sanctions model. The two MID models provide evidence that is strongly supportive of the alignment theory and in clear opposition to the democratic peace theory. In those models, states without representative regimes are statistically more likely to support democracies than they are to support states with which they share a regime type. Consequently, there is good reason to believe that autocracies
are indeed more likely to support democracies than other autocracies. With that, I finish the examination of the cost-related hypotheses and turn to discernibility.

6.4 Results – Cost and Discernibility

Discernibility is a key component of the alignment variable that has been used throughout this dissertation. Alignments that were less discernible – operationalized as the order of joining a dispute for all but the sanction model – were assumed to have a diminished ability to induce positive or negative alignment. Table 6.7 examines the accuracy of that assumption. Simple correlations are run between the discernibility of the previous alignment and the willingness of a leader to partake in a new alignment.

Table 6.7. Pearson Correlations of Discernibility of Past Alignment and Joining Similar Disputes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>War order</th>
<th>Dang. MID order</th>
<th>Non-dang. MID order</th>
<th>Number of sanctioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War involvement</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
<td>-0.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 810)</td>
<td>(N = 515)</td>
<td>(N = 393)</td>
<td>(N = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang. MID involvement</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 3,647)</td>
<td>(N = 2,717)</td>
<td>(N = 1,324)</td>
<td>(N = 129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID involvement</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
<td>-0.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 7,810)</td>
<td>(N = 6,314)</td>
<td>(N = 4,182)</td>
<td>(N = 421)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction involvement</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 5,135)</td>
<td>(N = 4,389)</td>
<td>(N = 3,194)</td>
<td>(N = 1,194)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to hypothesis 9, the correlation between the discernibility of past alignments and the decision to enter a current alignment should be a negative one: the earlier a state joined the previous dispute, the higher the chance of the recipient of that alignment taking part in the state’s future dispute. This is because the earlier a state joins a dispute, the more discernible its alignment is assumed to be. Given that numerous other

---

62 As long as it took place within 20 years for wars, 10 years for dangerous MIDs, and 5 years for non-dangerous MIDs and sanctions.
factors affect alignment decisions, there is no reason to expect that negative correlations to be very strong ones. With that in mind, 14 out of the 16 Pearson correlations support the discernibility hypothesis, though this is tempered by the lack of formal significance tests in these models. Discernibly joining wars in particular was consistently associated with higher odds of coaxing the other state to engage in future alignment. This leaves only one hypothesis left to test – the one dealing with the determinants of discernibility.

Table 6.8. Using a Truncated Negative Binomial Regression to Test the Correlates of Discernibility for Positive Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 15</th>
<th>Model 16</th>
<th>Model 17</th>
<th>Model 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in alliances</td>
<td>(-0.28^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.10)</td>
<td>(-0.40^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IA – IB)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military resources (I)</td>
<td>(-0.03)</td>
<td>(-0.01)</td>
<td>(-0.00)</td>
<td>(0.11^{*})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic resources (I)</td>
<td>(-0.56^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.24)</td>
<td>(-0.49^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.18^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.08^{***})</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IA – IB)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is S-Scores</td>
<td>(0.33^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.29^{***})</td>
<td>(-0.23^{*})</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IA – IB)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR (\chi^2) (df = 5, 5, 5)</td>
<td>(130.66^{***})</td>
<td>(125.23^{***})</td>
<td>(164.05^{***})</td>
<td>(16.43^{**})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>4,128</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** \(p\)-value < 0.001, ** \(p\)-value < 0.01, * \(p\)-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses

Hypothesis 10 has two components: it posits that leaders will make their positive alignments more discernible if the recipient of that alignment will be helpful in pursuing their own objectives, and that rulers will make their negative alignments less discernible as the potential damage caused by retaliation increases. Table 6.8 investigates the first part of that hypothesis. For a lack of a better alternative, the proxy for potential usefulness is the presence of a military alliance. The assumption is that leaders would not seek an alliance with someone unless they expected to get something from it. Models 15
and 17 have results that are consistent with the above hypothesis, while the other two models do not. Nevertheless, both of the latter have a coefficient in the proper direction – having an alliance with a state makes that state join a dispute sooner – and alliances do not serve the same function for sanctions as they do for military disputes.

One interesting aspect of the results is the role of military and economic resources in producing discernible alignment. Having a large military did not make leaders more willing to join any of form of disputes, but having substantial economic resources did just that. These results suggest that the economic ramifications of alignment play an integral role in a leader’s decision as to the timing of their intervention into a dispute. This was true for the Second Gulf War, which saw Britain and Australia – both members of the G-20 bloc of major global economies – join immediately, while economically weaker states opted to wait until the outcome and cost of the war was no longer in doubt.

Table 6.9. Using a Truncated Negative Binomial Regression to Test the Correlates of Discernibility for Negative Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 19 War</th>
<th>Model 20 Dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 21 Non-dang. MID</th>
<th>Model 22 Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in military resources (IA – IB)</td>
<td>0.09 ***</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.05 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil war (I)</td>
<td>0.34 **</td>
<td>0.61 ***</td>
<td>1.01 ***</td>
<td>-0.45 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military resources (I)</td>
<td>-0.10 **</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.09 *</td>
<td>0.11 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic resources (I)</td>
<td>-0.68 ***</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.72 ***</td>
<td>-0.20 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in distance (IA – IB)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.09 ***</td>
<td>-0.07 **</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in S-Scores (IA – IB)</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.41 ***</td>
<td>0.31 ***</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR $\chi^2$ (df =6, 6, 6, 6)</td>
<td>176.47 ***</td>
<td>158.68 ***</td>
<td>177.26 ***</td>
<td>43.77 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>1,411</td>
<td>3,918</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p-value < 0.001, ** p-value < 0.01, * p-value < 0.05; standard errors clustered around the triad in parentheses
The logic for wanting to make positive alignments discernible and negative alignments indiscernible are mirror images of one another. Whereas the former is premised on the possibility of gains, the latter depends heavier on avoiding losses. The state being aligned against can make life difficult for the intervener if the former is especially strong or if the latter happens to be vulnerable. I denote these possibilities with the difference in military personnel and the presence of a civil war in the intervening state. The intervener’s alignment should become less discernible as the object of negative alignment becomes stronger. Similarly, a state in the middle of a civil war should aim to downplay its foreign alignments in order to minimize the likelihood of external actors enflaming the ongoing civil conflict. This part of the tenth hypothesis is generally supported. Leaders join conflicts at a later stage against states with powerful militaries. The coefficients for that variable are not significant for the MID models, but are in the hypothesized direction. At the same time, civil wars make rulers weary of jumping straight into other countries’ disputes, though the same is not true for joining sanction regimes. It is possible that the latter can be explained by sanctions not being considered sufficiently hostile for a military retaliation. In light of sanctions being an economic tool, it is also conceivable that economic, not military, weakness would serve as a deterrent for intervention.

6.5 Conclusion

The results for this chapter are less conclusive than those for the previous one. At least one of the independent variables did not have hypothesized effect in many of the models involving low-cost alignment. The cross-tabulations are not as clear-cut as one would like. The sanction models in general underperform. One must keep in mind,
however, that most of the hypotheses in this chapter are based on a newly created
alignment measure, whose dimensions have no precedence in the alignment literature.

Some inconsistencies aside, the key theoretical insights over the importance of
past relations have been given strong support, and varying alignments based on cost and
discernibility produced many theoretically and empirically informative results. To start,
Table 6.1 showed that the ability of a state to make a difference to a dispute becomes less
important as the cost of the alignment decreases. While the results might seem like
common-sense, this was the first attempt to theoretically and empirically specify a basis
for the costs of different forms of alignment. These results have implications for research
that treats all MIDs as being equivalent, having either the same causes or effects.

The stage 2 results reinforced the importance of reciprocation and the perceived
likelihood of obtaining reciprocation in determining alignment behavior. Past alignment
consistently predicted present alignment, a finding that supports the key theoretical
insight that leaders will reciprocate in order to obtain additional assistance in the future.
When combined with the connection to disputants finding from the first stage, we see a
picture of foreign policy behavior where rulers feel pressured by domestic groups to enter
disputes based on past experience with the combatants, not on the merit of the issue. At
that point, the need for future support compels them to support those who had helped
them in the past and oppose those who had engaged in the opposite behavior.

The logic of reciprocation is dependent on leaders being reasonably certain
aligning with a state now will lead to the other state returning the favor in the future.
That certainty does not exist for states that have unrepresentative or unstable regimes.
The two variables predict negative alignment in nearly all of the models, across all forms
of alignment. The behavioral alliance reliability variable offers a more mixed set of results. On the opposite side of the spectrum are states that are unlikely to respond to negative alignment, proxied by a state’s amount of rivals at a given time. The results for this variable are consistent with the relevant hypothesis in all but one of the models.

The findings for discernibility are similarly supportive of alignment theory, but not uniformly so. Table 6.7 shows that joining disputes in a less discernible manner decreases the likelihood of the other side taking part in one’s future disputes. The other discernibility hypothesis finds weaker support. Rulers joined disputes involving a state whose help might be necessary in the future at an early stage of that dispute in only wars and non-dangerous MIDs. The expected consequences from retaliation made rulers less willing to join that state’s disputes discernibly in all but the sanctions model. Having a civil war in particular pushed states to temper their opposition to the state they were aligning against. The non-findings for military resources in two of the models can possibly be explained by the imprecise nature of that variable: states cannot use their military resources equally against all opponents.

The expansion of the dependent variable in this chapter does not alter the explanatory power of alignment theory relative to alternative explanations of alignment. Table 6.5 provided additional evidence that states neither balance nor bandwagon reliably. They do, however, align with the states that have helped them in the past, a result that is wildly at odds with realist expectations. Alignment theory also stands up well to the democratic peace: unrepresentative regimes are shown to favor aligning with democracies instead of with states with the same type of regime.
In the next chapter, I turn to tracing and testing the causal mechanism postulated by the proposed theory, focusing on the role of past alignments and dyadic history. I do so in the context of a case study that examines the behavior of several states from the former Soviet Union from 1991 to the present. Specifically, I examine Uzbekistan’s two alignment decisions related to its membership in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty, and Kyrgyzstan’s policies pertaining to the presence of foreign military bases on its soil. The results build upon those obtained in this and the previous chapter.
Chapter 7 – Former Soviet Union Case Study, 1991-2013

The previous chapters put forth a theory of reciprocal alignment and provided statistical support for the hypotheses derived from that theory. In brief, state leaders are faced with a scarcity of resources to accomplish their preferred objectives, and obtaining outside assistance is one way in which those leaders can resolve salient issues in a manner of their choosing. Other states have no incentive to let these leaders free-ride and require similar alignment in exchange. Thus, a ruler who wants alignment himself would be wise to help states who had helped his own in the past and to align with states as a down-payment on future assistance from them.

