European Journal of International Security (2023), **8,** 395–412
doi:10.1017/eis.2023.3

EJIS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Arms for influence? The limits of Great Power leverage

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(Received 14 September 2021; revised 11 January 2023; accepted 17 January 2023)

Abstract

Scholars and policymakers agree that major powers have leverage over their more junior partners. Giving security assistance or providing arms is supposed to increase this leverage. However, major powers often hit roadblocks when trying to influence the behaviour of their junior partners. This article demonstrates that junior partners are often successful in constraining the behaviour of the major power partners, and have particular success in extracting additional resources from their major partners. This article develops the concept of loyalty coercion to explain that leverage is based on rhetorical and symbolic moves, rather than material preponderance. It then uses cases of US arms sales to show that weapons transfers did not lead to US leverage, instead opened opportunities for junior partner influence. The article contributes to scholarly and policy perspectives on alliance management and reputation, and leverage in world politics.

Keywords: Alliances; Arms Trade; Leverage; Great Powers

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, then US President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of US troops from Germany. Many European leaders were surprised and confused by the move, especially since Germany has been such an important post-1945 ally for the United States. Reacting to the announcement, the German ambassador to the US emphasised Germany's track record and performance, stating 'Germany is a steadfast NATO ally and third largest contributor to its budget.'[1] A top parliamentary leader said that the US decision was not reflective of good allyship: 'The plans show that the Trump administration is neglecting an elementary tasks of leadership, to bind coalition partners into decision-making processes.'[2] A senior advisor to Chancellor Angela Merkel called the decision 'completely unacceptable'.[3] Within the US, policymakers from both parties said the move was surprising and not in keeping with the alliance relationship. Mitt Romney, a republican,

[1]Julian Borger, 'US to pull 12,000 troops out of Germany as Trump blasts "delinquent" Berlin', *The Guardian* (29 July 2020), sec. US news, available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/29/us-germany-troop-withdrawal-donald-trump}.

[2]Philip Oltermann, '"Regrettable": Germany reacts to Trump plan to withdraw US troops', *The Guardian* (6 June 2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/06/regrettable-germany-reacts-to-trump-plan-to-withdraw-us-troops}.

[3]'U.S. decision to withdraw troops from Germany "unacceptable" – Merkel Ally', *Reuters* (8 June 2020), available at: {https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-germany-military-beyer-idUSKBN23F0MA}.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3 Published online by Cambridge University Press

said it was 'a slap in the face at a friend and ally', while democratic senator Bob Menendez said it was 'an affront to one of our closest allies'.[4]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, President Joe Biden, who is much more interested in US engagement and reputation with allies, put a pause to the troop withdrawal. Biden, like many others, saw the US troops in Europe as a cornerstone of allyship and of the post-Second World War order.[5] German and other European officials welcomed the pause, and a return to normal relations within the alliance.[6]

Why was the reaction to changes in US troop levels so strong? And why, despite evidence that current troop levels are unnecessary, did Biden listen to the concerns of the European allies and stop the withdrawal?[7] After all, the United States could have used the troops elsewhere, and there were no immediate security issues that Germany would have been vulnerable to. Biden seems to have listened to calls to return to more normal relations and a sense of common purpose with this important, long-term ally.[8]

This article focuses on the ways in which claims of alliance mistreatment can constrain the policy options of their more powerful partners. While withdrawing troops would not have harmed or posed an existential threat to Germany, and might ultimately have been in US interest, Germany's claims of surprise and that it was being treated poorly weighed on the US, ultimately pushing it to reconsider. This is not uncommon: major powers are sensitive to their reputations of good allyship, and often take steps to avoid or mitigate criticism about their behaviour. Junior partners regularly make, and are often successful in, extracting greater amounts of resources from their major power partners. Contrary to popular wisdom, I argue that security assistance rarely gives major powers leverage over their junior partner allies. Instead, junior partners have leverage because their major power partners care about their reputations for being a good ally, and fear the broader alliance consequences of dissatisfied junior partners claiming mistreatment. While smaller states always fear abandonment, junior partners who can emphasise their loyalty and closeness to the major partner can draw contrast between their behaviour and their treatment by the major power. This type of leverage – what I call loyalty coercion – is rhetorical and does not come from the junior partner's ability to withhold or grant something of material value, such as basing rights, UN votes, or contributions to multilateral military campaigns. Contrary to popular belief, materially powerful states are not often able to do what they want; their choices are often shaped by the words and deeds of the junior partners.

Junior partner leverage is a crucial, yet often missing, explanation of international political behaviour. It departs from existing work on intra-alliance management by showing that the currency of bargaining is rhetorical and symbolic, and that the domain of contestation is reputation. Drawing on archival research at the US National Archives and Presidential Libraries, this article proposes a theory that shows how loyalty coercion affects the conversations policymakers have, the options they consider, and ultimately the paths they decide to take. This article highlights

[4]Nicole Gaouette and Ryan Browne, 'Trump's decision to move troops from Germany slammed as "a gift to Putin"', *CNN* (29 July 2020), available at: {https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/29/politics/us-troops-germany-criticism/index.html}; 'Menendez statement on Trump's dangerous troop withdrawal from Germany' (29 July 2020), available at: {https://www.menendez.senate.gov/newsroom/press/menendez-statement-on-trumps-dangerous-troop-withdrawal-from-germany}.

[5]Helene Cooper, 'Biden freezes Trump's withdrawal of 12,000 troops from Germany', *The New York Times* (4 February 2021), sec. US, available at: {https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/04/us/politics/biden-germany-troops-trump.html}.

[6]Lolita Baldor, 'Biden halts Trump-ordered US troops cuts in Germany', *AP NEWS* (29 April 2021), sec. Donald Trump, available at: {https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-donald-trump-military-facilities-europe-lloyd-austin-ff57f288a1bb3e5a38e3253ea0b94d80}.

[7]Borger, 'US to pull 12,000 troops out of Germany as Trump blasts "delinquent" Berlin'; 'US to withdraw 12,000 troops from Germany in "strategic" move', *BBC News* (29 July 2020), sec. US & Canada, available at: {https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53589245}.

[8]Sebastian Sprenger, 'Some German officials hope Biden will reverse US troop drawdown', *Defense News* (9 November 2020), sec. Europe, available at: {https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2020/11/09/some-german-officials-hope-biden-will-revert-us-troop-drawdown/}.

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the consequences of forming and alliances or partnerships. The status quo, it turns out, requires significant effort to maintain.[9]

To explain how and when junior partners' use loyalty coercion against their major power partners, this article proceeds as follows. First, I contextualise loyalty coercion by discussing leverage, loyalty, and reputation within alliances. Next, I explain the concept of loyalty coercion, and propose conditions under which states are likely to use this mechanism to extract greater resources from their major power partners. In the third section, I demonstrate junior partner use of loyalty coercion through two Cold War cases: Taiwan's successful uses of loyalty coercion against the US and Pakistan's unsuccessful attempts to use it. I show that states that can rhetorically lay claim to loyalty and friendship are able to constrain US policy behaviour and extract greater quantities and qualities of arms from the United States. I conclude by summariding the findings and explaining their implications for theory and policy.

Leverage, loyalty, and reputation within alliances

Alliances are all about management: they are not static relationships that are created and then continue to exist without much need for maintenance or upkeep. Nor are alliances about perfect, or even mostly perfect, alignment of interests and goals. Scholarship on alliances has tended to focus on the formation, dissolution, or performance during crisis of an alliance.[10] We know much less about the ways that states manage the associative-antagonistic aspects of their alliances.[11] This section provides an overview of existing work on leverage within alliances, and discusses why and when states care about being a 'good ally'.

