Reliability and Alliance Politics

Interdependence and America’s Asian Alliance System

By Iain Donald Henry

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Certifying Statement

I, Iain Donald Henry, certify that this thesis is a piece of original work and that all sources have been fully cited. The word count is 99 141 words (excluding the abstract, supporting material, footnotes, tables, figures, maps and bibliography).

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Abstract

Throughout the Cold War, US officials feared that Washington’s disloyalty to one ally would automatically cause other allies to doubt America’s security reliability. These doubts could prompt allies to adopt policies of neutrality, or even defect to the Communist bloc. This dissertation challenges the conventional wisdom—that alliance interdependence is underpinned by loyalty—by proposing the “alliance audience effect”. The alliance audience effect framework shows that discrete alliance commitments can be practically interdependent, but that this interdependence is not underpinned by loyalty. Through an investigation of Cold War case studies, using a process tracing methodology and archival research, this dissertation argues that US allies in Asia were unconcerned about whether America was loyal to other allied states. Instead, they monitored America’s behaviour in order to reassure themselves that the US was reliable: that their own alliance did not pose risks of either abandonment or entrapment. When allies feared abandonment, they encouraged America to solidify its presence in Asia and adopt a more aggressive posture. But when allies feared entrapment, they encouraged conciliatory US policies and worked to restrain Washington, thus reducing the risk of conflict. In some cases, American disloyalty to one ally was welcomed, or even encouraged, by other allies, as this disloyalty better served their own interests. Like the adage that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”, this dissertation shows that one state’s disloyal ally can be another state’s reliable ally. Because US allies have different interests, they will have different views of American behaviour: one ally might praise an instance of US disloyalty as proof of reliability, while another ally might condemn Washington for unreliability. In short, reliability is not synonymous with loyalty, and America does not have a collective alliance loyalty reputation. Beyond the allied perspective, this research also demonstrates how the United States managed its alliances and used alliance interdependence to achieve its own ends. This dissertation’s findings have relevance for the alliance politics literature, theories about international reputation, and the practical management of alliances.
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Notes on the use of archival material

The archival documents used in this dissertation often contain typographical errors: these are due to either the error of the original author, or mistakes made during encryption or decryption. Where the intent of the original author is beyond reasonable doubt, these errors have been corrected without notation. For example, ‘ok’ might be changed to ‘of’, ‘criticism’ to ‘criticism’, or ‘occurs’ to ‘occurs’. In doubtful cases, the correction has been placed in brackets, and the original spelling noted in the footnote. Obvious abbreviations have been expanded – for example, “mil” is expanded to “military”.

For the purposes of fidelity during encryption, transmission and decryption, diplomatic cables often repeat the word “not”. For example, a cable might read ‘it would immediately be claimed not rpt not only by opposition’. To aid ease of reading, such instances are quoted as ‘it would immediately be claimed not only by opposition’.

As per normal convention, other insertions made for the purposes of reading clarity are placed in brackets.

Abbreviations in the footnotes and bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADST</td>
<td>Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Central Decimal Files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAOHP</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs Oral History Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCARI</td>
<td>History of the Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JFD OHP</td>
<td>John Foster Dulles Oral History Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARA</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAA</td>
<td>National Archives of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOFORN</td>
<td>A handling caveat—NO FOREIGN NATIONALS—meaning that the document could not be seen by non-U.S. citizens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>Record Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNF</td>
<td>Subject Numeric File</td>
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## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANZUS</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand United States Security Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPAC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChiCom</td>
<td>Chinese Communists (the People’s Republic of China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChiNat</td>
<td>Chinese Nationalists (the Republic of China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINCPAC</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief, Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRK</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Far East (usually referring to a division in the US State Department)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOJ</td>
<td>Government of Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRC</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INR</td>
<td>Bureau of Intelligence and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAT</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCND</td>
<td>A US policy to “neither confirm nor deny” the presence of nuclear weapons at any place or on any vessel</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Intelligence Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATO</td>
<td>Pacific-Asian Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China (Communist China, on Chinese mainland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Republic of China (Nationalist China, on Formosa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea (South Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROKG</td>
<td>Republic of Korea Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>US-Japan Security Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USG</td>
<td>United States Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS</td>
<td>United States Ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Decision-makers fret about credibility. They have often believed that failing to follow through on a threat, or abandoning an ally, will embolden adversaries or destroy the trust that sustains alliances. This is particularly true for decision-makers in the United States of America: wars have been fought, and many lives lost, in efforts to preserve American credibility. Thomas Schelling wrote that the United States ‘lost thirty thousand dead in Korea to save face...and it was undoubtedly worth it’, because it established ‘Soviet expectations about the behaviour of the United States’.\(^1\) At the outbreak of the Korean War, President Harry Truman believed that ‘If aggression were allowed to succeed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere’.\(^2\)

Ideas about how an adversary will assess the credibility of American threats are still influential today. In 2014, President Barack Obama infamously drew a “red line” on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war, only to later back down from the threat of force.\(^3\) The controversy around this “red line” centered on the credibility of a threat issued to an adversary, but recent events have generated interest in the credibility of security promises within alliances. Deterrence theorists argue that wars can also be fought in order to preserve trust between allies. American policy throughout the Cold War was often influenced by the belief that disloyalty to one ally would send shockwaves through the system of anti-Communist alliances, tempting allies to either defect or adopt a neutral position between the West and the Communist bloc.

In 2014, when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea, there were suggestions that America's inaction unnerved its allies. Though Ukraine was not a treaty ally of the United States, a 1994 agreement, the Budapest Memorandum, pledged that

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US, Russia and the United Kingdom would ‘respect the Independence and Sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine’. Half a world away, in Asia, there were reports that Washington’s decision to not forcefully oppose Russian aggression ‘caused deep concern among already skittish Japanese officials’. According to one ‘senior American military official’, the Japanese ‘keep asking, “Are you going to do the same thing to us when something happens?”’