Decisions about alignment are taken in a domestic context. Various parts of the leader’s selectorate must consent to their foreign policy or the leader risks it being undermined in advance, not implemented properly, or rolled back after they leave office. Moreover, those constituent groups occasionally have strong preferences over cooperation and conflict with other states. Specifically, states that are friendly with the potential intervener will help generate interest groups that are supportive of future cooperation with those states, while hostile states help produce interest groups that lobby their government for a policy of conflict. When an international issue comes up that calls for a ruler to choose a side, that leader will be pressured by domestic groups to side with the friend and against the enemy. The very interpretation of the issue would depend on past relations with the disputants. Hence, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, that invasion was viewed through the prism of anti-Soviet lenses; whether the Soviet enemy might have been in the wrong did not cross the minds of most US lawmakers.
The previous two chapters provided evidence in support of hypotheses derived from this theory. They showed that past alignment, recent hostility, and an ongoing alliance consistently predict current alignment behavior. This holds for the entire 1816 to 1999 period, as well as for the pre-1945 and post-1945 sample. It holds for autocratic states and for major powers. The results also vary little when the alignment type in the dependent variable changes. Past alignment and dyadic history are shown to have a statistically and substantively significant effect on the decision to align with a specific state when the dependent variable is war, MIDs involving territory and/or fatalities, and other MIDs. Only the sanctions models do not provide the hypothesized results.

In this chapter, I use a case study to go beyond the question of statistical correlation and seek to determine whether past alignments and dyadic history have the posited effect on current alignment for the reasons stated in reciprocal alignment theory. I also aim to compare the ability of the proposed theory to outperform two competing explanations for the same phenomena: balance of power and homophily. This is done in two steps. First, the method of congruence is used to establish whether the outcomes in each alignment decision were consistent with those predicted by the applicable hypotheses. The goal is to see whether reciprocal alignment theory can outcompete the two opposing explanations. Second, limited process tracing is undertaken to unveil the mechanism that leads to the ultimate alignment decisions. A good theory is one that not only generates hypotheses that are supported by statistical analysis, but is also able to show that the results took place for the reasons specified in the theory.

The full rationale for the selection of the specific cases is detailed in the research chapter. The main reason for focusing on the former Soviet Union was to rule out as
many potential alternate explanations for the alignment decisions as possible. For that reason, a lack of a history of independence made the FSU an attractive region to examine. The cases chosen are Uzbekistan’s two decisions on membership in the Collective Security Treaty and Kyrgyzstan’s three decisions on allowing US and Russia military presence on its territory. They were selected due to variation in the key independent variables – past alignment for the Uzbek case and dyadic history for Kyrgyzstan – and the timing of the alignments. Having the same countries, and in Uzbekistan’s case, the same ruler, make decisions on the same issues over a prolonged period of time minimizes the heterogeneity of the circumstances that led to the alignments. The ensuing analysis shows that past alignment or dyadic history were integral in three out of the four alignment decisions where they could have played a role.

As Table 7.1 makes clear, only the result of the 2009 Kyrgyz alignment was inconsistent with the alignment theory. Where the previous history of dyadic relations or alignments between a given Central Asian state and Russia was positive, the end result was a positive alignment in two of the three cases. Where such history was negative, the consequence was a negative alignment. The results were consistent with the balancing explanation in three out of five cases and with homophily in two of the five cases. In the former instances, Uzbekistan was sufficiently powerful to at least attempt to stave off a Russian challenge to its desires for regional supremacy, but did so in only one of the two decision points. Kyrgyzstan was never strong enough to challenge designs on Central Asia, but still defied Russia in one out of the three scenarios. For the homophily explanation, Russia and the particular Central Asian state had similar regimes in two of the cases, one of which ended up with a pro-Russian alignment and one in an anti-
Russian one. In the three decisions where regime similarity was low, Russia was able to obtain positive alignment twice. Yet even when the outcome matched the expectations for the alternate theories of alignment, the reasons for those outcomes were inconsistent with the underlying logic of those theories.

Table 7.1. Overview of Theoretical Expectations and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Past alignment/ Dyadic history</th>
<th>Balance of power</th>
<th>Homophily</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan 1992</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>N/A / - / -</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan 1999</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>- / - / -</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan 2002</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>+ / + / +</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan 2009</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>+ / + / +</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan 2013</td>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>+ / + / -</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1 Uzbekistan pre-1992

In this section, I examine the Uzbek decision to align with Russia by joining the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty in 1992, a year after independence. At this time, Uzbekistan had no history of inter-state relations with Russia. Uzbekistan did consider itself the natural leader of Central Asia, something that caused unease in some of its neighbors. Its highly autocratic regime was also markedly different from Russia’s, with the Uzbek leader making no move to reform the Soviet-era political structure that gave him power. Hence, while reciprocal alignment theory is agnostic as to what decision Uzbekistan should have made, balance of power theory leans in the direction of Uzbekistan siding against Russia, as does the homophily explanation. This section will show that the opposite was case, challenging both alternative explanations of alignment.
The collapse of the USSR was as sudden as it was unexpected. This was doubly true for the leaders of Central Asia, who were not privy to the meetings that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The public of those states was no less taken aback by the sudden turn of events. The nationalist murmurings and disaffection for the multi-national state were limited mainly to the Caucasus and Slavic lands. The Uzbek population in particular voted strongly in favor of maintaining the unity of the Soviet Union in Gorbachev’s 1991 union referendum (Gleason 2001, 1081). Independence nevertheless came to each of the fifteen constituent republics of the USSR. With that independence came the task of crafting a foreign and domestic policy virtually from scratch.

Unlike the leaders of some of the European successor states to the USSR, Islam Karimov, the ruler of Uzbekistan since 1989, had never prioritized economic reforms. Whereas the rulers of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine implemented “shock therapy” in order to rapidly liberalize their countries’ economies upon the Soviet Union’s collapse, Karimov implemented only minor reforms, and did so at a glacial pace (Kazemi 2003, 213-4). The result was economic stagnation coupled with political stability in Uzbekistan, and relatively high economic growth after a period of severe recession in the aforementioned European states. The economic downturns cost the Ukrainian and Belarusian leaders their political careers and undermined the domestic credentials of the Russian president; the Uzbek stagnation has yet to claim Karimov’s presidency.

What has consistently mattered to the Uzbek ruler was stability, a stability challenged by Islamist, and to a lesser extent, pro-democracy elements in Central Asia. Not infrequently, the two traits have been shared by the same groups. This stability was hard to come by in a poverty-stricken, land-locked region with, in 1991, no strategic
importance. The states of Central Asia had no standing army, no nationalist history to promote solidarity, and few resources to cajole regime opponents into switching sides. The external options were only marginally better. China was wary of complete international isolation so soon after the Tiananmen Square Massacre, and thus avoided antagonizing Russia (Fravel 2005, 75). The US interest in the FSU was limited to securing nuclear weapons located outside of Russia and to maintaining the domestic legitimacy of the newly elected Russian regime. If Karimov was to obtain assistance in maintaining stability in Uzbekistan and in neighboring states, he would need Russia’s assistance. Fortunately for him, initial Russian disillusionment with the subsidization of non-Slavic territories of the FSU was replaced by a willingness to recreate some form of political ties in the region (Bremmer and Bailes 1998, 137).

Uzbekistan Joining the Collective Security Treaty

The immediate impetus for a security treaty in the FSU was the start of civil conflict in Tajikistan. By the time the Collective Security Treaty was signed in May 1992, Tajikistan was on the verge of descending into a bloody civil war. All members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) were invited to join the new Russian-led security framework. At the time, all of the successor states to the USSR, other than Georgia and the three Baltic states, were invited to sign the treaty. Six out of those eleven states accepted invitation. Other than Russia, whose political ambitions were well-served by the new security regime, the biggest proponent of the treaty was

\[63\text{ Turkmenistan was the only Central Asian republic in the Soviet Union to give more than it received in subsidies (Zhukov 2002, 356).}\
\[64\text{ The six states were Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (Splidsboel-Hansen 1997, 1508).}\]
Kazakhstan (Menon 1995, 174).65 Armenia signed the treaty in order to maintain Russian support over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute with Azerbaijan (Papazian 2006, 239).66 Each of the other signatories was affected by the events in Tajikistan.

Karimov’s decision to align with Russia by formally joining the Collective Security Treaty was made on the basis of three uncertain factors. First, the main object of the treaty was to protect predominantly Central Asian regimes against domestic, not international, opponents. Most of those regimes faced threats from newly empowered Islamists, democrats, and embittered ethnic minorities. It did not help that the Russian-backed government of Afghanistan fell in 1992, with a new wave of violence and extremism threatening to spill over into Central Asia.67 The Uzbek alignment was thus more a sign of Karimov’s domestic weakness than it was a show of support for Russian foreign policy interests. Unlike Armenia, Uzbekistan had no foreign foe. Unlike Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan was not dependent on Russia politically and not nearly as dependent on it economically.68 Second, Russia did not provide the highest bid for Uzbek support; rather, it made the only bid. Other states did not make serious offers to protect the Uzbek regime from internal or external foes, and no state but Russia was interested in Uzbekistan’s resources. Desperate to contain the violence in Tajikistan, the

65 Due to its dependence on Russian pipelines and Russia’s ability to stir up trouble among ethnic Russians in the northern half of the country, Kazakhstan has consistently pursued a foreign policy that avoided antagonizing Russia. In fact, in 1995, Kazakhstan was one of only two states to join a Russian-led customs union that was overwhelmingly favorable toward Russia (Hancock 2006, 128).
66 Russia has been Armenia’s main military sponsor since 1991, selling it a substantial amount of weaponry, and occasionally getting involved more directly in the dispute.
67 A substantial portion of Afghan mujahideen were ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, who were in a better position to spread their ideas to Central Asia after the fall of the Soviet Union and its security apparatus.
68 Karimov had quickly consolidated power, and therefore did not have to fear Russian meddling in Uzbek affairs. Uzbekistan does not have any secessionist territories and does not border Russia, both of which limit the ability of Russia to blackmail Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan also has a relatively closed economy and exports a moderate amount of natural gas, making Russian economic assistance unnecessary.
Uzbek ruler had no choice but to accept assistance from wherever it came. Whether this would remain the case was contingent on events outside of Moscow’s and Tashkent’s control. Last, the alignment was conditional on the events in neighboring Tajikistan. A conclusion to the Tajik civil war would potentially undermine the basis for the Russo-Uzbek alignment. Tajikistan not only faced a democratic, Islamist rebellion that could be copied in Uzbekistan, but was also home to a sizeable Uzbek minority. Any threats to the well-being of that minority threatened to create a nationalist backlash in Uzbekistan, which Karimov might not have the ability to control. If the civil conflict ended, Russian meddling in the region would become a much more salient issue.

7.2 Uzbekistan between 1992 and 1999

In this section, I examine Uzbekistan’s 1999 decision to end its participation in the Collective Security Treaty, which was viewed as a strongly anti-Russian move at the time. The decision took place in the context of worsening relations between Russia and Uzbekistan due to the former’s unwillingness to withdraw its military presence from Tajikistan, over Uzbekistan’s protests. Uzbekistan still considered itself the primary contender for Central Asian leadership. Its regime remained highly autocratic, in contrast to Russia’s borderline democracy. All three theories thus expected Uzbekistan to align against Russia, which is consistent with the eventual outcome. However, the rationale for that outcome was inconsistent with the logic of balancing and homophily explanations.