Most scholars and policymakers believe that when there is conflict between allies, the more powerful state will have leverage over its junior partner.[12] Some argue this is because by joining an alliance the less materially powerful state relinquishes autonomy in exchange for security when it joins an alliance.[13] For example, Victor Cha argues that the United States exercised 'near total control' over its Asian allies and was able to leverage the allies' dependence on the US to increase this control.[14] Major powers also have leverage because they provide things that the junior partner desires. Various forms of security assistance and/or aid is supposed to encourage the junior partner to behave in the manner the major power desires or else risk access to this aid.[15]

[9]Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in the International System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[10]See, for example, Brett Ashley Leeds and Sezi Anac, 'Alliance institutionalization and alliance performance', *International Interactions*, 31 (July 2005), pp. 183–202, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620500294135}; Brett Ashley Leeds and Burcu Savun, 'Terminating alliances: Why do states abrogate agreements?', *Journal of Politics*, 69 (2007), pp. 1118–32; Mark J. C. Crescenzi et al., 'Reliability, reputation, and alliance formation', *International Studies Quarterly*, 56:2 (1 June 2012), pp. 259–74, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00711.x}; Douglas M. Gibler, 'The costs of reneging: Reputation and alliance formation', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52 (2008), pp. 426–54; James D. Morrow, 'Alliances and asymmetry: An alternative to the capability aggregation model of alliances', *American Journal of Political Science* (1991), pp. 904–33; Stephen M. Walt, 'Alliances in a unipolar world', *World Politics*, 61:1 (2009), pp. 86–120; Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[11]Paul W. Schroeder, 'Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of power and tools of management', in Klaus Knorr (ed.), *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1976), p. 257.

[12]I share Jeremy Pressman's definitions of alliances as a relationship that does not require a formal written agreement, but that includes the expectation of continuing ties. See Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 5.

[13]Morrow, 'Alliances and asymmetry'; see also Douglas Gibler and Toby Rider, 'Prior commitments: Compatible interests versus capabilities in alliance behavior', *International Interactions*, 30 (1 October 2004), pp. 309–29, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620490883985}.

[14]Victor D. Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 3, 26.

[15]See, for example, Marina E. Henke, 'Buying allies: Payment practices in multilateral military coalition-building', *International Security*, 43:4 (2019), pp. 128–62; Patrick M. Regan, 'US economic aid and political repression: An empirical evaluation of US foreign policy', *Political Research Quarterly*, 48:3 (1995), pp. 613–28; Karl Derouen and Uk Heo, 'Reward,

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Despite the oft-repeated refrain that materially powerful states have leverage over their major power partners, there is little empirical evidence to support this. Marina E. Henke notes that in military coalitions, relatively weak states can dominate negotiations because their participation is crucial to maintaining the great power's coalition.[16] As Patricia L. Sullivan, Brock F. Tessman, and Xiaojun Li summarise:

> The literature to date is characterized by diverse findings in regard to the connection between military aid and recipient country behavior. Results depend on a number of factors, including the type of aid that is being analyzed (economic aid, military aid, arms transfers) and the recipient state behavior of interest (UN vote compliance, democratization, foreign policy belligerence, and human rights practice).[17]

There is brief acknowledgement that leverage within alliances can run in the opposite direction. Most notably, Keohane discusses the influence of small allies, who can take advantage of the US commitment to preventing falling dominoes.[18] He says that junior partners ought to assume the role of loyal ally, which gives them the ability to criticise their major power partner and extract greater resources without threatening the continued existence of the alliance.[19] What the literature does agree on is that major powers want to cultivate a reputation – for reliability and/or loyalty – in order to keep states tied to them and to present an attractive alignment option for other states.[20] Iain Henry provides a useful post-Cold War update to Keohane's focus on loyalty, pointing out that developments in one alliance can affect the reliability perceptions and behaviour of other allies.[21]

The existence of junior partner leverage introduces the importance of audiences, loyalty, and reputation to intra-alliance bargaining and alliance management. Crucially, it suggests that states care about what (certain) other states think of them, and that rhetorical and symbolic moves matter for a state's alliance prospects.

A theory of loyalty coercion

Loyalty coercion is form of alliance management that leverages major powers' concern about their reputation as a good ally. Loyalty coercion occurs when a junior partner creates a narrative that it is being abandoned or mistreated by its major power partner. Junior partners use loyalty coercion to manage up, and to extract additional resources beyond what the major power would otherwise like to provide. It is a way for junior partners to say to the major power: changing your relationship with us will have negative side effects for the faith other partners place in their alliance with you. To minimise, or in some cases even forestall, these claims, the major power will provide additional resources to the junior partner. Providing resources, especially in the form of conventional arms transfers, is one way to create alternate facts on the ground to push back against claims of mistreatment.

punishment or inducement? US economic and military aid, 1946–1996', *Defence and Peace Economics*, 15:5 (2004), pp. 453–70; Glenn Palmer, Scott B. Wohlander, and T. Clifton Morgan, 'Give or take: Foreign aid and foreign policy substitutability', *Journal of Peace Research*, 39:1 (2002), pp. 5–26.

[16]Henke, 'Buying allies', p. 156.

[17]Patricia L. Sullivan, Brock F. Tessman, and Xiaojun Li, 'US military aid and recipient state cooperation', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7:3 (2011), p. 278.

[18]Robert O. Keohane, 'The big influence of small allies', *Foreign Policy*, 2 (1971), p. 163, available at: {https://doi.org/10.2307/1147864}.

[19]Ibid., p. 170.

[20]Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 54; Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 432.

[21]Iain D Henry, 'What allies want: Reconsidering loyalty, reliability, and alliance interdependence', *International Security*, 44:4 (2020), p. 48; see also Gregory D. Miller, *The Shadow of the Past: Reputation and Military Alliances before the First World War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

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All junior partners can attempt to use loyalty coercion; the conditions that make loyalty coercion more likely to succeed are addressed at the end of this section. Loyalty coercion attempts can happen when two conditions are met: (1) the major power believes its commitments are interconnected; and (2) there is a relevant audience to receive and react to the junior partner's claims. I explain each of these in turn.

First, loyalty coercion requires that the major power care about its reputation for being a good ally. There has been a vibrant debate in the literature about whether or not states have reputations and if those reputations matter.[22] Reputation supporters, and policymakers, believe that commitments are interconnected and that what a state does with respect to one ally will affect their relations with other allies.[23] States want to know that their alliance partners are reliable and will uphold their commitments and not work against their allies. This is the logic behind the domino theory: the US had to intervene in Vietnam to prove it would defend Bonn.[24] As Glenn Snyder explained, states have an interest in 'fostering a certain image of oneself in the mind of the ally'.[25] Even if scholars continue to debate the existence of reputation, policymakers frequently make reference to their alliance reputation and express concern that interactions with one ally will affect interactions with other allies. In the words of President Dwight Eisenhower, 'You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly.'[26] The perceived interconnectedness believed by policymakers means we must treat it seriously.[27]

Because loyalty coercion is exercised rhetorically, there must be a relevant audience to receive the junior partner's claims. Without a relevant audience, the major power can ignore any protestations about mistreatment with little worry about consequences.[28] This means that the specific manifestations of loyalty coercion will vary based on the audience. For example, if the junior partner is targeting the major partner's other allies, its loyalty coercion will emphasise the fears of abandonment and/or mistreatment. The goal is to stoke fears, by saying that what is happening to this junior partner could happen to the other allies. There will be variation here, too, depending on how the junior partner is ranked within the major power's alliance hierarchy. A peripheral ally is unlikely to be able to make claims that resonate with core allies.[29] Allies that see themselves as close

[22]Mercer, for example, suggests that allies see desired behaviour situationally, and undesired behaviour dispositionally, making alliance reputation an impossible venture. See Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 227; On reputation more generally, see Henry, 'What allies want'; Daryl Grayson Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Danielle L. Lupton, 'Signaling resolve: Leaders, reputations, and the importance of early interactions', *International Interactions*, 44:1 (2018), pp. 59–87; Mark J. C. Crescenzi, Jacob D. Kathman, and Stephen B. Long, 'Reputation, history, and war', *Journal of Peace Research*, 44 (2007), pp. 651–67; Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1974).

[23]Robert Jervis, *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 252; Henry, 'What allies want', p. 48.

[24]Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 23; Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer Spindel, 'Divided priorities: Why and when allies differ over military intervention', *Security Studies*, 27:4 (2018), pp. 575–606.

[25]Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 54.

[26]The President's News Conference, American Presidency Project (7 April 1954), available at: {http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/}.

[27]Jervis, *System Effects*, p. 24.

[28]Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, 'Twisting tongues and twisting arms: The power of political rhetoric', *European Journal of International Relations*, 13:1 (1 March 2007), p. 43, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066107074284}.