Recently, Washington has felt the need to reassure its allies in Asia about the strength of their alliances with the United States. US treaty allies in the region—Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Australia—have worried that China’s activities in the South China Sea pose a threat to regional security and stability. In addition to seizing disputed territory at the Scarborough Shoal, China has reclaimed land from the sea and placed military equipment on these newly constructed islands. In response, the United States has conducted so-called freedom of navigation operations: military manoeuvres in which a US Navy vessel sails within twelve nautical miles of a Chinese-held island. The New York Times reported that such operations were intended ‘to reassure allies...that the United States would stand up to China’s efforts to unilaterally change facts on the ground’.

America’s allies in Asia are heavily reliant on the United States for their security. They are concerned about China’s rise and its willingness to challenge the post-war order through the threat or use of military force. Though Japan, South Korea and Australia possess advanced military capabilities, all rely on US extended nuclear deterrence: without this, they could not resist nuclear threats or blackmail. Accordingly, for these nations America’s alliance promises are of the utmost importance. In 2016 when the then-Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, indicated that he was dissatisfied with America’s

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4 Budapest Memorandum (Joint Declaration issued on 5 December 1994 at Budapest by the leaders of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America).
alliance commitments to South Korea and Japan, this generated speculation that if these allies feared abandonment they might develop their own nuclear weapons.\(^7\) This, in turn, could generate regional security dilemmas and/or prompt other states to build nuclear arms.

Though they have recently taken on a higher profile, these issues are not new. Since the end of the Cold War, America’s ambiguous commitment to Taiwan’s security has often been described as a litmus test of America’s reliability. Though the United States is not formally committed to defend Taiwan through a military alliance, former officials have argued that if the US were to allow Taiwan to be reunited with mainland China by force, then this would damage America’s treaty alliances in Asia.\(^8\) The famous realist theorist, John Mearsheimer, wrote that

> If the United States were to sever its military ties with Taiwan or fail to defend it in a crisis with China, that would surely send a strong signal to America’s other allies in the region that they cannot rely on the United States for protection. Policy makers in Washington will go to great lengths to avoid that outcome and instead maintain America’s reputation as a reliable partner. This means they will be inclined to back Taiwan no matter what.\(^9\)

Nancy Tucker and Bonnie Glaser have written that ‘US inconstancy [toward Taiwan] could convince American allies and friends to rely less on Washington, undertake an arms race, and/or bandwagon with China...If Japan began to doubt U.S. reliability, that could deal a fatal blow to the U.S.-Japan alliance’.\(^10\) The academic and policymaker consensus is that America cannot be disloyal to an ally – if it is, then other US allies will regard Washington as unreliable or untrustworthy, and will look elsewhere for security.

In short, these ideas are premised on the belief that a state’s commitments—whether they be threats to an adversary or promises to an ally—are *interdependent*. For alliance promises, deterrence theory’s conventional wisdom

\(^{7}\) See Gene Gerzhoy and Nick Miller, ‘Donald Trump thinks more countries should have nuclear weapons. Here’s what the research says.’, *The Washington Post*, 6 April 2016.

\(^{8}\) See, for example, Aaron Friedberg, ‘Will We Abandon Taiwan?’, *Commentary* magazine, 1 May 2000.


\(^{10}\) Nancy Tucker, and Bonnie Glaser, ‘Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?’, *The Washington Quarterly*, 34:4, pp.32-33.
suggests that this interdependence is governed by whether or not a state’s conduct demonstrates *loyalty*.

**The argument in brief**

Most scholars and practitioners agree that the idea of alliance interdependence is of critical importance – it can increase the likelihood of war, or prompt states to significantly revise their defence policies. But, as will be explained later, some academic research has argued that alliances are not interdependent in the way suggested by deterrence theory. This dissertation’s research question—how, if at all, are alliances interdependent?—contributes to this debate between deterrence theory and more recent scholarship on international reputation.

Working deductively from the existing literature on alliance politics and using a realist approach, this dissertation proposes the “alliance audience effect”. This framework, concerning alliance interdependence, theorises a causal relationship comprised of three hypotheses. It argues that US allies monitor America’s behaviour in other alliances, and these observations influence their perceptions of US reliability. If America’s allies believe the US to be unreliable—if their alliance with Washington poses either risks of abandonment or entrapment—then allies will act to mitigate such risks. Alliance interdependence exists, but it is not contingent on loyalty. Rather, it is underpinned by the concept of reliability, which concerns the degree to which shared interests enable allies to cooperate.

This dissertation then applies its research question to America’s alliances in Asia between 1949 and 1969. In considering the alliance audience effect framework against these case studies, the dissertation makes four important contributions to theories of alliance politics.

The first contribution is to carefully delineate between loyalty and reliability, and argue that alliances *are* interdependent, but that this is underpinned by *reliability*, not *loyalty*. These two terms are not synonymous. While deterrence
theory holds that America’s disloyalty to an ally will undermine or destroy its other alliances (because these allies will assume the US to have a character trait of disloyalty), this dissertation shows that states are not especially concerned about America’s general loyalty to its other allies. Instead of focusing on a national character trait of loyalty, this dissertation argues that each ally will focus on whether the US is likely to be reliable. Reliability is defined as the extent to which two allies share convergent interests about an issue on which they expect to cooperate.

Though some research on international reputation argues that alliances are not interdependent, this dissertation shows that US allies do monitor Washington’s conduct, in its other alliances, in order to better understand America’s interests, the extent to which they are valued, and the capabilities it can use to pursue these interests. Allies regularly ask: does the US share their interests, and will the US work with them—using military force, if necessary—to achieve those interests? If the answer is yes, then allies will perceive the United States to be reliable. But if America’s behaviour suggests that it does not share the ally’s interests, and is likely to adopt policies—such as recklessly risking war, or reneging on promises of military support—that will frustrate the ally’s international ambitions, then the ally will regard Washington as unreliable.