The Collective Security Treaty was officially ratified in 1994, with the proviso that it would have to be renewed at five-year intervals. The seven years between the initial signing of the treaty and the deadline for renewing it were eventful for the Uzbek leader. A national myth for Uzbekistan needed to be created for the sake of national unity. An
economy had to be shifted from the cotton-export model foisted upon Uzbekistan by the Soviet Union. Most importantly for the alignment story, Uzbekistan had to create a foreign policy from scratch, having no prior history of independence.

Being less dependent on Russia than his Central Asian counterparts and being in charge of a state with the largest population in the region, Karimov sought to make Uzbekistan into a dominant regional power. The move was tenable because of the weakness of the other states in the region, each of whom faced some combination of severe economic problems, political instability, potential for secessionism, dependence on outside states, or an inward-looking foreign policy. The Uzbek ruler thus had a large variety of resources at his disposal to pursue his goals. He also did not face cooperation-supporting domestic constituencies due to a lack of past cooperation with Uzbekistan’s neighbors. Combined with Uzbekistan’s lack of dependence on Russia, these factors put Karimov in a strong position to maximize his value from every stake before him.

Given Uzbekistan’s strengths, the Tajik civil war was the only source of potential conflict. When it became clear that the violence was not going to spill over the Tajik border, the Tajik situation lost its importance. No longer needing Russia for security purposes and seeing Russia as an obstacle to his regional ambitions, Karimov strove to minimize Russian influence in Central Asia (Kazemi 2003, 208). This purpose was best served by drawing foreign powers into the region and by weakening Russian-led institutions. The first task was accomplished by joining NATO’s Partnership for Peace program in 1996 (Gleason 2001, 1089) and forming bilateral agreements with the United
The second objective entailed working together with other disgruntled FSU states to minimize the effectiveness of the CIS. The latter proved to be wildly successful. By 1994, Karimov no longer viewed Russian military involvement in Tajikistan as beneficial to Uzbekistan’s interests (Akbarzadeh 2005, 46; Fumagalli 2007, 256). Russia’s apparent intention to station its troops in Tajikistan indefinitely provided additional motivation for Karimov to strive to weaken Russia’s influence in Central Asia. Karimov was not alone in pursuing this goal. A bloc united by little more than their opposition to Russian policy – GUAM - was formed in 1997, consisting of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Turkmenistan did not join any coalition opposed to Russia, but neither did it pursue multilateral cooperation with that state (Bohr 2004, 499). It did not help Russia’s case that the CIS was badly mismanaged. The organization suffered from high absenteeism (Sakwa and Webber 1999, 395), trade and investment targets were missed (Kubicek 2009, 243), and most acts of cooperation took place on a bilateral basis outside of the organization (Sakwa and Webber 1999, 397).

The other pillar of Uzbek foreign policy was drawing the US into the world of Central Asian politics, an undertaking in which Uzbekistan was only marginally successful before 2002. By 1995, Karimov was having some success in getting US attention (Grodsky 2004, 329). Uzbekistan even supported a US trade embargo against Iran that year, though it eventually backed off that support (Akbarzadeh 2005, 59). When

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69 This included agreeing to expand military contacts economic ties with the US (Winter 1998), allowing the US to help decommission a Soviet-era chemical weapon plant (Hogan 1999), and joining GAUM, the only CIS regional organization consistently supported by the US (MacFarlane 2004, 453).
70 Karimov also sought to reduce support for Russia from his domestic audience. Uzbek news from 1992 until 1996, operating under severe restrictions imposed by the Uzbek government, was the second most hostile in the Central Asia/Caucasus region after Azerbaijan (Carney and Moran 2000, 184).
the Taliban made significant advances in neighboring Afghanistan in 1997, Karimov turned to the West, and not to Russia, for assistance (Akbarzadeh 2005, 43-4). This provided the context for the 1999 negotiations to renew the CST.

**Refusal to Extend the Collective Security Treaty**

Karimov’s unwillingness to see Russia monopolize power in Central Asia was unaffected by domestic or international events. Though the US still played a minor role in the region, the Uzbek president maintained his belief that US power would be sufficient to curtail Russian influence in the region. As such, Karimov did not take the less costly option of simply allowing Uzbekistan’s participation in the Collective Security Treaty to expire. Doing so would avoid antagonizing Russia while increasing Uzbekistan’s foreign policy maneuverability. Karimov went a step further.

First, Uzbekistan withdrew from the CST in February of 1999, citing discomfort at Russian attempts to closely integrate the CIS and Russia’s stationing of troops in multiple FSU states (Pannier 1999a). Karimov did not reverse course when Tashkent, Uzbekistan’s capital, was hit by several explosions carried by out terrorist groups two weeks later (Pannier 1999b). This was a marked change from his behavior in the early 1990s, when a similar attack would have led to closer relations with Russia. Second, Karimov added insult to injury by joining the anti-Russian GUAM organization, renamed GUUAM upon Uzbekistan’s entry, the same April. A month later Uzbekistan signed several agreements with the United States, including those concerned with issues of security (Pannier and Echanova 1999). The message was clear: not only was Uzbekistan unwilling to play a subordinate role to Russia in Central Asia, it was willing to enlist American support on the same issues that Russia believed itself to have a monopoly on
resolving. Two years later, when Uzbekistan joined the Sino-Russian Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Karimov stated that he would not allow the organization to be used as a propaganda vehicle against US initiatives (EurasiaNet 2001).

### 7.3 The Case of Uzbekistan and Reciprocal Alignment

The Uzbek case provides two points in time where alignment decisions were made on the same issue, with the same party being the potential recipient of that alignment. The case is particularly interesting due to the lack of a history of inter-state relations between Uzbekistan and Russia, even if the former was subordinate to the latter as part of the Soviet Union. Unlike Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and the Baltic states, Uzbekistan had no long-lasting grudge against Russia. Uzbekistan was also not dependent on Russia’s goodwill, as was the case with Armenia and Kazakhstan. Given that there were at least some states aligning with and against Russia in both time periods, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Uzbekistan had a legitimate opportunity to choose a side without being forced to pay an unbearable cost.

The chief question is what role, if any, reciprocation played in the two alignment decisions. Additionally, the utility of using reciprocation in this case needs to be weighed against the accuracy of other possible explanations, notably balancing of power and regime similarity. The Uzbek case was chosen intentionally to vary the reciprocation factor in the two alignment decisions: Uzbekistan had few opportunities to receive alignment from Russia or the US within the first year of its existence. It also did not have time to form a cooperative or conflictual bilateral relationship with either of those states.

Unsurprisingly, the initial Uzbek alignment decision had little to do with reciprocation. Karimov was too busy consolidating his domestic authority to worry about
an active role in international affairs. The decision to join the Collective Security Treaty was intended to prevent additional domestic threats from arising in Uzbekistan, especially ones that might interfere with Karimov’s careful nation-building project. The civil conflict in Tajikistan served as a warning about what Karimov can expect in his own country if there are no military forces capable of standing up to Islamist opponents.

Though it was too early to expect Uzbekistan to act on the basis of reciprocation in 1992, Uzbekistan was free to act on the basis of the balancing or homophily explanations of alignment. Uzbekistan considered itself the natural leader of Central Asia and was not overly dependent on Russia for its economic and political well-being. By 1992, it was also obvious what shape the Uzbek regime would take; the end product of the Russian regime was less obvious, but the latter was already substantially more democratic than Uzbekistan. According to the balancing explanation, Uzbekistan should have taken every available opportunity to align itself against Russia. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, the Baltic states, and Turkmenistan refused to join the CIS security regime, many of them due to Russian military interference within their territories. Yet Uzbekistan, with a larger population than all but one of those states and geographically more distant from Russia’s reach chose not to balance against Russia.

Karimov was even less concerned with the lack of similarity between the regime type of his state and that of Russia. He did not view the Russian model as a viable alternative for his own domestic opponents, and was therefore unconcerned with Russian flirtation with democracy. Furthermore, the rulers of a majority of the states that refused to join the Collective Security Treaty had some democratic credentials, while Armenia was the only state other than Russia to join the treaty that was not an overt autocracy. In
the end, the states that joined Russia were either highly dependent on it – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan – or wanted future Russian assistance. There is no evidence that considerations of regime type ever entered into their calculations.

By the time of the second alignment decision, Uzbekistan had over seven years of independence, and had multiple opportunities to interact with Russia on a bilateral and multilateral basis. One Russian alignment decision in particular bothered Uzbekistan: Russia’s unwillingness to remove its troops from neighboring Tajikistan. Uzbekistan’s insistence on the removal of these troops has not altered the Russian position; in fact, an agreement was recently signed to keep those troops in Tajikistan until at least 2042 (Matveeva 2013, 7). When Karimov made the final decision to withdraw from the Collective Security Treaty, the Russian negative alignment on the Tajik military presence issue was to the forefront of his mind. The bilateral sniping between the Uzbek and Russian leaders and Uzbekistan’s attempt to draw in the US did not help matters either.

On the surface, the 1999 negative alignment is a classic example of balancing. Uzbekistan feared Russian power and took the appropriate steps to limit it. This explanation for Uzbekistan’s refusal to renew its treaty membership is flawed for two reasons. First, it does not account for Uzbekistan’s earlier support for Russian actions, most notably in 1992, and would fail to explain Uzbekistan’s actions post-2005, when the state renewed a cooperative relationship with Russia. Second, the balancing explanation

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71 Russia also had troops in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, without explicit support from all but the Armenian government. Though these actions reinforced Karimov’s belief that Russia wanted to dominate the FSU, the troops in question were too far away to be an immediate concern to Karimov.

72 On the day Uzbekistan confirmed its refusal to extend its involvement in the CST, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry released a statement blaming Russia’s policies in the CIS. A Russian newspaper, Vremya MN, specifically referenced Uzbekistan’s displeasure at Russian provision of heavy arms to Armenia and the continued Russian military presence in Tajikistan (RFE/RL 1999).
has little concrete evidence in its support. Karimov did consider limiting Russian power in Central Asia a priority in the late-1990s, but those policies were influenced more by specific Russian actions than by Russian capabilities per se. In fact, Karimov spent the early 1990s supporting the Russian Central Asian policy even as Karimov sought Uzbek hegemony in the region. It is quite likely that if Russia did not spend most of the 1990s sending its troops all over the FSU and did not attempt to leverage its economic hegemony throughout the region to enrich itself, Uzbekistan and other states would be more willing to work with Russia. Similarly, it is not a coincidence that Armenia and Belarus, the recipients of extensive Russian support, have maintained strong ties with Russia, while there is no pro-Russian constituency in either Azerbaijan or Georgia, both of whom previously found themselves on the wrong side of Russian foreign policy.