[29]Determining if a state is a core ally or a peripheral one often relies on perceptions of self and other. As Snyder (1961) explained, an ally considers another to be a core ally if it holds 'intrinsic value'. Intrinsic values can include countries for which a state feels cultural or 'psychic affinity', economic values, and moral values. Core allies tend to have shared strategic interests, including general approaches to foreign policy and views on world order. See Glenn Herald Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 32–41; Schroeder, 'Alliances, 1815–1945', pp. 256–7; Krebs and Spindel, 'Divided priorities', pp. 581–2.

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to and crucial in the major power's partners will have less concern about the treatment of allies that it sees as distant and sharing fewer interests. For example, Israel in the 1960s wanted to be seen as a core US ally, and tried to make claims that would resonate with the European allies. Israeli leaders frequently referenced their 'special relationship' with the United States, a direct reference to the US-UK special relationship.[30] The US noted that Israel was trying to project 'the image of a de facto alliance' with the United States by noting the similarities between it and the European allies.[31] However, the European allies did not at all see their fate represented in the US-Israel relationship, and in fact saw Israel as their own junior partner that they could sell arms to.[32]

A core ally, on the other hand, can make claims that will strike fear in both core and peripheral allies. After all, if the major power is mistreating its core allies, what hope is there for those on the periphery? These concerns were evident in US discussions about reducing security assistance to West Germany in the 1960s. The US was concerned that West Germany would claim abandonment, and that the other European allies would have a loss of confidence in the future, and would feel 'they cannot rely on the Americans for their defense for the long range'.[33] Claims of mistreatment from West Germany were much more worrying, coming as they would be from a core ally, than claims of mistreatment from Israel.

If the junior partner does not believe its claims will resonate with other allies, it might make rhetorical pleas that resonate with adversaries. The overarching message would be to say that junior partner is being mistreated or ignored, and is open to realignment. The junior partner would hope that the possibility of realignment would be a blow to the major power, and would cause the major power to provide it with additional resources. Jordan played to these concerns in the mid-1960s. King Hussein felt like he was second fiddle to Israel, and often raised the prospect of accepting Soviet weapons in his conversations with US officials. The US felt that Jordan was 'genuinely pro-West', but that arming Jordan would complicate the relationship with Israel.[34] But the US was so concerned about losing Jordan to the Soviet sphere, that it felt it had to arm Jordan or else it would signal to the Soviet Union that Jordan could be turned.[35] The US was concerned that *not* arming Jordan would 'have a significant effect on the credibility of our positions'.[36] In other words, loyalty coercion directed towards adversaries is a messier and longer chain of events, but can still generate concerns within the major power about how it is perceived by allies and adversaries.

While all states can make loyalty coercion attempts, not all states will be successful in extracting additional resources from the major power. Whether or not loyalty coercion is successful depends on the past behaviour of the junior partner. Junior partners with a track record of cooperation and good alliance behaviour to point to are more likely to be successful than junior partners that have misbehaved. An ally can hardly claim mistreatment if it has, itself, worked against its major partner or repeated proved uncooperative. Junior partners that are very loyal will have a greater likelihood of success than allies that have done the bare minimum in the alliance. What does good

[30]National Security File, Country File – Israel, Box 140, Folder 3 LBJ, Saunders, Memorandum for Rostow, 7 April 1967, 'The Real Problem in US-Israeli Relations'; Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the US-Israel Alliance* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 183.

[31]National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 31, Folder 3, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (LBJ), NSC Standing Group, Record of Meeting No. 3/64, 28 April 1964, p. 2, emphasis in original.

[32]See, for example, National Security File, Country File – Israel, Box 141, Folder 3, LBJ, Review of Proposed PL 480 Agreement with Israel, January 1968, p. 1; RG 59, Box 1603, Folder DEF 12 Near E 1/1/67, USNA, Research Memorandum RM-14, 'French Arms Activity in the Middle East', 11 March 1969.

[33]RG 59, Subject Files 1962–1966, Box 1, MC Disclosure Policy, General Files to Travel Restrictions in Soviet Bloc, USNA, Memorandum Bonn to State, 17 February 1966, pp. 2–3.

[34]National Security File, Country File – Israel, Box 145 (2/2), Folder 1, LBJ, Dean Rusk, Memorandum for the President, 19 February 1965, 'Near East Arms', p. 4.

[35]National Security File, Country File – Israel, Box 145 (2/2), Folder 1, LBJ, Dean Rusk, Memorandum for the President, 19 February 1965, 'Near East Arms', p. 3; National Security File, Country File – Israel, Box 145 (1/2), Folder 7, LBJ, Johnson, 'President's Instruction for Feldman-Sloan Mission', 15 May 1964, p. 2.

[36]National Security File, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 31, Folder 6, LBJ, Staff Study, 'Jordanian Request for Supersonics', 1966, p. 7.

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behaviour look like in the context of an alliance? At a bare minimum, allies do not work against the stated wishes of their partners. This can manifest in different ways, and could mean voting similarly in international organisations, deciding not to pursue a conflict, or both speaking out against the actions of a third state. At the bare minimum, allies should consult one another to avoid surprises, especially on issues of vital interest to their ally. Similar to Snyder's alliance halo, there is an obligation to, at the very least, avoid damaging the interests of the ally.[37] At higher levels of good behaviour, we will see more coordinated policy actions and statements. This could mean backing the actions of your ally, even if you don't have a strong of an interest in the issue. It might also mean joining in a military coalition, or offering troops or other materiel to the ally's war effort. States that undertake these higher levels of alliance cooperation will have a greater likelihood of loyalty coercion success, because they can point to their strong track record of cooperation, and use it to bolster their rhetorical claims of mistreatment.

Loyalty coercion can be used on its own, or in combination with other coercive attempts. For example, states that are of geostrategic interest to the major power can combine loyalty coercion with reminders of their material or instrumental value. Consider the US relationship with Saudi Arabia. US interests in Saudi Arabia have constrained its response to the Saudi-led war in Yemen, even after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi embassy in Turkey in 2018.[38] It is tempting to see Saudi interest in purchasing S-400 missile defence systems from Russia as pure alignment coercion: Saudi Arabia threatens to turn to Russia to stoke fears within the US and extract greater resources in turn. But Saudi Arabia used loyalty coercion alongside the more instrumental geostrategic coercion. A Saudi official explained that negotiations with Russia were due to mistreatment by the US, including the Biden administration's 'defiance of Saudi Arabia' and 'display of disinterest in the region's concerns'.[39] Important junior partners including Qatar and India expressed interest in receiving support from Russia after they saw Saudi Arabia enter negotiations with Russia. Even when states can point to their significant strategic value, they can find greater leverage by rhetorically leaning-in to loyalty coercion.

Major powers have two options in response to loyalty coercion attempts. First, the major power can engage on the same rhetorical grounds in a framing contest with the junior partner.[40] The major power can push back against claims of abandonment or mistreatment by trying to explain or give additional context to its actions. The goal is to reframe the narrative and show that it is not a disloyal or uninterested partner; the views of the relevant audience are the prize of this competition. For example, when the United States decided to reduce security assistance to allies in the latter half of the Cold War, it tried to preempt any uses of loyalty coercion by explaining that there was a general reduction in US security assistance worldwide, rather than reductions targeted at specific allies.[41] Its goal was to preempt narratives of mistreatment by providing context about changes to security assistance. When successful, the major power will have convinced the relevant audience that it remains reliable and faithful; when unsuccessful, other junior partners will start to re-evaluate their relationship with the major power, and might seek additional resources as proof of major power interest.

The second option for the major power is to take actions that change the facts on the ground. Taking actions to counter the narrative could include sending arms, engaging in joint military

[37]Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 356–9; See also Schroeder, 'Alliances, 1815–1945', p. 227.

[38]Helene Cooper, 'US blocks arms sale to Saudi Arabia amid concerns over Yemen war', *The New York Times* (13 December 2016), available at: {https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/13/us/politics/saudi-arabia-arms-sale-yemen-war.html}; Christopher M. Blanchard, 'Saudi Arabia: Background and US Relations' (Congressional Research Service, 29 April 2015); Mark Landler, 'In extraordinary statement, Trump stands with Saudis despite Khashoggi killing', *The New York Times* (20 November 2018), available at: {https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/20/world/middleeast/trump-saudi-khashoggi.html}.