This might seem more complicated than deterrence theory’s rule-of-thumb that “loyalty matters”, or the more recent reputation-based argument that commitments are not interdependent (and therefore states should not worry about their reputations). However, it can be reduced to an even simpler maxim: “national interests matter most”. Though decision-makers in Washington might worry that disloyalty to one ally will unnerve other allies, those other allies might welcome America’s disloyal act if it is in their own national interest. Allies do observe how America behaves within its other alliances, but they are not looking for virtuous moral conduct that exemplifies a national character trait of loyalty. Instead, they look for evidence that America’s interests remain convergent with their own, and therefore that America remains a reliable ally.
The dissertation’s second contribution is to demonstrate that states do not have a collective or universal “alliance reputation”. The alliance audience effect framework expects that one ally might believe America’s behaviour to have revealed that its reliability has declined, while another ally—with different interests—might interpret the same behaviour to be proof that America’s alliance reliability is assured. The alliance audience framework rejects the idea that universal alliance reputations exist, and instead shows that because different allies will have different interests, they will draw different inferences from American behaviour. Because allies do not evaluate America’s behaviour against an objective moral standard like loyalty, but instead assess whether America’s actions further their own interests, a reputation—a collective belief about American reliability—cannot form.

The third contribution of the alliance audience effect framework is to rehabilitate one element of deterrence theory. Though scholarship on international reputation argues that the United States should not worry about its allies doubting its resolve, this dissertation demonstrates it is useful for US allies to have confidence in Washington’s reliability. If an ally doubts America’s reliability, it will attempt to mitigate this risk. If it fears that America is likely to abandon it in its moment of need, it might increase its own defence capabilities, form new alliances, conciliate adversaries, or discuss its concerns with American officials in order to confirm that its interests are shared by Washington, and therefore that the US remains a reliable ally. If the ally fears that American actions might prompt an unwanted conflict, or even drag the state into hostilities, then it will seek to reduce the likelihood of violence: it will attempt to restrain the United States, launch peace efforts, or threaten to stand aside if conflict breaks out. Thus, it is usually in America’s interests for its allies to perceive its commitments as reliable. Declining American reliability can lead to insecurity, which in turn can prompt undesired behaviour—such as bandwagoning, adopting a neutral stance, or even the development of nuclear weapons programs—that runs contrary to Washington’s interests.
This dissertation's fourth contribution is to show that in some circumstances, alliance interdependence can actually be useful for Washington. Because, in the past, US decision-makers have assumed that loyalty matters, they have often been concerned that actions within one alliance might affect other allies. Specifically, US leaders have believed that other allies will react adversely to any instance of American disloyalty. Alliance interdependence is often thought of in negative terms, in that it limits American policy options. But historically, America has managed this interdependence in two ways: this dissertation describes them as the “set the example” approach and the policy of “simultaneous alliance management”.

The “set the example” approach enables the US to use alliance interdependence for its own ends. This occurs when US policy-makers choose and/or reject policies based on how they might be perceived by other allies: for example, the US can select policy in one alliance based on the belief that it expects other allies to observe, and be influenced by, the example. For instance, Washington might deal harshly with an obstinate ally to publicly demonstrate to other allies—to “set the example”—that such behaviour will not be tolerated. American policymakers can use this interdependence to encourage and discourage certain types of behavior in other alliances.

When Washington expects allies to be worried by developments within another alliance, the existence of interdependence requires the United States to manage alliances simultaneously. For example, knowing that some allies will be unnerved by US policy toward one ally, US diplomats and military officials might seek to reassure these other allies that this policy does not reduce America’s security reliability. The dissertation describes this as the “simultaneous alliance management” approach.

In summary, the alliance audience effect framework proposes that alliances are interdependent, but that this is not underpinned by a national character trait that manifests as an international reputation for loyalty. Instead, this interdependence is governed by each state’s beliefs about their ally’s reliability.
Counter-intuitively, if American disloyalty to an ally reduces the risk of a war that other allies wish to avoid, or if it enhances America’s ability to keep separate security promises, then this disloyalty might even be praised and welcomed by other US allies.

**Theoretical literature**

The idea that alliances are interdependent—and that this interdependence is underpinned by loyalty—is a central tenet of deterrence theory. This approach was very influential on alliance theorists and policymakers during the Cold War. Scholars such as Thomas Schelling argued that if a state was disloyal to one of its allies—if it abandoned the ally in its time of need—then other allies would doubt the state’s alliance reliability. These allies might be tempted to realign with the enemy, or adopt positions of neutrality.11

Deterrence theory predicts that defeats will embolden adversaries and frighten allies, but research conducted after the Cold War era has challenged these ideas. Jonathan Mercer argues that commitments are not interdependent, and that a state’s allies do not use past behaviour to predict future behaviour. Mercer theorises that reputations are formed when observers attribute a state’s behavior to their disposition (i.e. their national character), and not a specific situation. Mercer’s hypotheses expect that desired behaviour will be explained using situational explanations, but undesired behaviour as being due to national character. For example, states will explain the retreat of adversaries as situational, but their willingness to fight as dispositional. If allies fulfil their promises this is attributed to the specifics of a situation, whereas if they renege on their promises this is attributed to national character. Mercer argues that even if a state’s allies come to view the state as irresolute—as unwilling to risk war to follow through on threats and uphold promises—this does not create consistent expectations about that state’s future behavior. While Mercer’s research focuses primarily on threats issued to adversaries, he makes claims

about ‘a reputation for loyalty among allies’ because this is analogous to ‘a reputation for resolve’ toward adversaries.\textsuperscript{12}

Writing in response to Mercer, Gregory Miller argues that a reputation for resolve toward adversaries might be discrete from a reputation for loyalty toward allies.\textsuperscript{13} Miller tests five hypotheses about alliance reliability – two of these concern alliance formation, two focus on alliance abrogation, and one pertains to alliance management or variation. Miller finds that states with reputations for alliance reliability will enjoy two important benefits. Firstly, they will be able to ally with other reliable states, and secondly, they will be able to maximise their autonomy within any alliance. Miller also finds that unreliable states will have fewer alliance choices, and will have to sacrifice more autonomy within an alliance.