The regime similarity explanation for alignment is equally unappealing when applied to the Uzbek case. Though Russia was substantially more democratic than Uzbekistan in 1999, neither Russia’s marginal democratic credentials nor Uzbekistan’s unflinching autocracy were considered important issues by either party to the proposed alignment. Instead, it was the United States that was chiding Uzbekistan over its abysmal human rights record (Grodsky 2004), a fact that did not deter Karimov from pursuing closer relations with that democracy. In sum, the 1999 alignment decision itself was consistent with each of the three alignment explanations examined here. However, a close look at the events leading up to that decision makes it clear Karimov was displeased with specific Russian alignment decisions of the 1990s. His preference for a multi-vectored foreign policy was based more on his distrust of Russian motivations than it did his desire to undermine Russian power in Central Asia. Finally, Karimov’s refusal to
stay within the CST had absolutely nothing to do with the regime types of the states involved, something that became even clearer in the context of the close relationship between Uzbekistan and the US in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.73

7.4 Kyrgyzstan pre-2002

In the wake of September 11 terrorist attacks, Central Asia gained a newfound prominence in the eyes of American lawmakers. The states of Central Asia were all proximate to Afghanistan, making them valuable for logistical purposes and potentially stationing NATO troops. Kyrgyzstan was willing to accept the US request for military bases on its soil, something that did not please Russia. Nevertheless, Russia was no fan of the Taliban, whose enemies it had been funding for years, and was initially not vehemently opposed to a temporary US presence in Central Asia. Russia did want to be compensated for its tolerance of the new status quo, and for that it was rewarded with Kyrgyz military bases of its own. This alignment decision took place at a time when Kyrgyzstan was dependent on Russia economically and militarily, and was a recipient of Russian assistance in both areas, partially as a check against a resurgent Uzbekistan. This dependence made it impractical for Kyrgyzstan to stand up to Russian power, even if it so desired. Kyrgyzstan was the least autocratic state in Central Asia, but not one that anyone would confuse with a democracy; the Russian regime type was still marginally

73 In the decade and a half since his refusal to extent the CST, Karimov’s foreign policy has been shaped by factors similar to the ones discussed in this chapter. Karimov’s Uzbekistan eagerly joined the United States in its conflict against Afghanistan and the broader “war against terror” in order to obtain further leverage against a disliked Russia. This assistance did not quiet American criticism of Uzbekistan’s human rights record, however. When that criticism gained the potential to undermine Karimov’s regime in the wake of the Andijan massacre, Karimov ceased cooperation with the US and sought a rapprochement with Russia. As the domestic situation in Uzbekistan stabilized, Karimov has attempted to improve ties with the US.
democratic, but President Putin had already begun to position itself as a burgeoning
autocrat. Based on this situation, all three theories of alignment examined here would
expect Kyrgyzstan to side with Russia, which is broadly what it did. As in the previous
case, however, that alignment had little to do with the logic of homophily.

Prior to 2002, Kyrgyzstan’s main claim to relevance outside of Central Asia was
its role as a poster child for economic neoliberalism. The state did not have substantial oil
reserves, unlike Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan did not possess natural gas, unlike Kazakhstan,
Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In contrast to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan did not experience a
civil war or face substantial domestic threats to its security. Despite these disadvantages
in terms of attracting foreign aid, or perhaps because of them, Kyrgyz president Askar
Akayev did his best to present his country as the model of modernity in a region full of
authoritarian regimes, the latter of whom resembled 19th century Central Asian khans
much more than they did Western liberal democracies. This perception of modernism,
not entirely warranted, provided moderate returns for the Kyrgyz leader. Kyrgyzstan was
the second highest recipient of US aid in Central Asia throughout the 1990s (O’malley
and McDermott 2003, 84), and in 1998 was the first post-Soviet state, along with Latvia,
to join the World Trade Organization (WTO 1998).

The economic reforms and foreign aid did little to stem the economic turmoil
associated with the transition to a post-communist economy. The Kyrgyz GDP per capita
fell by half between 1990 and 1995, and did not surpass its 1990 level by 2009
(Mogilevsky and Omorova 2011, 5). While the decline in GDP was not unusual by post-
Soviet standards, the Kyrgyz economy was already operating from a low base. The
country’s GDP per capita by 2002 was significantly under $2,000 (Mogilevsky and
To make matters worse, Kyrgyzstan’s external debt increased from nothing to 140 percent of GDP between 1990 and 1999, before falling to 110 percent in 2002 (Mogilevsky and Omorova 2011, 15). The relatively strong economic growth starting from the mid-1990s did not appreciably improve the standard of living of most Kyrgyz citizens, a factor that undoubtedly affected the legitimacy of the Kyrgyz regime.

On the security front, Kyrgyzstan faced low to moderate external threats and a similar level of domestic threats, though neither jeopardized Kyrgyzstan’s stability or independence. Domestically, Kyrgyzstan was an occasional target of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which took 13 hostages in 1999 (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 73). It also faced armed elements of the drug trade, which used Kyrgyzstan as a transit point (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 75). Internationally, most of Kyrgyzstan’s problems stemmed from Uzbekistan’s economic and foreign policy. Uzbekistan hurt the already weak Kyrgyz economy by imposing currency controls and other autarkic measures after leaving the ruble zone in 1993 (Kazemi 2003, 214). Kyrgyzstan also had reason to fear Uzbek nationalism. While the nationalism was aimed predominantly at Uzbekistan’s domestic audience, it nevertheless had the potential to enflame tensions among the substantial Uzbek minority in the major Kyrgyz city of Osh, which was already a site of conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 1990 (Menon and Spruyt 1999, 95). Uzbekistan’s claims to regional dominance throughout the 1990s were also less than welcome in Bishkek.

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74 Osh would become the primary location for a new round of Kyrgyz-Uzbek bloodshed, with the Uzbeks being on the receiving end of the violence, during the 2010 regime change in Kyrgyzstan (BBC 2010).
Given the poor state of Kyrgyzstan’s military – possibly due to the Kyrgyz leadership attempting to ward off a coup similar to the one attempted in 1991 (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 77) – Kyrgyzstan was never in a position to protect itself against potential foreign aggression. The state instead depended on implicit or explicit security guarantees from external actors. Thus, Kyrgyzstan was one of the earliest Central Asian states to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) program (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 85), doing so in 1994. The program aims to improve military to military relations between NATO and the partner states, as well as improving the military effectiveness and professionalism of the latter. While the partnership does not come with a security guarantee, an attack against a PfP member risks souring relations with NATO, a prospect that is no doubt unappealing to Kyrgyzstan’s Central Asian neighbors, each of whom is also a member of the Partnership for Peace.

Kyrgyzstan’s defense policy also entailed cooperation with Russian-led institutions, including the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Central Asian Union, which had the effect of blunting the potential of Uzbek aggression (Bohr 2004, 491) without making the kind of bilateral concessions to Russia that might have provoked a nationalist backlash. Membership in these organizations provided an additional economic benefit to Kyrgyzstan, whose economy was buttressed by economic interaction with the more prosperous Russia (Bremmer and Bailes 1998, 137). The September 11 attacks and the American need for a military transit point in Central Asia for supplying its troops in Afghanistan served to test that dependency-based relationship. The result was an inconsistent attempt to alleviate the burdens of dependency on Russia by attempting a multi-vectored foreign policy that eventually fell apart and tilted strongly toward Russia.
Kyrgyzstan Leases Military Bases to the United States and Russia

Shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the US undertook an invasion of Afghanistan, whose de facto rulers, the Taliban, were accused of harboring al-Qaeda. Unfortunately for the US, Afghanistan is landlocked, hundreds of miles away from the nearest major body of water. Furthermore, the US was using the Afghanistan-based Northern Alliance as the main ground force in the conflict against the Taliban, which ruled out possible military bases in Pakistan, Iran, and Turkmenistan. That left only Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan offered to host a military base for the US, going as far as demanding its Russian occupants leave, but the US decided against that option, possibly because of the poor infrastructure in that country (Kucera 2013).

The United States instead obtained military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Manas and Karshi-Khanabad, respectively. In February 2002, Kyrgyz President Akayev made the final decision to lease the Manas military base to the US for a period of a year, with the possibility of future extensions (RFE/RL 2002). There was little if any arm-twisting involved in the deal. In fact, the Central Asian rulers were lining up to offer their services to the US government, something they had been attempting with limited success from the time of their independence. The US had the potential of weakening their dependence on Russia and providing generous economic support. The latter was useful not only for boosting Central Asian economies, but also for consolidating elite support for the Central Asian rulers, Akayev included. This was particularly important

\[75\] Given the hostility between the US on the one hand and Pakistan and Iran on the other, it is unlikely that the latter would consent to a large-scale American troop presence regardless of the circumstances. Turkmenistan’s policy of neutrality would also have ruled out an overt US military presence.  
\[76\] US aid to Kyrgyzstan doubled between 2001 and 2002 (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 89).
for the Kyrgyz ruler due to his domestic position being conditional on his capacity as a power broker between clans without a strong base of his own (Collins 2004).

Not wishing to rupture relations with Russia, Kyrgyzstan soon consented to a Russian military base within its territory. By December 2002, the Russian Air Force was deployed in the Kant Airbase, 20 miles from the American base (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 72). This coincided with the restructuring of Kyrgyz debt to Russia (O’malley and McDermott 2003, 82). Unlike the US, which required the bases for military reasons, Russia used its military presence in Central Asia as a check against an anti-Russian foreign policy (Allison 2004, 288). Kyrgyzstan was willing to accept these constraints given that Russia’s proximity to Kyrgyzstan, its high volume of trade with the country, and its willingness to allow Kyrgyz migrants to work in Russia visa-free fostered a high degree of Kyrgyz dependence on Russian goodwill.

7.5 Kyrgyzstan between 2002 and 2009

The Kyrgyz situation changed in some major ways but not in others by 2009. Kyrgyzstan was still dependent on Russian goodwill, and not in a position to challenge Russian authority. The dependence on Russia had only grown between 2002 and 2009, due to Kyrgyzstan’s worsening economic situation and political instability. The Russian and Kyrgyz regime looked more and more similar by 2009, as the rulers of both states slowly sidelined and/or corrupted most democratic institutions. In light of this background situation, each of the three alignment theories would expect Kyrgyzstan to align with Russia when given the opportunity. The opportunity took place in 2009, when Russia asked Kyrgyzstan to permanently close the Manas American military base on its soil. After taking $2 billion in Russian loans and grants as a side-payment, the Kyrgyz
leader, Bakiyev, changed course and allowed the Americans to stay. He did make some concessions to Russia after that decision, but it was not enough to placate Russian anger. This is thus the one case where all three theories got the alignment choice wrong.

During the three years subsequent to the establishment of US and Russian military bases on Kyrgyz soil, Akayev vacillated between a pro-Western and a pro-Russian course. His hand was forced by the successful overthrow of the Georgian and Ukrainian leaders by street protests in 2003 and 2004-2005, respectively. The color revolutions, as they were called, spooked Akayev, who was concerned over a similar occurrence in his own country – rightly, as it transpired. The pro-Western orientation of those revolts suggested to Akayev that Western forces, particularly the US, were funding and/or leading them. As a result, Akayev adopted policies much more sympathetic to Russia than to the US (Blagov 2005). Time was running out for Akayev, however, and Russian elites did not trust Akayev for his previous perceived duplicity (Blagov 2005). Despite promising not to allow a 2005 legislative election to become another color revolution (Blagov 2005), Akayev ended up being overthrown by a pro-democracy movement after the election results were recognized as having severe shortcomings (OSCE 2005).