[39]'Lavrov in Saudi Arabia to take advantage of Biden's mistakes', *The Arab Weekly* (10 March 2021), available at: {https://thearabweekly.com/lavrov-saudi-arabia-take-advantage-bidens-mistakes}.

[40]Krebs and Jackson, 'Twisting tongues and twisting arms'.

[41]Entry A1(5412), Container 6, Folder DEF 19 1969, USNA, Speech by General Ciccolella to Taiwan military commanders, 16 September 1969, p. 2.

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exercises, diplomatic visits, or other actions that would demonstrate reliability and continued partnership with the junior partner.[42] These options are not mutually exclusive, and major powers will often pursue both. Empirically, loyalty coercion should result in a change in the major power's behaviour: it will explain or justify its actions in an attempt to win the framing contest, or (and) it will seek to change the facts on the ground to limit the junior partner's ability to claim mistreatment.

Loyalty coercion and arms transfers

Arms transfers are a useful tool for analysing intra-alliance behaviour for three reasons. First, states see arms sales as 'an important tool that states can use to exercise their influence'.[43] The logic is that the major power provides the arms in return for the junior partner modifying their behaviour or acting in a particular way. As former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance explained, arms transfers provide 'leverage and influence' within the friendly state receiving the weapon.[44] Arms transfers are a hard case for loyalty coercion, because major powers can threaten to cut off the supply of arms, thus damaging the junior partner's military capabilities. In the words of Lockheed Martin's Vice President, 'When you buy an airplane, you also buy a supplier and a supply line; in other words, you buy a political partner.'[45] Thus, the logic of leverage holds, junior partners should bend to the will of their major power partners or else jeopardise their supply of crucial parts. The need for continued arms and parts and maintenance means that there are multiple points of leverage a major power should be able to exploit. To see the reverse – junior partners successfully demanding better and/or greater quantities of arms – is a puzzle for existing literature, and suggests that junior partners can exercise coercion.

Second, all major powers engage in arms transfers, so using them as a window into loyalty coercion means that the theory is not restricted to one particular major power. The US, for example, has provided more than $204 billion for security assistance and cooperation programmes since 2006.[46] Foreign military financing, through which states can purchase US weapons at attractive credit rates, accounted for 68 per cent of this spending. Although I use the United States as the major power in the case studies that follow, the US is not unique in its sales of arms or the purposes to which it puts them. Like the US, Russia offers security assistance and arms aid to friendly countries, such as its 2017, $1 billion deal with Lebanon for interest-free arms purchases.[47] Russia is the second-largest exporter of conventional arms, followed by France, China, and Germany.[48]

[42] Marina G. Duque, 'Recognizing international status: A relational approach', *International Studies Quarterly*, 62:3 (2018), pp. 577–92.

[43] Clayton Thomas et al., 'Arms Sales in the Middle East: Trends and Analytical Perspectives for US Policy' (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 23 November 2020), p. i. On arms transfers as tools of leverage, see also Keith Krause, 'Military statecraft: Power and influence in Soviet and American arms transfer relationships', *International Studies Quarterly* (1991), p. 314; see also John Sislin, 'Arms as influence: The determinants of successful influence', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 38:4 (1994), pp. 665–89; Barry M. Blechman, 'The impact of Israel's reprisals on behavior of the bordering Arab nation diirected at Israel', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 16:2 (1972), pp. 155–81; Spencer Willardson, 'Under the Influence Of Arms: The Foreign Policy Causes and Consequences of Arms Transfers', Theses and Dissertations (1 January 2013); Andrew J. Pierre, 'Arms sales: The new diplomacy', *Foreign Affairs*, 60 (1982), p. 266; Herbert C. Kemp, 'Left of Launch: Countering Theater Ballistic Missiles' (Atlantic Council, 31 July 2017), available at: {https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/left-of-launch}.

[44] Quoted in Paul Y. Hammond, *The Reluctant Supplier: U.S. Decisionmaking for Arms Sales* (Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1983), p. 33.

[45] Quoted in Scott C. Gover, 'US Security Assistance to Egypt: A Source of Influence or Illusion' (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1996), p. 28.

[46] Susan B. Epstein and Liana W. Rosen, 'US Security Assistance and Security Cooperation Programs: Overview of Funding Trends' (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018).

[47] Anna Borshchevskaya and Hanin Ghaddar, 'How to Read Lebanon's Acceptance of Russian Military Aid', The Washington Institute (7 December 2018), available at: {https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-read-lebanons-acceptance-russian-military-aid}.

[48] Pieter Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova, and Siemon Wezeman, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2021', SIPRI (March 2022), available at: {https://www.sipri.org/publications/2022/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2021}.

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Finally, there are a number of plausible, alliance-focused explanations of arms sales that allow me to compare loyalty coercion to alternate explanations. Many suggest that states sell arms to allies for reasons of interoperability and to coordinate arsenals.[49] This makes intuitive sense: states sell arms to friends they might fight alongside. Another reason to sell arms is to boost the military capabilities of friends and allies, perhaps decreasing the need for the major power to step in and come to its friend's aid. States might also sell arms to allies as part of a quid pro quo, where the arms are given in instrumental exchange for something else, such as basing rights or transit permissions.[50] These alternate explanations mean that we need to understand the reasons and rationales behind arms transfers.[51]

Major powers provide other types of aid, also with the intention of exercising leverage over the junior partner.[52] While economic aid, food aid, or general military aid are also forms of aid for leverage, arms transfers are the most useful tool for examining the theory of loyalty coercion. Arms transfers give the junior partner independent military capability. Even when states put restrictions on the arms they sell – such as asking that the arms not be used in a particular location or against a certain adversary – the junior partner can choose to ignore that restriction and use the arms as they wish. This makes arms aid different than other types of aid because it results in an immediate change to the junior partner's military capabilities. Therefore, extracting additional arms as the result of loyalty coercion should be a hard task: states are generally cautious in giving independent military capabilities to others, especially to potentially misbehaving junior allies. By the same token, though, sending arms is a tangible and visible way to dispute claims of alliance mistreatment. It is much easier for the major power to point to a squadron of fighter jets than it is to make vague reference to bank transfers or money provided. Responding to loyalty coercion with additional arms transfers can therefore be a clear and unambiguous way for the major power to try to refute claims of alliance mistreatment.

To demonstrate the plausibility of loyalty coercion I explore two cases in depth: US arms sales to Taiwan and to Pakistan during the Cold War. These cases vary in their geographic region and in the loyalty of the ally, and show successful use of loyalty coercion (Taiwan) and failed attempts at loyalty coercion (Pakistan). Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s was a loyal US ally, a committed anti-Communist Cold Warrior. As a very loyal ally, it was able to use loyalty coercion to extract continued arms transfers from the United States – including prestigious fighter jets – even after the US explicitly wanted to cut off its arms supply. Pakistan, by contrast, was a less-loyal US ally during the Cold War, and often made visible overtures to China. Its misbehaviour towards the US made it difficult for Pakistan to use loyalty coercion, and despite its best efforts was unable to extract additional arms transfers or to constrain US behaviour towards India. The cases are similar in that the US had an alliance with the junior partner (Taiwan, Pakistan) but was also interested in relations with that junior partner's chief adversary (China, India). The different paths the US took to developing relations with China in the 1970s and India in the 1960s show the promises and the limits of loyalty coercion. Importantly for case comparison purposes, the US had significantly

[49] Adam Lockyer, 'The logic of interoperability Australia's acquisition of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter', *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 68: 1 (1 September 2013), pp. 71–91, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1177/002070201306800106}; Richard Charles Fast, 'The Politics of Weapons Standardization in NATO' (University of California Santa Barbara, 1981).

[50] A. Trevor Thrall, Jordan Cohen, and Caroline Dorminey, 'Power, profit, or prudence? US arms sales since 9/11', *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 14:2 (2020), pp. 100–26.