Beyond significantly advancing alliance theory, the research of Mercer and Miller has significant policy implications. Mercer concludes his book by writing that states should not worry about allies doubting their resolve, because these allies will believe that the state’s behavior is determined by situational factors—their interests and capabilities—and not by an immutable character trait. Because, Mercer argues, reputations only form when character-based attributions are made, then even if a state has been very loyal in the past, its allies will not assume it will always behave this way in the future. This contrasts vividly with deterrence theory, which expects states to always make character-based judgments about the behavior of their ally. In contrast, Miller shows that states can indeed benefit from their having a reputation for alliance reliability: reliable states can ally with other reliable states, and maximize their autonomy within alliance agreements.

Mercer’s scholarship has challenged the long-held assumptions of deterrence theory, but the debate continues. Does alliance interdependence exist, and does

it require careful management, or is it a fallacy which leads states into unnecessary conflicts for the sake of prestige, or reputations, which don’t exist? Policy-makers seem captivated by deterrence theory’s simple causal logic, even though there are serious doubts about its validity. Most academic work on the issue of credibility focuses on adversarial interactions and threats, but these research findings are then often simply applied to alliance interactions and promises. However, it is far from clear that the same dynamics apply to both scenarios.

**Asian alliances literature**

As noted earlier, it has often been assumed that America’s alliances—particularly those in the Asian region—are interdependent, and that this interdependence is underpinned by Washington’s loyalty to its allies. Though many authors have produced excellent accounts of the individual bilateral alliances in Asia, the idea of interdependence within America’s Asian alliance system—also known as the “hub and spoke” model or “San Francisco system”—is often assumed, and has not received sustained scholarly attention.¹⁴

Victor Cha proposes a ‘powerplay’ theory, and argues that ‘the desire for maximum and exclusive control over potentially dangerous allies’ resulted in Washington creating a system of bilateral alliances, rather than a single multilateral alliance, in the 1950s.¹⁵ Presenting the bilateral hub and spoke nature of this alliance system as a deliberate US choice, Cha argues that bilateral alliances with the Republics of China (ROC) and Korea (ROK) gave the United States the ability to restrain these two states.¹⁶ Both the ROC and ROK strived to

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¹⁴ The “hub and spoke” term originated with John Foster Dulles, the architect of the alliance system. The hub of the wheel was the United States, while its alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand were the ‘spokes’. See Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan*, Sydney University Press: Sydney, 1969, p.66. Additional spokes were added by the signing of alliances with the Republics of Korea (1953) and China (1954).


reunify their divided countries, but such efforts would have posed serious risks to peace in Asia. Cha argues that the lack of a multilateral alliance structure minimised the extent to which these allies could coerce or entrap Washington, but he does not consider how America’s conduct within the bilateral alliance system might be influenced by the possibility of interdependence across these technically discrete alliances. If American decision-makers were perpetually worried about their loyalty reputation, then the need to protect this might have negated whatever influence Washington achieved through the bilateral structure of the alliance system.

Separately, Cha also argues that two states (not in an alliance) will cooperate on security issues when they doubt the reliability of a common ally, but this does not address the issue of whether the alliance commitments themselves are interdependent. Cha applies his “quasi-alliance” theory to America’s alliances with Korea and Japan between 1969 and 1988, and finds that the high-water mark of their security cooperation was when both Seoul and Tokyo doubted US reliability. Cha argues that although historical animosity is often cited as the reason for friction in the relationship between South Korea and Japan, mutual concerns about the possibility of American abandonment ameliorate this grievance and spur periods of discernible security cooperation.

Thomas Christensen examines how disunity within an alliance coalition can make it more difficult for adversaries to identify the core interests of the alliance, and this complicates efforts to coerce or negotiate with the member-states. Using the example of the alliances between the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (the DPRK, or North Korea), Christensen shows that disunity in the Communist camp made it difficult for them to credibly signal their intentions to the United States. Christensen’s excellent and forensic monograph remains the only book-length

choose a different framework of alliances for Asia than what was pursued in Europe?” Emphasis added.
treatment of how alliance bargaining can affect strategic interactions in Asia, though it focuses on adversarial bargaining situations. When it comes to how states might assess the reliability of their allies, there is a notable gap in the literature: does America’s behaviour (in other alliances) affect how an ally perceives Washington’s reliability? In other words: are these alliances interdependent?

Rarely is the hub and spoke system of Asian alliances used to test or advance our theoretical understanding of alliances. Most alliance theory is developed from, and tested against, case studies of late 19th and early 20th century Europe. The European environment—continental, multipolar, and characterised by flexibility and realignment—provides rich case studies for alliance theory. Few works look beyond this region and time for case studies: Stephen Walt’s The Origin of Alliances, which considers the Middle East region from 1955-1979, is the most prominent exception. But Walt’s cases actually share several significant similarities with 19th and 20th century Europe – a multipolar, continental region, characterised by regular realignment amongst the major regional powers. In considering this literature, it remains unclear what components of existing alliance theory might result from circumstances specific to these two regions and the international conditions at these times. Compared to the continental, multipolar environment of pre-WW1 Europe, there is perhaps no region and period more dissimilar than that of the Asia-Pacific region after World War II. As other scholars have argued, there is a need to develop and test more international relations theory against Asian case studies.

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Research question and case study selection

This dissertation does not seek to determine under what conditions alliance interdependence is more or less prevalent. Before this important issue can be addressed, a prior research question must be asked: ‘how, if at all, are alliance commitments interdependent?’ To answer this, the dissertation applies the alliance audience effect framework’s three hypotheses—generated deductively from the existing literature on alliance politics, credibility and reputation—to case studies likely to falsify or support the framework’s overall validity, and thus further develop its theoretical contributions. The dissertation does not seek to test the alliance audience framework against least likely or hard cases, or against alternate hypotheses (generated from deterrence theory or posited by other authors).23

After theorising the alliance audience effect framework, this dissertation tests it against Asian case studies drawn from the first twenty years of the Cold War (i.e. 1949 – 1969). These case studies were selected from this time period and geographical area for six reasons.