After losing control over the southern half of the country and many state institutions, Akayev was replaced as president by Kurmanbek Bakiyev, a former prime minister turned opposition leader. Bakiyev made a name for himself by opposing an American military presence in Kyrgyzstan, even when he was still prime minister (Gleason 2009). It thus came as a surprise to no one when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), of which Kyrgyzstan is a member and which is dominated by Russia and China, called for a timetable for a US withdrawal from its military bases in
Central Asia (Saidazimova 2005). What was surprising was Bakiyev’s about-turn: in a meeting with US Defense Minister Rumsfeld three weeks after the SCO declaration, he conceded that the US base was in Kyrgyzstan to stay for the long term (Saidazimova 2005). Attempting to use the foreign policy turbulence to his advantage, Bakiyev demanded that the US increase its rent payments for the Manas base from $2 million a year to $200 million (RFE/RL 2005). After a lengthy game of hardball in which the US was threatened with eviction multiple times, the US government agreed to increase rent to about $20 million a year, as part of a $150 million economic package (RFE/RL 2006).

By 2009, Bakiyev abandoned most pretenses to democratic rule, returning to the tactics of his predecessor, Askar Akayev, who was by then in exile in Russia. If Bakiyev’s legitimacy was not undermined by his increasingly autocratic rule, then it was by the worsening global economic climate, which hit hard the already fragile Kyrgyz economy. It was in that context that Bakiyev flew to Moscow to obtain $2 billion in aid and loans (RFE/RL 2009). The deal was not without strings: Bakiyev simultaneously announced that the Manas military base would be closed (RFE/RL 2009). The decision was a popular one domestically: only the opposition Social Democratic Party did not support the measure (Tchoroev 2009). The age of Kyrgyzstan’s multi-vectored foreign policy was said to be at an end (Gleason 2009). Then Bakiyev reversed course.

**Kyrgyzstan Leases Military Bases to the United States and Russia Part II**

After accepting $2 billion in Russian aid in exchange for ending the US military presence in Kyrgyzstan in February 2009, Bakiyev used the deal as bargaining leverage to increase the US rent payments for the Manas base from about $20 million a year to $60 million in June of the same year (Marat 2009). The deal came in the wake of intense
negotiations between Bakiyev and the newly elected Obama administration. The agreement followed a familiar pattern of a Kyrgyz leader being pressured to tell US troops to leave his country in exchange for economic benefits, the leader accepting those benefits, which leads to visits by high-ranking US defense officials, a reversal of the original decision, and outrage in Russia.

History repeated itself again scarcely a month after Bakiyev’s about-turn when the Kyrgyz president consented to a new Russian military base on Kyrgyz soil, this time in Osh (McDermott 2009). Unlike the temporary agreements with the US, this one was set to last 49 years, with the possibility of 25 year extensions thereafter (McDermott 2009). The basing rights also came with full diplomatic immunity for all Russian troops, a condition not granted to American soldiers in the Manas base (McDermott 2009). What is more, this basing deal was made without any input from Uzbekistan, whose border is only a few miles from Osh (McDermott 2009). By acceding to Russian demands on the Osh base, Bakiyev worsened relations with the US and Uzbekistan, both important regional players. This was all insufficient to appease Russia, however.

7.6 Kyrgyzstan from 2009 to 2013

In the last case examined here, Kyrgyzstan was once again asked by Russia to force the closure of an American military base in Kyrgyzstan. Between 2009 and 2013, Kyrgyzstan became even weaker and more dependent on Russian goodwill and assistance. This was true on the economic front and the political one, considering that Russia played a role in a regime change that ultimately brought Atambayev to power. Though Kyrgyzstan is still far from a democracy, the current Kyrgyz president was chosen in an election that was a vast improvement over previous ones and his legitimacy
at least partly rests on maintaining the image of democratic rule. This is in contrast to Russia, where the most recent election was widely seen as dubious in both the lead up to the polls and the vote-counting (OSCE 2012). When the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, once again insisted that Kyrgyzstan close the US military base on its soil, reciprocal alignment and balance of power theories would both expect him to consent. According to the homophily explanation, Atambayev should have refused, if not because of his own support of democracy, then at least because of his desire to maintain the popular illusion of Kyrgyz democracy. Unlike in the previous instance, Kyrgyzstan agreed to Russian demands and firmly told the US that its troops should soon leave. That outcome is thus consistent with reciprocal alignment and balancing theories, but not homophily.

As the economic climate in Kyrgyzstan worsened in early 2010 due to the ongoing global economic downturn, Moscow tolled the death knell of the Kyrgyz regime by sharply increasing the prices of gasoline and diesel products destined for Kyrgyzstan. The resulting price hikes for basic energy products in Kyrgyzstan led to large-scale protests against Bakiyev (Trilling and Umetov 2010), goaded on by the predominantly Russian-owned media in Kyrgyzstan (Marat 2010). The Russian turn against Bakiyev was likely a combination of its displeasure at Bakiyev’s double-dealing and, more recently, his unwillingness to enter the Russian-dominated Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia (CUBKR). After initially fleeing the protests to Osh, Bakiyev accepted exile in Belarus. He was replaced on an interim basis by opposition politician

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77 This Russian turn against Bakiyev makes no sense in the context of balance of power theory, but is fully expected by reciprocal alignment theory. The former does not expect leaders to hold grudges, assuming that raison d’être would trump any sentimentality. Reciprocal alignment theory, however, places reciprocation at the center of its causal mechanism. Russian unwillingness to trust and/or support someone who had been an unreliable ally in the past is thus fully consistent with the reciprocal explanation.
Roza Otunbayeva, who made frequent mention of her pro-Russian orientation. Within days of coming to power, she announced that Kyrgyzstan was once again reversing course and joining CUBKR (Marat 2011).

The overthrow of Bakiyev did not lead to an end of violence in Kyrgyzstan. The southern half of the country was still in chaos, partially because it was Bakiyev’s base and partially because of attacks against ethnic Uzbeks, whose relative prosperity made them an easy target for Kyrgyz nationalists. Otunbayeva’s response to the continued violence was to call Russian President Medvedev and ask him to send Russian troops to restore order in her state; she made the same call to Russian Prime Minister Putin a few days later (Socor 2010). Russia decided not to accede to this request for a variety of reasons, but the damage to Kyrgyzstan’s reputation as an independent state was done.

The situation eventually stabilized, without Russian assistance, and Almazbek Atambayev, a prime minister under Bakiyev turned opposition leader, was elected as the new president of Kyrgyzstan in elections that were fairer than previous presidential polls, but involved substantial irregularities during the voter registration and vote counting process (OSCE 2011). Not long after the victory, Atambayev played up the prospect of the US using its Kyrgyz military base to attack Iran, providing that possibility as a justification for wanting to close the base (RFE/RL 2011).

**Kyrgyz President Ends US Military Presence in Kyrgyzstan**

As was often the case, the poor state of the Kyrgyz economy, including a $361 million budget deficit in 2012, made the Kyrgyz president soften his previous position

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78 Atambayev’s statements notwithstanding, it is still possible that the Kyrgyz ruler’s position will change before 2014.
In April 2012, Atambayev stated that he supported the continued American usage of the Manas base, but only in a civilian capacity (Marat 2012), something that he reaffirmed in January 2013 (RFE/RL 2013). However, in a May 2012 meeting with the NATO deputy secretary general, Atambayev made no mention of wanting to close down the base after NATO troops wind down their operations in Afghanistan in 2013 (McDermott 2012). It is entirely conceivable that Atambayev is leaving his options open, much like his predecessors, in an attempt to extract greater assistance from the US in exchange for continued military use of Manas beyond 2014.

Consistent with the behavior of Akayev and Bakiyev, Atambayev coupled his support for an American presence on his country’s territory with further concessions to Moscow in exchange for extra funds. By September 2012, Atambayev agreed to transform all the Russian military facilities in Kyrgyzstan into one united base, making it harder to expel any individual component (Matveeva 2013, 8). In exchange, Russia wrote off nearly half a billion dollars in Kyrgyz debt (Matveeva 2013, 8). As of May 2013, it is unclear what ramifications this move will have on Kyrgyzstan’s relationship with Russia or how it affects the likelihood of the US maintaining a military presence at the Manas base beyond 2014. It does seem that Russian politicians have moved on from their hostile rhetoric and actions against Kyrgyzstan and are instead aiming their ire at Tajikistan, which has stalled on its own military base deal with Russia (Parshin 2013).

7.7 The Case of Kyrgyzstan and Reciprocal Alignment

The Kyrgyz case provides a more complicated test for the theory of reciprocal alignment. In contrast to the Uzbek case, there are no clear past alignments that played a decisive role in the present ones. Instead, the focus will be on dyadic relations: whether
they created domestic constituencies for continued conflict or cooperation, and whether those constituencies in tandem with the country’s political leadership made their alignment decisions on the basis of these relations. The entire Kyrgyz-Russian relationship also takes place in the context of severe Kyrgyz dependence on Russia, which can be expected to tilt the Kyrgyz foreign policy in Russia’s direction, though perhaps not decisively. The balancing explanation will be more difficult to investigate. The Kyrgyz dependence on Russia made overt balancing against it impractical, a factor that the balance of threat – but not the balance of power – theory recognizes. The case does serve as fertile grounds for testing the homophily explanation for alignment, given the variation in Kyrgyzstan’s political structure and several changes of regime.

Prior to the 2002 decision to allow American and Russian military bases on its territory, Kyrgyzstan was a recipient of fairly generous economic assistance from both states. Moreover, it obtained military training from NATO personnel and was reliant on Russian-led institutions to stave off possible Uzbek aggression. Akayev faced a serious quandary due to the knowledge that providing a military base to the US would entail aligning against Russia and refusing to do so would serve as an anti-American alignment. Akayev’s solution was to allow the US base, while granting a similar privilege to Russia. The decision did not entirely please both sides, but it did allow for continued Kyrgyz cooperation with both parties. Such a nuanced approach is unlikely to have been taken if Akayev was not concerned with maintaining positive bilateral relations with both states.

In 2009, Bakiyev, the new leader of Kyrgyzstan, faced the decision of whether the US should be able to maintain its military presence in Kyrgyzstan. Once again, Russia was pushing the Kyrgyz leader to disallow American troops, while the US was lobbying
for the opposite outcome. Bakiyev managed to coax higher rent payments from the US several years earlier, but those were not sufficient to keep the Kyrgyz economy afloat in the wake of global economic turmoil. Instead, Russia came to Kyrgyzstan’s rescue with an offer of $2 billion in aid and loans. When combined with the lack of a significant pro-American constituency and Bakiyev’s own earlier opposition to the American Manas base, these factors should have been sufficient to produce a pro-Russian alignment. The fact that he did not do so and only tried to placate Russia by offering it a new military base at Osh goes against the predictions of reciprocal alignment. It is likely that Bakiyev expected his maneuver to produce aid from both Russia and the US over the long term, but he should have been more concerned with the Kyrgyz-Russian relationship. A lesser reason for the unexpected outcome has to do with the transactional nature of Kyrgyzstan’s ties with Russia. The constant threats of punishment and the linkage of carrots to sticks diminished any goodwill that the Kyrgyz might have been expected to feel toward Russia. This prevented the creation of a strong pro-Russian constituency, thereby allowing Bakiyev greater autonomy in dealing with Russia.