[51] The existing literature on arms transfers has not yet reached consensus on why states sell or seek arms. For an overview, see Spencer L. Willardson and Richard A. I. Johnson, 'Arms transfers and International Relations theory: Situating military aircraft sales in the broader IR context', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 39:2 (2022), pp. 191–213; see also Frederic S. Pearson, 'The correlates of arms importation', *Journal of Peace Research*, 26:2 (1 May 1989), pp. 153–63; Debbie J. Gerner, 'Arms transfers to the Third World: Research on patterns, causes and effects', *International Interactions*, 10 (1 August 1983), pp. 5–37, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1080/03050628308434605}; Geoffrey Kemp and Steven Miller, 'The arms transfer phenomenon', in Andrew J. Pierre (ed.), *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1979), pp. 15–97.

[52] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to consider additional types of aid and leverage.

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more geostrategic interest in Pakistan, and Pakistan frequently attempted to use this lever to extract arms. Taken together, then, the cases demonstrate how and when loyalty coercion can be used, and how it compares to existing conceptualisations of intra-alliance leverage.

The United States intended to use arms sales to generate leverage in each of the cases, making the cases useful for comparing competing explanations. A briefing from the US Military Assistance Advisory Group in Taiwan drew a direct link between the types of arms provided and the degree of leverage and influence the US would have over Taiwan.[53] Similarly, the US believed that providing arms to Pakistan would force it to align with, and listen to, the US, rather than China or the Soviet Union.[54] Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Anderson explained that arms transfers to Pakistan were 'another case in which we are spending money not purely for military or internal security purposes'.[55]

Focusing on US arms sales allows me to hold constant a number of important variables. During the Cold War, the US was one of the two superpowers, and certainly meets the criteria of being a major power. It exported the largest global share of conventional arms, which means it should be more immune to loyalty coercion than other major powers. The United States was also interested in maintaining its alliance relationships during the Cold War, and was sensitive to losing allies or potential allies to the Soviet Union, meaning that it meets a baseline criteria of caring about its alliance reputation. And finally, the US often used (and still uses) conventional arms transfers to generate leverage within the receiving state. It is thus a good example of a state that should be able to maximise its major power leverage over its junior partners.

To identify and explain loyalty coercion, the cases below are organised around the following questions. First, what was the ally's existing relationship with the United States – did the ally have a plausible history of loyalty to point to? Second, when and how did the ally make a loyalty coercion attempt, and was it successful or unsuccessful? Third, did the ally receive arms transfers because of loyalty coercion or because of other reasons? The cases address these questions in order.

I collected evidence for the use and consequences of loyalty coercion from the US National Archives and Presidential Library system. I use process tracing to follow loyalty coercion from its use by the junior partners through to its consequences for US behaviour. Because loyalty coercion is exercised rhetorically, I look for it in the narratives and statements – both public and private – surrounding arms sales. Loyalty coercion by the junior partners, Taiwan and Pakistan, will be marked by claims of abandonment and concerns about what other allies will think about the US. These claims will be followed by requests for arms transfers to assuage the concerns of Taiwan and Pakistan. I then trace the US response to these statements through internal memos and conversations about the arms transfer request and statements made by the junior partner. For the US, the observable implications of loyalty coercion are the transfer of arms alongside statements that the US was reluctant to send the arms and/or that it was sending the arms out of concern for its own alliance reputation.

Taiwan reaps loyalty's bounds

Taiwan successfully used loyalty coercion during the US opening towards mainland China. It highlighted its history of loyalty to the United States to draw attention to what it saw as abandonment and disloyalty by its great power patron. Taiwan raised the spectre of European consequences, frequently telling the US that the European allies were watching. Taiwan successfully extracted additional arms and prolonged its political relationship with the United States long after US leaders

[53]RG 59, Entry A1(5412), Container 6, Folder DEF 19 1969, USNA, Letter Ciccolella to Green, 18 April 1969, p. 6.

[54]Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1950, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V. Document 837, Department of State Policy Statement, 'Pakistan', 3 April 1950, available at: {https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v05/d837}.

[55]FRUS 1955–1957, South Asia, Volume VIII, Document 196, Memorandum, Operations Coordinator (Bishop) to Assistant Secretary of State (Allen), 28 July 1955, available at: {https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v08/d196}.

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decided they wanted to cut relations with Taiwan in order to establish a relationship with mainland China.

Taiwan had a strong foundation from which to use loyalty coercion because of its formal and informal ties to the United States. The US and Taiwan signed a Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 and signed the Formosa Resolution in 1955.[56] In addition to the formal ties created by the Mutual Defense Treaty, Taiwan took actions to demonstrate its loyalty to the United States. First, Taiwan was vocally in opposition to Communism, which was notable because of its proximity to China.[57] Second, Taiwan got involved in the later stages of the Vietnam War, offering the US use of its military bases and other facilities to aid the war effort.[58] By offering rhetorical and material support for the Vietnam War, Taiwan showed that it was not just any other ally, but was a close friend and supporter of the US. This support was notable because even the United Kingdom was calling for the US to withdraw from the Vietnam War.[59] Taiwan thus had a formal defence treaty to rely on, shared anti-Communist sentiment, and notable pro-US statements to point to.

Taiwan began using loyalty coercion as soon as it became apparent that the US was interested in starting relations with mainland China. The US initiated relations with mainland China in July 1971, when Henry Kissinger made a secret visit to China. He followed this with a public visit, paving the way for Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. Yet despite the formal shift in recognition in 1979, and repeated statements that the US would withdraw military forces and end its arms sales to Taiwan, the United States continued to provide Taiwan with arms.[60] Taiwan was able to make these coercion attempts because, to it, the US was abruptly shifting course and jeopardising the survival of Taiwan, actions that a good ally should never take.

Taiwanese leaders publicly and privately emphasised their loyalty to the United States, reminded the US that its actions were not those of a good ally, and that other states were watching. In October 1972, the US Embassy in Taiwan reported being told that US actions 'could not be reconciled with the requirements of alliance and friendship'.[61] In a letter to President Ford in September 1974, Premier Chiang Ching-Kuo reminded the US that

> The historical ties between the United States and the Republic of China are permeated with deep and broad significance which transcends our bilateral relations. This friendship is of tremendous importance to us; and to the other allies and friends of the United States in the Asian and Pacific region, it also serves as a good example of the mutuality of benefits.[62]

Taiwan suggested the US should provide Taiwan with arms to demonstrate to *other* allies the strength of US commitment to Taiwan. Taiwan's use of loyalty coercion emphasised the damage to US reputation if other allies believed the US was abandoning Taiwan. Importantly, Taiwanese leaders pointed to the European allies as the relevant audience at stake. October 1975, Vice Premier Teng told Henry Kissinger that US dealings with mainland China and away from Taiwan made

[56]Thomas J. Bellows, 'Taiwan's foreign policy in the 1970s: A case study of adaptation and viability', *Asian Survey*, 16:7 (1976), pp. 3–4.

[57]Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders – Correspondence with ROC Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, Box 1, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library (GRF), Letter Chiang Ching-kuo to Gerald Ford, 20 September 1974, p. 2.

[58]Chiao Chiao Hsieh, *Strategy for Survival: The Foreign Policy and External Relations of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1949–79* (Nottingham, UK: Sherwood Press, 1985), p. 142.

[59]Krebs and Spindel, 'Divided priorities'.

[60]In 1972, the US pledged to ends it relationship with Taiwan; during the Carter administration, the US sought to terminate formal relations with Taiwan, and in August 1982 the US decided it would not 'seek to carry out a long term policy of arms sales to Taiwan'. See Michel Oksenberg, 'A decade of Sino-American relations', *Foreign Affairs*, 61:1 (1982), pp. 175–95; Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, 'US arms sales to Taiwan: Institutionalized ambiguity', *Asian Survey* (1986), p. 1327.

[61]FRUS, 1969–1976, China 1969–1972, Volume XVII, Document 92, Telegram Taipei (McConaughy) to State, 'Ambassador's conversation with Vice Premier Chiang Ching-Kuo', 22 October 1972, available at: { https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v17/d92}.

[62]Correspondence with ROC Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, Box 1, GRF, Letter Chiang-Ching Kuo to Gerald Ford, 20 September 1974, p. 2; Krebs and Jennifer Spindel, 'Divided priorities'.