Firstly, the Asian hub and spoke system between 1949 and 1969 provides case studies that span almost the full spectrum of alliance behaviour: alliance formation, alliance politics during a crisis, and peacetime alliance renegotiations. The only aspect unexamined is that of alliance abrogation. Thus, these case studies can be used to assess the alliance audience effect across a range of different scenarios. If the alliance audience effect is present in all of these varied case studies, then it suggests the framework has a higher degree of generalisability.

Second, the hub and spoke alliance system was formed after the advent and first use of nuclear weapons. This is an important factor overlooked in many

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23 George and Bennett note the difficulty of classifying cases as ‘most’ or ‘least-likely’, as ‘Cases usually fall somewhere in between being most and least likely for particular theories, and so pose tests of an intermediate degree of difficulty’. See Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, MIT Press: Cambridge, 2005, p.122.
conceptual treatments of alliance politics – many alliance theories are developed and tested against case studies from the pre-nuclear era. The invention of nuclear weapons meant that the rapid destruction of entire nations became feasible. In such circumstances, alliances—particularly those that provide extended nuclear deterrence—take on a new form. Previously, a state may have been able to defend its allies without incurring substantial risk of damage within its own borders, but the Cold War's nuclear balance removed such possibilities for states allied to either the West or the Communist bloc. Furthermore, because of the long time-frames involved in developing nuclear weapons capabilities, alliance reliability probably became more important. Before nuclear weapons, if a state was shown to be unreliable then its allies may have had some opportunity to improve their own security capabilities before an adversary seized the opportunity to coerce or attack them using conventional forces. In an age of nuclear weapons, if an ally's promise of extended nuclear deterrence is suddenly shown to be unreliable, this could immediately and drastically render a state insecure and vulnerable to nuclear coercion or attack.\(^{24}\) If global nuclear disarmament efforts continue to fail, then a theory of alliance reliability tested against modern case studies may have greater explanatory power for contemporary situations (where the nuclear element remains influential).

Third, the period from 1949 – 1969 was chosen because several important variables—American military power, the global and regional balance of power, the presence of nuclear weapons, the lines of enmity and amity in Asia—can be held as reasonably constant. As a result, the exact reasons for varying levels of allied confidence in American reliability can be more clearly identified. From 1969 onwards, there was significant uncertainty about the level of American commitment to Asian security. The “Guam Doctrine” of July 1969—in which President Richard Nixon stated that US allies in Asia would continue to receive American support, but would have to take primary responsibility for their own defence—recast the nature of America’s commitment to Asian security. Gradual US-China rapprochement, vacillation and abrupt decision-making concerning

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troop positioning in South Korea in 1971, as well as President Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, also had a significant impact on American allies in Asia. As many different events after 1969 cast doubt on America’s role in Asia, it would be difficult to confidently isolate the exact reasons for variance in allied perceptions of US reliability.

Fourth, the availability of archival evidence is another reason for limiting the scope of enquiry to the first twenty years of the hub and spoke alliance system. Many of the relevant primary sources, such as diplomatic cables, intelligence assessments, records of conversations and governmental agreements, have been declassified and are available for public use. The availability of these primary sources enables the construction of a very detailed historical narrative, which in turn enables the identification and analysis of specific policy changes within an alliance. Even toward the end of the 1949 – 1969 period, the availability of declassified documents decreases.

Fifth, applying this framework to the hub and spoke system generates conclusions of significant policy relevance today. Though Taiwan and New Zealand are no longer American allies, the overall structure of this alliance network remains intact, and it is—depending on who is asked—either the source of, or possible solution to, contemporary security tensions. Despite the importance of this system, few academic works consider the issue of interdependence between the alliances. The common assumption—that disloyalty to one ally might undermine or destroy the alliance system—is very questionable, but rarely questioned.

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Finally, the hub and spoke structure of this alliance system facilitates the task of observing and evaluating instances of alliance interdependence. In the period examined, America formed bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and also a trilateral alliance with Australia and New Zealand. There are usually only two actors within the alliance – America and its local partner. When interactions within one alliance are observed by other allies, it is easier to identify the cause and result of any reliability concerns.

The task of clearly and confidently identifying instances of interdependence within a multilateral alliance, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), is necessarily more complicated. With so many states involved, it is far more difficult to precisely identify the reasons for a particular change in defence policy. Furthermore, it might prove impossible to identify and measure discrete reasons for a state’s belief that alliance reliability had varied: within a multilateral alliance, do states assess the reliability of individual allies, or the alliance as a whole? By examining case studies from the hub and spoke alliance system, it is possible to avoid these issues and thus more precisely identify and evaluate reliability concerns.

This is not to say that similar dynamics do not operate within multilateral alliances – this dissertation makes no claims about the alliance audience effect framework’s applicability (or inapplicability) to such organisations. However, it is expected that alliance interdependence can be more clearly observed in a bilateral alliance structure, and this is a key reason for selecting cases drawn from America’s Asian alliance system.26

Based on a preliminary analysis of America’s Asian alliance system from 1949 – 1969, possible case studies were identified. The comparatively short Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958) was not considered because an examination of the prolonged First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954 - 1955) enabled a more thorough investigation of the US policy-making approach. The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was not considered because it is a multilateral alliance

26 This does, of course, limit the generalisability of the dissertation’s findings.
and—like NATO—this means that causation cannot be so clearly identified and traced. America’s early security commitment to South Vietnam was unsuitable on the basis that America’s behaviour—which is the independent variable of the framework’s first hypothesis—did not occur within, or ultimately develop into, an alliance relationship.  

The regional reaction to the Guam Doctrine of 1969 was also considered, but ultimately rejected, because America’s behaviour was not confined to a specific alliance relationship.