On a deeper level, the null finding reflects the difficulty in translating dyadic or systemic variables onto a domestic context. A country’s institutions and its history set the boundaries for an acceptable foreign policy, as well as acting as selection mechanisms for the types of individuals that are able to become its leader. Where those historical and institutional constraints are weak, a ruler enjoys a greater freedom of action, not needing to worry about key constituents opposing certain foreign policy moves. Nevertheless, the choices available to such leaders are not without limits, particularly as each choice that is made constrains the range of options that are available in the next issue cycle.
Moving forward, the US committed to withdrawing its combat troops from Afghanistan in 2014.\(^{79}\) This served as a green light for Russia to demand that Kyrgyzstan require all American troops to leave Kyrgyz territory in 2014. Similar to the situation in 2009, the Kyrgyz economy was in poor shape. As before, Russia stepped in, this time by forgiving nearly half a billion in Kyrgyz government debt. Distinct from the 2009 circumstances was the Kyrgyz president’s relations with Moscow. Russia played a key role in the events that led to the overthrow of Bakiyev, who by that point was not viewed favorably in his country. By helping Atambayev’s ally, Otunbayeva, gain power at Bakiyev’s expense, paving the way toward Atambayev’s own election as president, Russia helped generate public and elite support for its policies. Based on the recent dyadic relations of the Russian and Kyrgyz governments, the reciprocal alignment theory would expect the Kyrgyz government to give in to Russian demands. That is indeed what occurred. The US was told that it would not be able to use Manas for military operations after 2014, and Russia’s military presence in Kyrgyzstan was further consolidated.

The Kyrgyz case does not lend itself well to testing the balance of power explanation for alignment. Kyrgyzstan is substantially weaker than Russia, borders the state, and is highly dependent on it economically. A policy of balancing would likely have disastrous consequences for Kyrgyzstan, all while imposing minimal costs on Russia. With that in mind, there is no evidence that Kyrgyzstan at any point wished to lessen Russian influence in Central Asia. Its relationship with the United States was based on the prospect of economic gain, not on a desire to weaken Russia. It is in that

\(^{79}\) The withdrawal does not include special operations forces (Shanker and Schmitt 2012).
context that Kyrgyzstan would grant Russia additional military privileges on its territory whenever it needed to mollify its government. Kyrgyzstan has tried to contain Uzbekistan. But just as in the Uzbek case, the containment is based on a history of antagonistic behavior and not due solely to Uzbekistan’s material capabilities.

Based on the homophily explanation of alignment, we would expect Kyrgyzstan to undertake a more pro-American path during the short intervals in which it had a somewhat democratic government. Instead, the opposite is true. Bakiyev called for a US withdrawal from Manas shortly after coming to power in the wake of the “Tulip Revolution” that overthrew the previous dictator. Similarly, Otunbayeva opted for closer relations with Moscow, not Washington, after helping the overthrow of the now autocratic Bakiyev. The Kyrgyz democratic parliamentary elections in 2010 did not lead to a notable shift in that country’s foreign policy.

7.8 Conclusion

Out of the five alignment decisions examined in this chapter, three were consistent with the expectations of reciprocal alignment theory, and were taken at least partially as a consequence of the causal mechanism presented in that theory. Karimov’s withdrawal of Uzbekistan from the Collective Security Treaty in 1999, the initial Akayev decision to create an American and a Russian base on Kyrgyz territory, and Atambayev’s likely ending an American military presence in Kyrgyzstan comprise the three supportive alignments. All were taken either because of prior alignments or due to the recent dyadic relations of the states involved. One of the alignment decisions – Uzbekistan’s signing of the CST in 1992 – neither supports nor contradicts the expectations of the alignment theory; there was no opportunity to build up a history of alignment or bilateral relations
in the few months between independence and the signing of this treaty. Only one of the five alignments investigated in this chapter contradicts the reciprocal alignment theory. In that case, Kyrgyz President Bakiyev opted to extend the US lease on Manas despite getting substantially more support from Russia than from the US and despite there being very little domestic opposition to ending the American military presence in Kyrgyzstan.

The two alternative explanations examined here – balance of power and homophily – fared worse. Even in the instances where the alignment decisions were consistent with the theoretical expectations, the actual motivations of the relevant actors had little to do with the proposed causal mechanisms. Uzbekistan did not align against Russia because the latter was powerful; it aligned against Russia because Yeltsin refused to remove Russian troops from Tajikistan. Every Kyrgyz leader did not waver in closing the Manas base because they needed American support to contain Russia; they wavered because they wanted to extract additional resources from the US to keep the Kyrgyz economy functioning and to solidify their own grasp on power. Furthermore, balance of power theory cannot explain the variation in the alignment behavior of the two Central Asian states in light of stable relative power differences between them and Russia.

Table 7.2. Percentage of Correct Predictions for Theories of Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Correct Uzbek Decisions</th>
<th>Correct Kyrgyz Decisions</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal Alignment</td>
<td>1/1 (100%)</td>
<td>2/3 (67%)</td>
<td>3/4 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of Power</td>
<td>1/2 (50%)</td>
<td>2/3 (67%)</td>
<td>3/5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>1/2 (50%)</td>
<td>1/3 (33%)</td>
<td>2/5 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The causal mechanisms of the homophily explanation for alignment were similarly not present in any of the alignment decisions. Uzbek and Kyrgyz leaders did not at any point base their alignment decisions on the regime types of the United States and Russia. Kyrgyz President Akayev played up his tenuous democratic credentials to get economic aid from the United States, but certainly did not support the opening of Manas because of supposed regime similarities. When Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan, was supporting Russian policy, it was because he needed Russia for security reasons. When Karimov decided to change sides in 1999, he made no mention of Russia’s regime type. Even homophily in terms of similar ethnicity failed to inform many foreign policy decisions. Excluding some empty posturing, Uzbekistan did little to help ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, including when they were getting killed by the hundreds during the most recent wave of violence there in 2010. A Turkic identity likewise failed to provide a basis for Central Asian foreign policy.

Overall, the two case studies examined here provide some evidence in support of reciprocal alignment theory. More importantly, they demonstrate that the proposed casual mechanism operates in a manner predicted by that theory. Whether the results can be generalized onto a broader population of cases is an open question. Central Asia is unique in its lack of history of independence, which is what made it an attractive case study. It is possible that rulers of more established states operate on a different basis than the Central Asian leaders. Nevertheless, if these results are taken in tandem with quantitative ones that reach a similar conclusion, then we should have more confidence in the explanatory power of the theory they are intended to test. This does not preclude the utility of using different case studies to determine the general applicability of the theory.
Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This dissertation began by asking two questions: whether each form of alignment has its own causes and what convinces rulers to join other countries’ disputes. The previous chapters provide theoretical and empirical explanations for both general questions. I will review the theory and the empirical findings, and illustrate both with the Iraq and Iran alignments mentioned in the first chapter.

8.1 Why Align?

The primary reason for aligning with other states is the desire to obtain similar alignment in the future. Leaders have a finite amount of resources at their disposal to deal with a variety of problems. Frequently, there is a mismatch between the type of resources in a ruler’s possession and the kind of resources needed to obtain the best result on a highly salient issue. The Saudi royal family has money flowing out of the ground, but is unable to use that money to create a first-class military. North Korea has one of the largest militaries in the world, but faces constant shortages of food.

Two conditions need to be present for leaders to take part in interstate alignment: they must have the ability to make a difference to the resolution of the stake and they must be able to obtain domestic support for this action. The latter requires the intervening state to have some connection to one or more of the disputants. Albania was not in a position to aid its Chinese ally in the latter’s war against India for the simple reason that Albania was too far away and had no ability to project power. Rhetoric aside, Brazilian leaders are not going to invest political or economic capital in helping resolve the Palestinian conflict, because they will not be able to justify the expense to the public.
The decision to align with a specific country is largely dependent on the dyadic relations and past alignments between the intervener and the disputants. Positive and negative dyadic relations both create domestic constituencies that seek to maintain the current state of affairs, curtailing the ability of a ruler to pursue an opposing policy. Reciprocating past alignments has a more international focus: it demonstrates reliability to the state whose past support is being reciprocated and other states that might seek assistance from the current intervener. Additionally, the perceived reliability of a state is affected by its institutional characteristics. States that are unstable or ruled by unrepresentative regimes are at risk of being forced to radically alter their foreign policy, lessening their potential value as alignment partners.

8.2 Summary of Findings

The broad question of political alignment has not been previously approached in a quantitative manner. Neither has a state’s position on a concrete stake been used as the unit of analysis. These shortcomings have more to do with the theoretical priorities and empirical knowledge of the time period in which alignment studies were popular than with the importance of the concept of alignment. Consequently, many of the findings, particularly those relating to the first stage of alignment and findings related to the alignment measure are entirely novel.

1. In order for leaders to take part in alignment, they must have a connection to the disputants and have the ability to make a difference. The importance of these factors is conditional on the cost of the alignment: they matter less when that cost is low. The connection factor is operationalized in terms of having alliance ties with the disputants or having a recent MID with those states. The relevance factor is operationalized as the
potential intervener’s proximity to the disputants and that intervener’s military and economic capabilities.

When war joining is the dependent variable, each of the above variables significantly increases the likelihood of states joining the dispute. Substantively, potential interveners with a high or maximum value for these variables have a 0.909 probability of joining an existing war. When the opposite is true, the probability falls to a paltry 0.030. The connection and relevance factors are thus each close to being a necessary condition for war alignment; combined, they are almost sufficient to produce that costly form of alignment.

The results are somewhat complicated for the variables denoting an ability to make a difference as the cost of alignment decreases. In the dangerous MID model, proximity ceases to have a positive effect on alignment formation. In the non-dangerous MID model, the same is true for military capabilities. With the exception of these anomalies, the hypotheses derived from the reciprocal alignment theory fare well. Having alliances or MIDs with the disputants increases the likelihood of involvement, suggesting that leaders have to justify alignments to their constituents. Economic capabilities are shown to make one more willing to take part in a sanction regime, while military capabilities do the same in most militarized conflict models. The implication is that only resources that could be used in a dispute affect a potential intervener’s calculus.

2. History of interaction plays a dominant role in the second stage of alignment, where leaders choose sides in a dispute. This serves as the most important and consistent finding throughout this dissertation. The sanctions model is the only one where any variable used to represent history – past alignments, recent dyadic conflict, and ongoing
alliances – does not have the hypothesized effect. That discrepancy can possibly be explained by the use of conflict variables being used to explain alignment on a vastly different type of issue. This sanction model apart, history variables were able to explain alignment in every possible context.