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'European visitors question the U.S. willingness to come to Europe's aid if Moscow attacked.'[63] Less than a month later, a State Department briefing paper acknowledged these concerns, noting, 'we don't intend to normalize in such a manner that we downgrade the integrity of our commitments in the eyes of such important allies as Japan or the Western European countries.'[64] The US was aware 'of the need not to create the mistaken impression that the United States is quietly trying to disengage from our close and valuable relationship with [Taiwan]'.[65]

Taiwan's appeals to loyalty spilled into the public sphere, with newspapers proclaiming both the goodness of the US and Taiwan's support of the US during the Vietnam War. Notably, an editorial in the *China Post* praised US involvement in Vietnam, saying 'Almighty God should be given credit for having brought into being a nation with such a high sense of justice and prosperity.'[66] This statement is an example of Taiwan trying to contrast its track record of support for the US with US mistreatment of Taiwan. Any hints of abandonment should, therefore, be taken seriously by all other allies.

These rhetorical appeals to loyalty influenced US decisions to provide arms to Taiwan. First, in December 1972 the US finally approved Taiwan's request to produce the F-5E fighter jet in Taiwan.[67] Taiwan had been asking for this for a year-and-a-half, but it was only after the overtures to China became public – and potentially worrying to the European allies – that the US finally agreed. As Kissinger explained to Ford, the US might have to give Taiwan arms because 'creating a context where any major change in our relationship with Taiwan which implied abandonment of yet another ally would be unacceptable at this time'.[68] Symbolically, the first F-5E rolled off the assembly line on 30 October 1974, the late Chiang Kai-shek's birthday.[69]

As Taiwan increased its appeals to loyalty throughout the 1970s, so too did US arms sales increase. Taiwan received the F-104 Starfighter jet, a jet it had been after for years, in 1975.[70] In 1976, the US approved new arms sales to Taiwan, explicitly to maintain Taiwan's confidence in the US.[71] The formal approval was for anti-submarine rockets, jets, surface-to-air missiles, and helicopters. And Taiwan did indeed receive many of these weapons, including HAWK missiles and even a naval destroyer.[72] Even as the US was trying to politically extract itself from its relationship with Taiwan, it continued to provide weapons. Arms sales to Taiwan increased from $139.4 million in 1977 to $209 million in 1980.[73] The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which formally severed ties with Taiwan, included provisions for continued arms transfers. The Act states, 'the United States will make available to Taiwan such defensive articles and defensive services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.'[74] Even as

[63]Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), PQID: 1679040685, Memorandum, Scowcroft to President Ford, 'Secretary's Talks with Chinese Officials', 21 October 1975, p. 3.

[64]DNSA, PQID: 1679040945, State Department Briefing Paper, 'Normalization', November 1975, p. 15.

[65]RG 59, Box 2205, Folder Pol China-US 1/1/70, U.S. National Archives, College Park, MD (USNA), Telegram State (Rogers) to Taipei, 4 November 1970, p. 3.

[66]Ibid., p. 144.

[67]RG 59, Box 1697, Folder DEF Chinat 1/1/70, USNA, Telegram State (Rogers) to Taipei, 22 December 1972, p. 3.

[68]DNSA, PQID: 1679040066, Memorandum, Kissinger to Ford, 'Your Trip to the People's Republic of China', 20 November 1975, p. 19.

[69]Bellows, 'Taiwan's foreign policy in the 1970s', p. 3.

[70]Box 1687, Folder DEF US-Chinat 1/1/67, USNA, Telegram Taipei (McConaughy) to State, 12 November 1968, p. 4.

[71]'US Security Assistance to the Republic of China: NSSM 212', DSNA, Memorandum for the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, 12 April 1976.

[72]SIPRI arms transfer database.

[73]Wei-chin Lee, 'US arms transfer policy to Taiwan: from Carter to Clinton', *Journal of Contemporary China*, 9:23 (2000), pp. 57, 69–70. This only continued under Reagan: in 1983 the US delivered $388.6 million to Taiwan. From 1986–1996, Taiwan was a top Asian buyer of US arms, totalling $10.284 billion in military sales. From 1990 to 1995, it was the second-largest buyer, just behind Saudi Arabia. See also Tsan-Kuo Chang, *The Press and China Policy: The illusion of Sino-American relations, 1950-1984*, (New York, NY: Ablex Publishing, 1993), p. 87.

[74]Quoted in Cal Clark, 'The Taiwan Relations Act and the US balancing role in cross-strait relations', *American Journal of Chinese Studies* (2010), p. 4.

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the US formally changed its alignments, it remained tied to a security assistance relationship with Taiwan.

Was the provision of arms throughout the 1970s the result of loyalty coercion, or are there alternate explanations? The first piece of evidence for loyalty coercion comes from repeated private US statements that it did not want to continue providing arms to Taiwan. The US was interested in pursuing relations with mainland China, and knew arming Taiwan would complicate that process. As Secretary of State William Rogers said, 'this does not appear a propitious time for us to give appearance of helping [Taiwan] add a new dimension to [Taiwan's] capacity for arms production.'[75] Similarly, in January 1975, the State Department wrote 'it is clear that arms supply to [Taiwan] cannot be an open-ended process.'[76] However, the US was aware of the broader alliance consequences of stopping arms transfers to Taiwan. As Henry Kissinger bluntly stated, 'The US does not need Taiwan. The problem we have is the impact internationally of a sudden total reversal of an American position on other friendly countries, and even perhaps on countries that are not friendly to the US.'[77] Concerns about other allies constrained how the US could act towards Taiwan.

Second, there was a deep asymmetry in US-Taiwan relations that the US did not take advantage of. The US was in the process of breaking diplomatic ties with Taiwan, as it did when it repealed the Formosa Resolution in October 1974 and abrogated the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1979. As the major power, the US could have cut off the flow of arms and not suffered strategically in the region. The US could have done this at any point in time during the opening towards China. The Ambassador to Taiwan noted the asymmetry in this relationship: 'Taiwan needs US friendship and cooperation', whereas the US was not dependent on Taiwan.[78] There was no broader geostrategic interest that forced the hand of the US.

Third, providing arms to Taiwan complicated and prolonged the normalisation process with China. Each time the US gave Taiwan arms or agreed to continued support, relations with China soured. In November 1976, a State Department memo explained that new arms transfers to Taiwan would be viewed in China 'as a sign of US insensitivity toward normalization considerations', that might indicate the US was 'backtracking on China policy'.[79] Harold Saunders, of the State Department's Intelligence and Research Division, noted that China was hardening its views on Taiwan and its negotiating stance with the US. Saunders said this was a direct result of China's belief that the US was interested in 'moving toward a policy of indefinite US support for [Taiwan]', rather than moving forward with normalisation.[80] Taiwan was a headache for US-China relations.

These three pieces of evidence suggest that the US continued to provide arms because it was concerned about the broader alliance implications of being seen to abandon a loyal ally, a point Taiwanese leaders repeatedly made to the US. It is not as if the United States needed access to Taiwanese territory or key resources – it could have cut ties cleanly, but did not out of fear of worrying its other allies. Finally, continued evidence for the relevance and use of loyalty coercion comes from the rhetorical debate about the status of Taiwan today. In 2010, the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote an opinion piece titled 'Answering Taiwan's Defense Call'. The piece tied arms sales to Taiwan's loyalty and the US's reputation for reliability, stating, 'The Chinese are more likely

[75]RG 59, Box 1697, Folder DEF Chinat 1/1/70, USNA, Telegram State to Taipei, 25 August 1971, p. 2.

[76]DNSA, PQID: 1679041330, Memorandum for Lt General Brent Scowcroft, 'Department of State's Comments and Recommendations on NSSM 212', 29 January 1975, pp. 1–2.

[77]Kissinger Reports, China Memcons and Reports, Box 2, GRF, Summary of Kissinger-Teng discussions, prepared for October 1975 trip to China, November 1974, p. 3. This problem was heightened post-Vietnam.

[78]RG 59, Box 2206, Folder POL Chinat-US 8/19/72, USNA, Airgram Taipei (McConaughy) to State, 'US Policy- Annual Assessment', 14 June 1971, p. 11.

[79]Department of State Action Memorandum, DNSA, PQID: 1679040442, Hummel to Kissinger, 'Sale of Harpoon Missile to the ROC', 1 November 1976, p. 2.