This process of elimination left a small group of events in which America’s behaviour in one alliance was a) significant to, and observed by, other allies and b) relevant to America’s alliance reliability and thus significant for the security of these US allies. These five case studies are:

- America’s treatment of South Korea (before and after the North Korean invasion) and America’s subsequent negotiation of alliances with Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines and Japan (1950-1951)
- America’s conduct of alliance negotiations with the Republics of Korea (1953) and China (1954),
- America’s behaviour in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954-1955),
- America’s willingness to revise the US-Japan alliance (1955-1960), and

These case studies were selected on the basis that the independent variable of the alliance audience effect framework’s first hypothesis (i.e. America’s behaviour in one alliance relationship) had to be observable and significant. The alliance audience effect framework does not expect every minor interaction

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27 However, other authors have examined Vietnam as an instance of the United States intervening for the sake of its credibility reputation, and their findings—that allies with direct interests in the conflict supported the intervention, but those without direct interests did not support it—are consistent with the alliance audience effect framework. See Ronald Krebs and Jennifer Spindel, ‘Divided Priorities: Why and When Allies Reject Interventions for Reputation’, Paper for presentation at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA, 18 March 2016.
within an alliance to be closely scrutinised by other allies, but *significant* interactions—those that suggest a discrepancy between America’s true interests, and those it publicly professes—provide suitable case studies to test the framework. The framework expects allies to monitor such interactions closely, because they provide opportunities to better understand American interests and thus better assess American reliability. The framework expects alliance interdependence only when the ally observing US behaviour regards it as *significant* for its beliefs about America’s reliability and its own security. For example, when applying the framework to the reversion of Okinawa, the dissertation does not set out to explain why this development had a tremendous impact on South Korea and Nationalist China, but had no effect on Australia and New Zealand – this is easily explained by the importance of Okinawa to Seoul and Taipei’s security situation, and Okinawa’s lesser importance to Australia and New Zealand.

In two of these case studies (the negotiation of the US-ROK alliance and the First Taiwan Strait Crisis), the reactions of two US allies outside the Asian region are considered. The United Kingdom and Canada observed these events closely and were influential on US policy. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 3, at the time the United Kingdom still had a substantial military presence in Asia, and thus their position was influential on US thinking.28

**Method and Sources**

This dissertation uses primary sources, and a process tracing methodology, to demonstrate how the alliance audience effect operated in the hub and spoke alliance system between 1949 and 1969. Secondary sources are also used, but the dissertation makes a substantial research contribution through the use of original data, including recently declassified documents.29 Many sources,

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28 On the UK’s post-WW2 role in Asia, and especially its impact on Australia’s outlook, see Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press Australia: Melbourne, 1988, Chapter 3.

29 That said, the primary sources are presented with sufficient secondary material so as to acknowledge the wider international context. See George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, p.97.
especially for the earliest case studies, are available in the United States Government’s *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series. Where possible, citations refer to these FRUS sources, as they are the most easily accessible.\(^{30}\) Beyond FRUS materials, the vast majority of primary sources used were obtained from the US Government’s National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The records at NARA—comprising of State Department cables, memoranda, letters, intelligence assessments, minutes of meetings and records of conversation—were especially important for tracing causation in the more recent case studies. They provide accurate information on diplomatic communication between the United States and its allies, as well as the internal deliberations of the US Government.

Though data from archives in South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines could have been sought, the decision to focus on US records was made for four reasons. Firstly, America’s archives contained data on each of the alliances, whereas other national archives would contain more limited information specific to that country and its alliance with the US. Secondly, language issues would have significantly complicated efforts to obtain declassified documents from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan or the Philippines. Though such sources would have provided alternate perspectives on certain events, the need to translate such documents would have reduced the overall amount of data that could be collected and processed. As this dissertation focuses on the question of alliance interdependence within the Asian alliance system, it prioritises breadth over depth. Thirdly, American archives are the most complete and comprehensive—scholars of Asian alliances typically rely on American sources as some Asian archives are fragmentary, or access is restricted.\(^{31}\) Finally, it was not necessary

\(^{30}\) While this dissertation does not adopt Moravcsik’s “Active Citation” approach, in order to assist the ease of replication it does, wherever possible, provide the most readily accessible reference for archival material. This is usually the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series, which is freely available online. See Andrew Moravcsik, ‘Active Citation and Qualitative Political Science’, *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research*, 10:1, 2012, pp.33-37 and Andrew Moravcsik, ‘Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research’, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 43:1, 2010, pp.29-35.

\(^{31}\) See, for example, Junghyun Park, ‘Frustrated Alignment: The Pacific Pact Proposals from 1949 to 1954 and South Korea-Taiwan Relations’, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 12:2, pp.217-237, for detail on the South Korean and Taiwanese archives.
to go beyond American archival data in order to test the alliance audience framework: each of the hypotheses can be satisfactorily tested using this data.\textsuperscript{32}

This reliance on American archival material entails certain risks, but these are not insurmountable. Perhaps the most significant concern is that allies might have deliberately complained about American unreliability in an effort to extract greater defence commitments from Washington. Stephen Walt has suggested that US allies in Asia have been able to ‘get Uncle Sucker to take on more burdens by complaining that they had doubts about American resolve’.\textsuperscript{33} Such duplicitous efforts—if US diplomats or intelligence agencies failed to detect them—might not be reflected in American documents. However, it is unlikely that this issue could be addressed even with the use of non-American archives: if US allies attempted to manipulate the United States in this manner, they are unlikely to ever declassify material that would reveal such behaviour! Furthermore, in the American documents examined there is often critical examination of, and speculation about, the possible motives of allied leaders. This increases the likelihood that US diplomats would detect efforts at manipulation. Indeed, as this dissertation shows (in Chapter 3), the United States sometimes adopted particular alliance policies to set the example that it would not allow its foreign policy to be manipulated by an ally.

Although most primary sources used were viewed at the US Government’s National Archives and Records Administration facility in Maryland, other documents were obtained through the National Archives of Australia, the John Foster Dulles Papers and Oral History Project (at Princeton University’s Mudd Library), George Washington University’s National Security Archive, and the oral history interviews conducted by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

\textsuperscript{32} This is not to say that additional sources from these national archives would not be useful in falsifying the hypotheses of the alliance audience effect framework. However, the basic dynamics of the framework can be assessed by using US documents only.