Past dyadic conflicts and alignments, as well as ongoing alliances, were all strong predictors of war alignment. Rulers refuse to intervene on behalf of states that they have feuded with in the recent past or with states that have aligned against them in the past. They take the opposite approach for states with whom they have a history of bilateral or multilateral cooperation. The substantive effects of these variables is considerable. When the dyadic conflict variable is at its 95th percentile, meaning that the intervener had a far more hostile relationship with state A than with state B, state A obtains positive alignment only a fifth of the time. When the history variables are set at their alignment-inducing 95th percentile or their maximum, together with the reliability variables, positive alignment takes place with a probability of 1.000. More realistically, setting the conflict and past alignment variables alone to their 95th percentile – which occurs 68 times in the war data – shows a probability of positive alignment of 0.89

The effect of the history variables is robust to numerous model specifications. These results do not appreciably change whether or not the first-stage variables are included in a two-stage model. They do not change when world wars, which make up a high portion of war alignment observations, are removed from the population of cases. The variables sustain their effect in the pre-1945 and the post-1945 sample. They also do not change whether the dependent variable is intervention into a war, a dangerous MID, a non-dangerous MID. History not only matters, but it is the primary driver of alignment.
The former Soviet Union case study in Chapter 7 demonstrated that the causal mechanism from the reciprocal alignment theory is applicable to at least some alignment cases. The Uzbek part of the case study showed that past alignments do affect decisions about present alignments; Russia’s negative alignment against Uzbekistan on the Tajik troops issue played a major role in Uzbekistan’s own negative alignment against Russia in 1999. Dyadic history played the main role in the Kyrgyz alignments, where successive Kyrgyz leaders faced no serious domestic opposition at granting military privileges to Russia because of the latter’s previous acts of cooperation.

3. Rulers align with other states because they are either repaying them for past support or because they want assistance in the future. They align against states because such a move gives them domestic support and shows everyone that their interests cannot be ignored without a cost. The latter two factors underline the importance of a state’s perceived reliability for reciprocating alignments good and bad.

State reliability is assumed to include institutional and behavioral indicators. For the former, the stability and public control over executive recruitment are used. Whether states respect their alliance commitments against any state in the system is used as the behavioral marker. The effect of the institutional variables is more straightforward, but all three variables affect alignment decisions in most of the statistical models. Representative and stable states are shown to obtain positive alignment more frequently than their unrepresentative and unstable counterparts when the outcome variable is war joining. The behavioral variable has the hypothesized effect in a probit model, but not in a Heckman model. In the probit model, the substantive effects for the variables are considerable. Given a choice between a state with a representative regime and an
unrepresentative one, an intervener sides with the former 71 percent of the time. Similarly, an intervener opts to support the more stable disputant – a state that has not only recently obtained independence and one that is not experiencing a civil war – with a probability of 0.859. When using the alliance reliability measure, based on honoring past alliances, interveners support the more reliable state 0.597 of the time.

The importance of reliability does not weaken when examining meaningful sub-samples of the population. All three variables affect the choice of sides in war alignments when world wars are excluded. The behavioral variable does fail to have a significant effect in the post-1945 period, and the stability one has the same problem in the pre-1945 era. However, the former can be explained by the waning role of formal alliances since the creation of the United Nations, and the latter is a function of the low variability in stability levels before 1945, when civil wars were rare and regimes changes even rarer. The results vary little if the dependent variable is changed. The two institutional measures of instability affect a ruler’s choice of alignment partners whether they are joining wars, dangerous MIDs, non-dangerous MIDs, or sanction regimes. The behavioral variable does not have the hypothesized effect in the non-dangerous MID model, but does in the other three. Overall, we can see that leaders think twice before using scarce resources to help states that might not do the same in the future.

The effect of reliability works in both directions: states that are not in a position to reciprocate negative alignments are likely to obtain these alignments. Operationalized as the number of rivals external to the conflict triad – reverse unreliability increases the likelihood of negative alignment in every alignment model. This holds for all sub-samples mentioned above and for all forms of alignment. The moral of this story is that
stretching yourself thin serves as an invitation to all potential enemies to join the fray. This was the case for Iran after its revolution in 1979, when its hostility to the Western world helped provoke an Iraqi invasion. It is a factor that lowered the cost of invading Israel for various Arab states because they knew Israel faced a multi-front war.

4. The unreliability part of alignment theory was premised on the assumption that states undergoing institutional changes will be less loyal to their former alignment partners. A series of cross-tabs showed that to generally be the case. Democratizing states – operationalized as states whose executive recruitment became more free in the previous five years – were at least twice as likely to turn on their alignment partners as were states that were not undergoing this process. From the subset of observations involving multiple alignments within a short period time, the largest difference was for non-dangerous MIDs. Whereas over half of the democratizing states turned on their alignment partners, the same was true for only a sixth of non-democratizing states.

5. One of the key elements of this dissertation was the introduction of an alignment measure, which uses cost and discernibility as its two axes. Some of the previous findings already incorporated the cost dimension, showing that the role of history is not limited to high-cost alignments and that states need fewer resources to participate in low-cost alignments. This was the case in the first stage of alignment models, which showed that both military and economic resources were necessary for war alignments, but only one of the two was required for less costly forms of the same phenomenon. The discernibility dimension, which indicates the clarity with which a state was aligning with a specific state or against a specific state, offers a more mixed set of results. Fourteen out of sixteen correlations were supportive of the hypothesis that states that provided
indiscernible alignment will in turn receive indiscernible alignment. The ambiguous results came from testing the determinants of discernible alignment.

Part of the problem with these tests is the lack of good proxies for the potential usefulness of an alignment partner and the potential damage that could be inflicted by the same partner. The first is operationalized in terms of alliance ties and the second in terms of relative military capabilities and the existence of a civil war. The variables have the expected effect in most, but far from all models. Encouragingly, they are statistically significant in the war models. This means that an intervener that needs another state’s future assistance will be quick to join that state in the latter’s wars, with the discernibility being denoted as the order of a state’s intervention into a dispute. Interveners who feel compelled to align in a war against a state that they have good reason to fear will make their alignment as indiscernible as possible, hoping to avoid retaliation.

The discernibility findings start becoming inconsistent when the cost of alignment falls. The presence of a military alliance does not lead to more discernible alignments in the dangerous MID and sanctions models. Likewise, military capabilities that favor the other side do not lead a less discernible negative alignment in the two MID models, at least if standard levels of significance are used for hypothesis testing. These mixed results are not entirely surprising: the concept of discernibility is a new one. What the concept means and what it entails for interstate behavior will have to be refined.

6. The reciprocal alignment theory proposed here is not the only one that attempts to explain alignment decisions. Two of the dominant competing explanations are the capability and homophily research programs. From the capability program, I test two hypotheses whose expectations are diametrically opposed to those obtained from the
reciprocal alignment theory: that states, at least those of the major power variety, align with the weaker state in a dispute and that states change their alignment partners when it is in their immediate interest to do so. The balancing hypothesis is premised on the belief that the foreign policies of powerful states are geared at preventing one of their own from becoming a hegemon, thereby dominating the entire international system.

Model 9 in Chapter 5 provided a test for the balancing hypothesis. In that model, the dependent variable was war joining, and the population of cases was restricted to those where neither disputant was more than three times stronger than the other and where the intervener was a major power. If balancing does not work in this context, it likely does not work in any context. The results were mixed for balancing and supportive of the reciprocation rationale. The balancing and past alignment variables were both statistically significant, but the substantive effect of the former paled in comparison to the latter. The weaker disputant obtained alignment roughly three-fifths of the time, which is far from the realist claims that balancing is a law of politics. On the other hand, the state on the favorable side of the 95th percentile of the past alignment variable received positive alignment nearly nine times out of ten.

Removing the lack of power preponderance and major power intervener criteria or using a less costly form of alignment as the dependent variable produced even more lopsided results. In the war model without this criteria, states were more likely to support the stronger state, though that effect was not statistically significant. When the dependent variable was joining either type of MID, the balancing variable once again did not have the effect predicted by the balancing hypothesis. The no permanent friends hypothesis did not fare any better. When given the chance to change their alignment
partner in successive disputes, rulers took that opportunity less than 10 percent of the time; it did not matter whether the alignment was for a war, a dangerous MID, or a non-dangerous MID. That outcome is not consistent with the expectations of realist theory.

7. The other explanation tested against reciprocal alignment came from the homophily research program. Democratic peace theory, which is part of that program, argues that democracies should be much less likely to face off against other democracies in military disputes than are autocracies. It is unclear whether autocracies should favor other autocracies or be indifferent over regime type. A critical test between this hypothesis and one derived from alignment theory is whether or not autocracies prefer aligning with democracies or other autocracies. Reciprocal alignment theory argues that democracies, operationalized as regimes where the executive is elected, are inherently more reliable alignment partners and are thus more likely to obtain positive alignments from all states. Democratic peace theory expects a negative or no relationship.

The results overwhelmingly support reciprocal alignment theory. When the dependent variable is alignment into a war, autocracies are significantly more likely to support democracies than they are to support fellow autocracies. The result holds whether autocracy is defined in terms of executive recruitment or the overall Polity score. In Chapter 6, I find that autocracies are more likely to support democracies than they are to support autocracies whether they are intervening in a war, a dangerous MID, or a non-dangerous MID. Alignment results are thus consistent with the democratic peace explanation only when the intervener is itself a democracy.

Even when alignment outcomes match those expected by the democratic peace theory, it is not at all certain if the latter is responsible for the former. In the Chapter 7
Case study of the former Soviet Union, the autocratic Uzbek regime aligned against the semi-democratic Russian regime on one notable occasion, and various autocratic Kyrgyz regimes have been unwilling to align against autocratic Russia. A closer examination of the alignments, however, showed that regime similarities at no point played a role in alignment decisions. The case study results suggest that balancing was also not the main reason for alignment decisions, even when balancing predicted the correct response.

8.3 Iraq and Iran Alignments

Reciprocal alignment theory provides several insights as to the workings of the alignments in the Iraqi and Iranian cases mentioned in the first chapter. First, the states providing the most troops to help the US during the Iraq War – the only US supporters to meet the Correlates of War 1,000 soldier cut-off for being war participants – were the United Kingdom and Australia. The UK was no friend of Iraq’s political leadership, and probably would have supported anyone who invaded the country. Nevertheless, the scale of Britain’s contribution would likely be far smaller if it was not aligning with a country that had helped it numerous times since the Suez debacle. Australia, unlike Britain, was more concerned with the future than the past. A settler colony in Asia, Australia has always worried about a military confrontation with a major Asian land power. As a consequence, Australia has sent troops to faraway corners of the earth to aid Britain and later the US, hoping that they will ultimately return the favor.