[80]Department of State Briefing Memorandum, DNSA, PQID: 1679040316, Saunders to Kissinger, 'Peking's Hard Line on Taiwan', 4 October 1976, p. 2.

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to respect a U.S. that assists its allies ...'.[81] In response to Taiwan's earlier requests for jets, one analyst advocated for the US to supply Taiwan with arms, writing, 'As Taiwan's most vital partner, the U.S. must push back on Chinese encroachment on it. If it does not, no one else will ... the United States needs to sustain the diplomatic commitments maintained by the last nine presidents.'[82]

Taiwan successfully used loyalty coercion: it took concrete demonstrated its status as a loyal ally by supporting the war effort in Vietnam and by keeping up with its anti-Communist rhetoric. Taiwan then used this history of loyalty to stoke US fears that cutting ties with Taiwan would cause other allies to lose faith in the US. The result was an arms transfer relationship that not only complicated the opening to China, but that continues to affect US-China-Taiwan relations today.

Pakistan's lack of leverage

Pakistan was in a similar situation to Taiwan: it was allied with the United States even as the US was interested in pursuing relations with India, Pakistan's chief rival. As with Taiwan, the US was aware that a friendship with India would be unacceptable to Pakistan. Unlike Taiwan and China, Pakistan did not have a history of loyal actions to point to. While it had a mutual defence treaty with the United States, Pakistan frequently made overtures to China that undercut its ability to claim loyal ally status. Because Pakistan could not credibly claim to be a loyal ally, it was unable to use loyalty coercion, and the US was ultimately able to begin a relationship with India without causing concern among its other allies. Pakistan did not extract additional arms transfers from the United States, and the United States cut ties with Pakistan and pursued a relationship with India beginning in 1965.

Between the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1955 and the border war with India over Kashmir in 1965, Pakistan received numerous types of weapons from the United States. These transfers were appropriate given the defence treaty, and were also an example of the US trying to cultivate leverage within Pakistan. This is in part because of the geostrategic interest the US had in finding a friendly buffer on the subcontinent; it saw Pakistan as an important ally against China.

Early in the relationship, Pakistan acted the part of loyal ally, at least rhetorically. Shortly after signing the Mutual Defense Treaty, Pakistan's President Mohammed Ayub Khan called Pakistan America's 'most allied ally', and Pakistan offered rhetorical support for the US during the Korean War.[83] Ayub quickly changed course, and made his first loyalty coercion attempt with reference to other important allies. In October 1955, he told a US official that the lack of conventional weapons transfers to Pakistan meant that he 'cannot trust the Americans' word'.[84] He said that other countries were watching what the US would do in Pakistan and that the King of Saudi Arabia told him, 'you cannot rely on the Americans; you cannot trust them.' He tried to tie arms transfers to future US relations with Iran, Lebanon, and Iraq by warning the US that the leaders of these countries were similarly sceptical of US intentions. He further warned, 'people are saying that America is resorting to political opportunism with Pakistan. If this becomes a widely held opinion you are not going to succeed in your policies in this area.'[85] His statements were clear attempts to tell the US that it was not playing the part of good ally, and that other junior partners were watching.

[81]Shortly after the Obama administration announced its intentions to sell arms to Taiwan in January 2010, the Chinese government threatened to impose sanctions on the US. This was the first time China raised the spectre of sanctions, rather than a lesser penalty such as the suspension of military exchanges. The Editorial Board, 'Answering Taiwan's defense call', *The Wall Street Journal* (10 March 2010).

[82]Dean Cheng, 'Beijing Doth Protest Too Much: US Arms Sales to Taiwan Are Right Thing to Do', The Heritage Foundation (2018).

[83]Mohammed Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 176; M. Srinivas Chary, *The Eagle and the Peacock: US Foreign Policy toward India since Independence*, 345 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995), p. 94.

[84]Foreign Service Despatch, RG 59, Box 3875, Folder 790D.5-MSP/1-355, 790D.5-MSP/10-455, USNA, Lahore (Fisk) to State, 'Ayub says US Letdown on Military Aid to Pakistan May Kill American Prestige in the Middle East', 4 October 1955, p. 1.

[85]Ibid., p. 3.

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This initial appeal to loyalty had a minor effect on US arms transfers to Pakistan in the late 1950s. In November 1955, a telegram to the US Embassy in Pakistan noted the potential alliance implications of a vocally dissatisfied Pakistan: 'deeply concerned possibility [of] severe damage [in] our relations [to] Pakistan and adverse repercussions [on] other Middle Eastern nations which could follow'.[86] While Pakistan did receive F-86 Sabre planes and M-47 tanks in 1958, these transfers were scheduled when the defence treaty was signed, and prior to Ayub's statements about loyalty.

Pakistan could not rhetorically claim to be a loyal ally because of its behaviours toward China. In fact, Ayub often eschewed loyalty coercion in favour of more direct coercion, leveraging US geostrategic interest in Pakistan. He made frequent threats to realign with China if the US were not more forthcoming with conventional weapons and other assistance.[87] These actions made it difficult for Pakistan to credibly claim it was acting as a loyal US ally. George Ball, for one, noted Pakistan's frequent 'philandering' with China.[88] In an interview with *Le Monde* in 1959, Ayub said that if the US did not provide it with additional arms, Pakistan would seek aid from other countries.[89] While the US did finally provide Pakistan with the F-104 Starfighter in 1961, Pakistan had asked for this weapon seven times between 1959 and 1961. Even India recognised the strains in US-Pakistan relations, with the Indian Charge d'Affairs saying the F-104 transfer was a way to 'pacify an ally angry over unrequited love'.[90]

Perhaps believing that geostrategic interest would force the US to continue sell arms, Pakistan continued to take actions of disloyalty. For example, Pakistan began criticising the US war effort in Vietnam, and Ayub publicly expressed his displeasure with its US alliance in an interview with the *Daily Mail* in 1964.[91] In 1963, Pakistan and China signed a trade agreement, a border agreement, and a civil air agreement.[92] These steps only harmed Pakistan's ability to claim it was a loyal US ally, and forced Pakistan to resort to threats to realign with China as a last attempt to extract arms from the United States. But these levers of geostrategic interest were also unsuccessful, and as the US decided not to offer Pakistan a long-term military aid package.[93] Pakistan had very little leverage – loyalty or otherwise – over the United States. The US placed an arms embargo on Pakistan – still its ally – after Pakistan and India fought a war in Kashmir in 1965. By July 1966, the US State Department had all but given up on transferring arms to Pakistan, noting in a memo that 'no foreseeable level of US military aid is likely to add significant leverage'.[94] The United States began openly pursuing a relationship with India in 1965, after the war. In October 1967, President Ayub visited Moscow to open the door for the Soviet Union to transfer arms to Pakistan.[95]

Pakistan is a useful case for evaluating the plausibility of loyalty coercion because it was geographically of interest to the United States, giving it the option to use loyalty coercion alongside more traditional geostrategic coercion. Unlike Taiwan, the US did want things from Pakistan – namely a democratic ally next to China and access to Pakistan's territory. Geostrategic interest

[86]FRUS, 1955–1957, South Asia, Volume VIII, Document 205, Telegram State (Hoover) to Karachi, 12 November 1955, available at: {https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v08/d196}.

[87]W. M. Dobell, 'Ramifications of the China-Pakistan border treaty', *Pacific Affairs*, 37:3 (1964), p. 206; George J. Lerski, 'The Pakistan-American alliance: A reevaluation of the past decade', *Asian Survey*, 8:5 (1968), p. 409.

[88]Quoted in Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 144.

[89]Foreign Service Despatch, RG 59, Box 3876, Folder 790D.5-MSP/8-559, USNA, Lahore (Corry) to State, 5 August 1959, p. 2.

[90]Proquest Historical Newspapers, PQID: 750662790, Prem Bhatia, 'Prospect and retrospect: The road to Hell', *Times of India* (1 August 1961), p. 8.

[91]National Security File, Country File – Pakistan, Box 151 (1/2), Folder 2, LBJ, Telegram Karachi (Cargo) to State, 27 June 1964, p. 1; National Security File, Country File – Pakistan, Box 151 (1/2), Folder 2, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX (LBJ), Komer, Memorandum to the President, 14 July 1964, Tab B.