Within the US archives, thousands of primary documents were examined. The availability of such information enables the use of a forensic process tracing methodology that allows causal patterns to be identified, traced and tested. To empirically examine the dissertation’s hypotheses, a historical process tracing approach is best for identifying and contextualising the factors that influence reliability perceptions and decision-making within alliances. To identify causal patterns, it is necessary to closely trace the evolution of views in Washington and allied capitals, and explained what led to these changes. The only way to demonstrate such causation satisfactorily is through archival research and process tracing methods. Although they do not explain their choice of methodology in these terms, other authors focusing on alliance management have chosen to avoid quantitative approaches in favour of qualitative, historically-based process tracing. The two most prominent scholars researching alliances in Asia—Victor Cha and Thomas Christensen—have both used historical case studies and process tracing methods.34 As George and Bennett write, process tracing does ‘not seek to replicate the logic of scientific experimentation...[but] seeks to uncover a causal chain coupling independent variables with dependent variables and evidence of the causal mechanisms posited by a theory’.35 Accordingly, this method is well-suited to testing and developing the alliance audience effect framework.

Dissertation outline

In Chapter 1, the dissertation examines the existing literature on credibility, reliability, reputation and alliances. It further explicates the difference between loyalty and reliability, and argues that a state’s allies may not be especially concerned by that state’s disloyalty to another ally, so long as they perceive this action to be in their national interest. Based on its analysis of existing alliance theories and their limitations, it then deductively develops the three hypotheses that form the alliance audience effect framework.

34 See Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, Cha, Powerplay, and Christensen, Worse Than a Monolith.
35 George and Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development, p.153.
Chapter 2 examines the creation of America’s alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, and how the formation of these security pacts was influenced by America’s conduct toward the Republics of Korea and China. Until the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, America’s commitment to Asian security was far from certain, so countries closely observed American behaviour in order to better understand US interests in Asia. Throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, the perception that America had abandoned the ROC, and was likely to abandon the ROK, influenced regional perceptions of US reliability. States adopted a variety of policies intended to solidify America’s presence and role in Asia: some pursued multilateral alliances in an effort to secure a lasting US presence, while others offered to host American bases on their soil. As expected by the alliance audience effect, America’s decision to defend Korea resulted in states such as Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand having greater confidence in American reliability. Further, America’s conduct within each bilateral relationship was strongly influenced by the belief that security partners and prospective allies would be watching. When America began to sign treaty alliances with these states, this led to a strong consistency amongst the alliance agreements: no ally could receive favourable treatment, lest other allies observe it and demand similar concessions. This “simultaneous alliance management” approach was a direct outcome of the alliance audience effect.

Chapter 3 considers the formation of the US-ROK and US-ROC alliances, as well as the initial stages of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. It demonstrates that the ROC’s beliefs about American reliability were influenced by how the US treated the ROK. America’s hesitancy to ally with the ROK unnerved the President of the ROC, Chiang Kai-shek, but America’s reluctance was, in part, due to its fear of setting a precedent in which the preferences of a local ally (Korea) were prioritised over America’s own national interest. The US was aware that Taipei was watching and was being influenced by Washington’s treatment of Seoul, so Washington explained its behaviour within the US-ROK relationship to Chiang Kai-shek. Based on his observations of the US-ROK alliance negotiations and the example set by US negotiators, Chiang realised that in order to obtain his own
alliance with the US, he would have to abandon his goal of restarting the Chinese Civil War with American support. Although Victor Cha has suggested that the US-ROC alliance was Washington's way of ‘chaining Chiang’, the alliance audience effect framework instead shows that Chiang willingly accepted the restraining elements of the US-ROC alliance. After Chiang offered to subordinate his desire for reunification to America’s interest in avoiding large-scale conflict with Communist China, the US concluded the US-ROC alliance in late 1954.

The signing of this treaty occurred shortly before an escalation of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, and this is the focus of Chapter 4. This chapter clearly illustrates and firmly justifies the dissertation’s delineation between loyalty and reliability. American decision-makers were torn in two directions: they felt that to abandon the “offshore islands” of Quemoy and Matsu would catastrophically damage allied confidence in the United States, even though the US had never publicly committed to defend the islands. But these same allies consistently told the United States that they did not regard the defence of the islands as wise, as to do so would risk a general war with Communist China (and possibly the Soviet Union). America’s apparent loyalty to Taiwan—and the risks of war this would pose—caused some US allies to assess that America’s reliability had decreased, and they worked to restrain America and reduce the risk of war. Though American decision-makers were captivated by the belief that Washington’s reputation as a loyal ally was on trial in the court of alliance opinion, almost all US allies desired American disloyalty to Taiwan.

The first Taiwan Strait Crisis had a profound effect on America’s most important regional ally, Japan, and the consequences of the crisis on this alliance are examined in Chapter 5. Many accounts of the US-Japan alliance argue that resentment felt by the Japanese people created a need to revise the 1951 alliance treaty into an agreement of greater “mutuality” or “equality”. Though it does not radically depart from this argument, this chapter shows that Japanese perceptions of American reliability—which were strongly influenced by

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American conduct during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis—also played an important role in revision of the alliance. Specifically, the risk of being dragged into an unwanted war with mainland China spurred Tokyo’s desire to control how American forces could use bases in Japan. The new treaty, signed in 1960, placed specific limits on how the US could use bases in mainland Japan: with the secret exception of action to defend Korea, US forces would have to request Japanese permission to use bases in mainland Japan for other purposes (such as the defence of Formosa, or the offshore islands).

The last case study, in Chapter 6, examines the negotiations to transfer administrative control of Okinawa back to Japan. Under the auspices of the 1960 US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, American forces could use bases on this small island for any purpose and there was no requirement to seek permission from the Japanese Government. This made the island particularly important for the defence of the ROK and ROC, and these states were very sensitive to any suggestion that a reversion of the island to Japanese control could imperil their own security. As US-Japan discussions about Okinawa’s reversion progressed between 1967 and 1969, the ROK and ROC carefully monitored these negotiations and attempted to influence the US and Japanese Governments. Both Seoul and Taipei lobbied to ensure that their interests—maintaining America’s ability to use Okinawa for the defence of South Korea and Taiwan—would not be threatened by Okinawa’s reversion to Japanese control. In response, the United States adopted a policy of simultaneous alliance management: State Department officials launched a ‘hand-holding operation’ in order to reassure Seoul and Taipei that their security interests would not be jeopardised by reversion.37

Finally, the dissertation concludes by examining the case studies against the expectations of the alliance audience effect. It considers what events since 1969 might support or challenge the theoretical framework, and also examines the framework’s relevance to other aspects of alliance theory.