Second, leaders must believe their states are capable of playing a substantive role in a stake’s resolution and believe that they will have sufficient domestic support to engage in such actions. Looking at the Iranian sanctions, it is clear that both conditions are met for the countries involved. Nearly all of the European states supporting the sanctions are
part of NATO, providing their leaders cover for taking part in the dispute. The states on
the other side of the stake, including China, India, Russia, and Turkey, either have strong
cooperative ties with Iran or have found themselves on the opposite side from the US on
too many issues. States in Africa and South America, most of whom do not have deep
positive or negative ties with either disputant, have opted to stay out of the fray.

Proximity and power projection played no less of a role in the Iraq and Iran
alignments. The UK and Australia have some of the best power projection capabilities in
the world, which is why they were able to send thousands of troops to Iraq. Japan took
part in the anti-Iranian sanctions because of Japan’s large economy and considerable
reliance on imported oil. States more proximate to Iran are generally major oil producers,
and thus not in a position to influence Iran by refusing to buy its oil. Some militarily
weak countries did join the US in the war against Iraq, but their contributions were
symbolic or intended to lend the US extra legitimacy, not extra manpower.

Third, the choice of alignment partners is predicated on the dyadic history of the
intervener and each of the disputants. Saddam Hussein’s Iraq did not make many friends
after its invasion of Iran, occupation of Kuwait, constant threats against Saudi Arabia, use
of chemical weapons against the Kurds, pursuit of a clandestine nuclear program, refusal
to allow UN inspectors to do their job, refusal to accept the UN-mandated no-fly zone,
and support for Palestinian terrorism. Being on the wrong side of some of the most
salient Middle Eastern issues was extremely damaging for Iraq’s ability to obtain positive
alignment. Even states that were not friendly with the US had sufficiently poor relations
with Iraq to implicitly or explicitly support the US invasion of the country.
The reliability of Iran and Iraq as alignment partners were in considerable doubt. Both states gave overwhelming power to their leaders: Hussein in Iraq and Khamenei in Iran. Along with the power of these countries’ rulers came a lack of institutional structure for foreign policy continuity. Moreover, Iran faced a significant protest movement in 2009 and Iraq’s Hussein did not control Iraq’s Kurdish territories and ruled the rest of his country through fear. In each case, a change in leadership had a high probability of leading to a change in foreign policy. Anyone sacrificing their resources on behalf of either regime thereby risked obtaining nothing in return. In that light, the overwhelming support for the US is understandable, even from regimes that might oppose potential US hegemony or be sympathetic to authoritarian rule.

8.4 Policy Implications

Additional studies would need to be carried before definitive policy recommendations could be made on the basis of reciprocal alignment theory. Nevertheless, certain tentative recommendations could be made on the basis of the current findings. One recommendation is relevant for US-NATO relations. On the basis of the first stage of alignment theory, the US is fully justified in pressuring European states to increase their military effectiveness. The rationale is two-fold. First, increasing the number of countries with larger militaries that will never align against the US military is obviously in America’s interest. That is probably why the US undertakes this policy. There is a second reason for this policy, however. As the military capabilities of America’s allies dwindle, not only will their military contributions to NATO efforts decrease, but they will refuse to take part in military alignments at all. This would, in turn, force the US to act unilaterally, undermining the legitimacy of its actions.
Another policy implication has to do with Sino-American relations. It has recently become popular to talk about an impending military conflict between the US and China. The rhetoric is only slightly amended from the previous version, which talked of conflict between the US and Japan. The China argument has greater merit. Japan cooperated with the US on numerous economic and military issues prior to Japan’s rapid economic growth. Though there was some domestic support for reducing military cooperation with the US, Japanese leaders would find virtually no support for a costly alignment against the US. In contrast, US-Chinese relations have been mixed. High trade volumes have been coupled with arguments about Chinese dumping of goods on the American market and Chinese currency manipulation. The Korean issue has seen agreements and disagreements between the two states, depending on the specific stake.

The question is how the US should react to China’s increasingly aggressive policy toward its territorial disputes with its neighbors if the United States does not want to end up on the negative side of Chinese alignments for the foreseeable future. There are a few options, some more viable than others. One response is to listen to Chinese officials and stay out of these disputes or at least make the intervention indiscernible. In this manner, a difference in preferences will not generate anti-American hostility within China and would not pressure China into retaliating in order to save face internationally. Another solution would be for the US to attempt to decrease the salience of these territorial issues in favor of economic issues or those relating to North Korea. If China gains new foreign policy priorities, it will be less concerned with being opposed on less salient issues.

The clearest policy recommendations are based on the reliability findings. A state like Russia should strongly reconsider its support for the unstable and unrepresentative
Syrian regime. Not only does Russia risk being punished by Syria for its current policies if the latter ever gets a regime change, but it might end up with the same consequences even if Assad remains the power. The reason is that a foreign policy change would be one of the few foreign policy concessions that Assad would be willing to make to the Syrian rebels in exchange for an end to their rebellion. The United States face an opposite set of incentives. Its relations with the current Syrian leadership are based on such intense hostility that there is little prospect of those relations ever being mended. On the other hand, a new Syrian regime, whether it owes its creation to the US or not, will be one that starts with a relatively blank slate in its foreign relations. That would provide an opportunity for the US to develop cooperative relations with the new Syria.

8.5 Future Research

This dissertation points to several paths for future research. One direction would be to reduce the distance between the theoretical claims and how they are tested. Using leader-related variables instead of just state-related ones would be one step in that direction. This could be coupled with domestic-level variables that gauge the level of constraints faced by that leader in making foreign policy. The obstacle would be to match the specific timing of a leader’s tenure with disputes that took place during their tenure. There is a large potential for error for disputes whose start date is not clear and for countries where the leadership situation is uncertain. The resulting data might be systematically biased due to the accuracy of Western data compared to non-Western data.

Furthermore, some of the variables used in this dissertation are indirect indicators of the concepts they are meant to measure. Some concepts, like issue salience, could not be operationalized at all. There is a great potential for improving confidence in the
empirical results by resolving these problems. Based on the issue paradigm, there is
every reason to think that the effect of the main variables is conditional on the issue
salience of the particular stake. A failure to find an adequate proxy for this variable
likely created artificial noise and made the findings weaker than they otherwise would be.

Another productive path for future research would be to create theoretical and
empirical extensions for the reciprocal alignment theory. There are many implications of
the theory that could not be tested here due to space constraints. For instance, if the
perception of reliability affects the ability of leaders to obtain alignment, are rulers who
know they will need future assistance willing to implement significant political reforms?
Could leaders cheat the system by forming cooperative ties with states shortly before they
get embroiled in a dispute or is a lengthy period of cooperation necessary before the
rulers of other states can justify joining someone else’s conflicts? Does the willingness
of a ruler to reciprocate past alignments decrease if his expected tenure in office is brief?

There is room for improving the alignment measure. It might be possible to create
a continuous measure for both the cost and discernibility dimensions of that measure by
creating theoretically justified and replicable criteria. That would allow one to test the
alignment hypotheses in one composite dataset. The discernibility dimension has a great
deal of potential. We know that Israel sabotages Iranian nuclear reactors, China allows
hackers to attack American military contractors and businesses, and Russia provides all
kinds of military equipment to the Syrian regime. Yet by not verifying that they are
responsible, the states are able to leverage the plausible deniability into avoiding severe
retaliation. The causal mechanism for this phenomenon needs to be better examined.
Lastly, alignment is defined in terms of cooperation and conflict. This dissertation emphasized the conflict dimension, but the cooperation one is no less important. An important task would be to systematically examine cooperative acts of alignment. For reciprocal alignment theory to hold, the factors that make positive alignment more likely must be similar to the ones that make negative alignment less likely. The difficulty is establishing what the alternatives to specific acts of cooperation were given that alignment requires a dispute over how a stake should be resolved. It is not clear what that dispute is when two countries sign a trade agreement. A theoretically and empirically convincing answer to this question would improve confidence in alignment theory.

* * *

Theory about the correlates of alignment has fallen out of favor along with the realist framework that first gave rise to it. Much of the research that deals with alignment does so in a fragmented manner, addressing one form of alignment in isolation from other pertinent research. This dissertation is intended to demonstrate the utility of shifting in the opposite direction, seeking to combine the many insights from the existing literature into a coherent, empirically-supported story. That story starts with the importance of reciprocation in international affairs, highlighting the frequent dependence rulers face on their foreign counterparts in obtaining important objectives. It then moves on to the consequences of perceived unreliability of potential alignment partners, based as much on the actions of those countries’ leaders as on the institutional characteristics of their states. It concludes by pointing out what is similar among all alignments, while simultaneously using an alignment measure to underline areas where they differ. Yet, it is only the first part of the story, and much more is yet to be written on the determinants of alignment.
Bibliography


Eurasian Daily Monitor, April 3.


Appendix A – No Permanent Friends

Below is a list of major powers that took part in a multi-party war on the same side as at least one other country. The note part of the table mentions whether that major power ended up turning on that other country in another war within a 20-year period. The purpose of this table is to show that no major power fought on the side of one country in one war, and against that country in a future war while siding with a former enemy. The table provides evidence against the realist contention that states have no qualms with betraying their allies or backing their former enemies if it is in their interest.

Table A.1. List of Major Powers with Opportunity to Change Sides in Proximate Wars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Power</th>
<th>War Year</th>
<th>Alignment Partners</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Sardinia, Tuscany, Modena</td>
<td>Aligned against Sardinia in 1859, but not on side of former enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Austria, Two Sicilies</td>
<td>Aligned against Austria in 1859, but not on side of former enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>France, Two Sicilies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>France, Two Sicilies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Sardinia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Aligned against Austria in 1866, but not on side of former enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Aligned against Germany in 1866, but not on side of former enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Italy, Mecklenburg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Germany, Mecklenburg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Most German minors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Baden, Bavaria, Wurttemberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Japan, US, UK, France</td>
<td>All fought on same side in WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Russia, US, UK, France</td>
<td>All fought on same side in WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Russia, Japan, UK, France</td>
<td>All fought on same side in WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Russia, Japan, US, France</td>
<td>All fought on same side in WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Japan, US, UK, France</td>
<td>All fought on same side in WWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, UK, Japan, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, France, Italy, US</td>
<td>No major power wars for more than 20 years after World War I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, Russia, Japan, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, France, Italy, US</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, UK, Russia, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, France, Italy, US</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Austria, Turkey, Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, UK, Japan, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, Russia, Italy, US</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, UK, Japan, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, France, Russia, US</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, UK, Japan, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Romania, France, Italy, Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Germany, Japan, Hungary, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Italy, Japan, Hungary, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Germany, Italy, Hungary, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>France, USSR, US, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Norway, Canada, Netherlands, Greece, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Mongolia, China, South Africa, Ethiopia</td>
<td>Party to the Korean War before Chinese intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>UK, USSR, US, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Norway, Canada, Netherlands, Greece, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Mongolia, China, South Africa, Ethiopia</td>
<td>Aligned against China in 1951, but not on side of former enemy. China is also not a major power in World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>France, UK, US, Yugoslavia, Canada, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia, China, South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>France, UK, USSR, Yugoslavia, Canada, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia, China, South Africa</td>
<td>Party to the Korean War before Chinese intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
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