[92]Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, p. 144.

[93]Ibid., p. 156.

[94]RG 59, Box 1655, Folder DEF 12-5 India 1965-1966, USNA, Letter Hoopes to Handley, 14 July 1966, p. 2.

[95]RG 59, Box 1699, Folder DEF 19 U.S.-NEAR E 1/1/67, USNA, Telegram Karachi to State, 2 October 1967.

https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3 Published online by Cambridge University Press

gave Pakistan a somewhat freer hand to criticise the US, but it did *not* result in additional arms transfers from the US. Further, Pakistan could not make the specific appeals to loyalty that Taiwan could, and ultimately lost its arms transfer relationship with the US because there were no broader alliance loyalty concerns it could use to constraint the US. Neither geostrategic nor loyalty coercion worked for Pakistan.

Conclusions: Refining loyalty coercion and alliance management

This article has proposed a theory of loyalty coercion, based on the observation that major powers must frequently feed the hungry appetites of their junior power partners. While major powers can provide arms transfers and security assistance for purposes of leverage, they often open themselves up to reverse leverage attempts from the junior partner. Fearful that an unsatisfied junior partner's claims of mistreatment will lead to a crisis of confidence throughout its alliance network, major powers are stuck providing arms as proof that they are good and loyal allies. As the children's novel warned, if you give a mouse a cookie, he's going to ask for some milk.[96] Give a junior partner security assistance, and they are going to ask for more, especially if the junior partner has a history of good behaviour and loyalty behind its requests.

The existence of loyalty coercion suggests that scholars need to reconsider our understandings of alliance management. First, the status quo is not something that persists without effort and maintenance. Though most of our research focuses on changes to the status quo, we need to do more to understand the significant amount of effort it takes to maintain political relationships, and the different tools that states have at their disposal. A lack of attention from major powers – even if not maliciously intended – can be used by junior powers to claim they are being mistreated or ignored. As with social interpersonal relationships, keeping up ties is a labour-intensive process.

Second, though there are always power asymmetries in alliances or friendships, these power asymmetries do not mean that leverage it the sole purview of the powerful. Junior partners can constrain the choices of their major power partners, and can sometimes result in the major power acting against its own interests. Taiwan prolonged the normalisation process by taking advantage of US concerns about its alliance reputation.

Finally, the theory developed here suggests that much of the seemingly quotidian workings of international politics are rhetorical. In response to loyalty coercion attempts, major powers can try to engage in a framing contest, competing for the interpretation of relevant audiences. States care about how others see them, and take actions to affect these perceptions, even in cases where there are clear material or other geostrategic interests. Reputation is the prize that the major power hopes to secure by responding to loyalty coercion.[97]

For policymakers, this article is a cautionary tale that shows there are no quick fixes in international politics. Major powers should be careful in choosing partners, lest they open themselves up to too many loyalty coercion attempts. This is the case regardless of the polarity of the international system. The cases here took place during the Cold War, with the Soviet Union looming as an alternate major partner. While in a unipolar world the superpower is not competing with others, it also doesn't want junior partners to think they can go it on their own. The unipole wants junior partners to see a benefit in aligning with and listening to it, and thus should be sensitive to the reputational blows that can be dealt through loyalty coercion. Similarly, a multipolar world, major powers are competing for junior partners, and should be especially concerned about their reputation for being a valuable and loyal partner. Any rhetoric that paints them as unfaithful or problematic is unwelcome, because it might drive potential partners into the open arms of adversaries. Because a multipolar world presents more alignment options, loyalty coercion should be

[96] Laura Numeroff, *If You Give a Mouse A Cookie* (London, UK: HarperCollins, 1997).

[97] For more on the ongoing debate about reputation in IR, see Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*; Miller, *The Shadow of the Past*; Henry, 'What allies want'; Krebs and Spindel, 'Divided priorities'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3 Published online by Cambridge University Press

more common, and states should be more swift and forceful in responding to them. To assuage concerns about alliance mistreatment, this will result in more arms transfers and more attention to those transfers.

In essence, as long as a state cares about its reputation – whether for materialist, strategic, or normative reasons – it should be concerned about junior partner leverage. Immediate gains from forming an alliance can often give way to long-term headaches as the major power tries to navigate its own interests and the pressures of loyalty coercion.

The theory proposed here and demonstrated through the cases suggest three avenues for future research. First, in terms of theory, future research should seek to determine the weight of the conditional variables on the uses and successes of loyalty coercion over time. As explained in the theory section and seen in the case studies, the plausibility of switching sides is a significant factor in being able to use loyalty coercion. How has side switching changed in the post-Cold War era? Are alignments more fluid, and thus junior partners better able to threaten realignment? Similarly, to what degree is loyalty coercion sensitive to changes in administration? The decision to sell and to purchase arms are two level games. Future research can examine how sensitive loyalty coercion is to changes in domestic politics. Future research could benefit from a more directly comparative theory-testing study to better understand these conditional variables. Relatedly, future research should examine what happens when a junior partner overplays its hand. It is plausible that a junior partner's loyalty coercion attempt will fail *and* backfire, such that the junior partner's reputation is damaged. What differentiates these cases of alliance damage from cases of mere failure?

The second avenue for future research is empirical. The preceding cases are all from the Cold War era, which was a time when keeping allies in your bloc was paramount. Future research should examine time periods beyond the Cold War. There is nothing to suggest that alliance loyalty suddenly stopped mattering in 1991, but it is possible that loyalty coercion had to become more nuanced and less direct once the US and USSR were no longer directly competing over allies. Alternately, as the world becomes more multipolar, it is possible that loyalty coercion will become more common.[98] As Henke notes, alliance consensus and cooperative buy-in matter; has loyalty coercion had to similarly adapt?[99] Additionally, the cases focus on the United States. Future research should look both at other superpower arms transfers (such as the USSR during the Cold War), as well as major powers. Are all major powers with robust arms production capacity – such as France, Germany, or the UK – vulnerable to loyalty coercion? Or are their alliance and arms sales relationships more transactional and less concerned with reputational stakes. This empirical investigation will pay theoretical rewards, by helping us clarify which major or great powers actually care about their alliance reputation.

Finally, future research should address the policy implications that are highlighted in this article. The preceding cases demonstrate the catch-22 of arms sales. While in some cases arms sales can be a carrot or stick to affect junior partner behaviour, arms sales often open major powers to reverse leverage attempts. What is the lesson for major powers? Should they be more cautious and circumspect with their arms sales? Or is there a way to avoid or mitigate the possibility of reverse leverage attempts? Future research could examine this in two ways. First, when, if at all, have junior partners actually switched arms suppliers? If the threats made by junior partners are empty threats, then perhaps major powers can just ignore them.[100] Second, are arms transfers substitutable? In response to a loyalty coercion attempt, can the major power offer *other* goods or services to satisfy

[98]William C. Wohlforth, 'Unipolarity, status competition, and Great Power war', *World Politics*, 61:1 (2009), pp. 28–57; Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain gangs and passed bucks: Predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity', *International Organization*, 44 (1990), pp. 137–68; Tongfi Kim et al., 'Arms, alliances, and patron-client relationships', *International Security*, 42:3 (2018), pp. 183–6.

[99]Henke, 'Buying allies'.

[100]Raymond C. Kuo and Jennifer Spindel, 'The unintended consequences of arms embargoes', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 19:1 (2022), orac030, available at: {https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orac030}.

https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the junior partner? Clarifying these questions will have policy implications for how states organise and think about their arms sales and alliance relationships.

Acknowledgements. This article and I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Devon Evans, Amy Williams, and the entire team at New England Cancer Specialists, as well as Karen Kadish, Dr Lauren Thompson, and Marissa LaHaie for making this article possible. Special thanks to Amy, for her encouragement and care while I worked on this article during infusions. Previous versions of this article were presented at the 2019 International Studies Association Conference and 2019 American Political Science Association Conference. I thank Dr Newmark and the editors of *EJIS*, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on this article. Any remaining errors or mistakes are my own.

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Cite this article: Spindel, J. 2023. Arms for influence? The limits of Great Power leverage. *European Journal of International Security* **8,** 395–412. https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3

https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.3 Published online by Cambridge University Press