37 State’s 44757 to Seoul, 22 March 1969, Confidential, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Subject Numeric Files (SNF) 1967-1969, Record Group (RG) 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459.
Although this dissertation is not written as history, because it seeks to identify and examine alliance interdependence—something considered by few authors—it does make a strong contribution to the historical record. Chapter 2 shows how America's need to treat prospective allies fairly and equitable led to a high degree of consistency across discrete alliance treaties. Chapter 3 challenges Victor Cha’s 'Powerplay' thesis by showing that in order to secure an alliance with the United States, Chiang Kai-shek willingly surrendered his ambition of forcibly reuniting China. Though it is not a central theme, Chapter 4 also highlights the limits of American influence on troublesome allies – while Washington wanted to encourage Nationalist Chinese restraint, it was unable to control Taipei in the manner suggested by Cha’s powerplay theory. Chapter 5 presents a new take on the 1960 revision of the US-Japan alliance, and shows that Tokyo’s experience of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis was an important driver of revision efforts. Finally, in Chapter 6, a consideration of the ROC and ROK reaction to the reversion of Taiwan contributes a new perspective on events usually studied only within the context of US-Japan relations.
Chapter 1
Alliances and audiences

As outlined in the introduction, relatively recent scholarship has challenged several aspects of Cold War-era alliance theory, particularly those pertaining to reputation, loyalty and reliability. This chapter reviews the existing body of alliance literature, focusing primarily on the realist texts. Then, it examines recent scholarship on reputation in international politics. This analysis identifies several issues not adequately explained, or not addressed, by current theories of alliance reliability and credibility.

In this chapter, certain concepts, definitions and ideas are developed. Jonathan Mercer’s concept of “resolve” is considered in detail, and its shortcomings identified. Because it is unclear as to what exactly determines a state’s level of “resolve”, this chapter instead advances the idea of reliability. After doing so, the chapter proposes and explains three hypotheses about reliability in alliance politics, and together these form the alliance audience effect framework. The differences between loyalty and reliability are explicated, and other key concepts such as entrapment and abandonment are analysed and critiqued.

The arguments and analysis in this chapter are underpinned by four realist assumptions. First, states will act in their own self-interest. Second, states can possess only imperfect knowledge about the intentions of other states, including their allies. This generates fear and insecurity in the international system. Third, national leaders will act in a rational manner, seeking to attain the best security results for their state. Finally, the nature of the international system is anarchical, meaning that there is no supranational body that can govern or regulate state behaviour.
What is an alliance?

As might be expected, there are a number of competing definitions. Stephen Walt defines an alliance as ‘a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states’.¹ He uses the terms alliance and alignment interchangeably, while other authors delineate between these concepts. Glenn Snyder defines alliances as ‘formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership’, and alignments as ‘expectations of states about whether they will be supported or opposed by other states in future interactions’.² In Snyder’s construct, ‘alliances are a subset of alignments—those that arise from or are formalized by an explicit agreement, usually in the form of a treaty’.³ The Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions dataset authors define alliances as ‘written agreements, signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of conflict, to refrain from military conflict with one another, or to consult/cooperate in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict’.⁴

Walt’s definition is an expansive one, but his willingness to include ‘informal arrangement[s]’ more accurately reflects the dynamics that occur in such relationships – though a formal treaty text may not exist, states can come to count on the support of informal allies, and adversaries have to consider the possibility that these informal allies might intervene even in the absence of an alliance treaty.⁵ Accordingly, this thesis adopts Walt’s definition of an alliance, which also has the advantage of better encapsulating some of the dynamics that are explored in later chapters.

² Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.4, p.6.
³ Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.8.
Existing alliance theory

While certain aspects of alliance theory have been thoroughly explored, other areas remain relatively unexamined. To date, alliance theory has focussed on the formation, functions (deterrence and fighting), and the dissolution of alliances. The seminal neorealist text, Kenneth Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*, does not specifically examine the issue of alliances, but touches upon their different roles in multipolar and bipolar systems.6 Stephen Walt’s book, *The Origins of Alliances*, explains why, how and when alliances form.7 Walt adapts Waltz’s central thesis (that the structure of the international system forces the world towards a bipolar balance of power) by arguing that threat perceptions—not the location and distribution of raw power amongst the international system—are the main determinant of alignments and alliances.

Perhaps the most comprehensive book on alliance theory is *Alliance Politics*, by Glenn Snyder.8 Within the context of a multipolar international system, Snyder argues that alignments between countries are the foundation of alliance agreements. In some cases these alignments are strong enough to make alliances, in one sense, superfluous – the alliance treaty merely codifies military support that would have been provided even if the alliance didn’t exist.9 Snyder explains the division of common goods between alliance partners not only at the inception of the alliance, but he also discusses how changes in power or the external environment can affect alliance negotiation and bargaining.

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7 Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.


One of Snyder's key theoretical contributions is his delineation between allied and adversarial relationships. By considering this security triangle as two games, an "adversary game" and an "alliance game", Snyder demonstrates how nations adopt strategies for their effects—sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary—in both games.\textsuperscript{10}

In order to understand how ideas of loyalty and reliability might affect alliance politics, it is first necessary to understand why alliances form, how they function, and why they end.

**Why do alliances exist? How do they change over time?**

In an anarchical international system, where all states are seeking security from external threats, there are two means of increasing a state's security. The first is through what is known as internal balancing: 'moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, [and] to develop clever strategies'.\textsuperscript{11} The second method, external balancing, focuses on alliances and alignments: 'moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one'.\textsuperscript{12}

Internal balancing, as the name suggests, consists of those things that a state might do, within its own internal resources and borders, to improve its security situation. It might increase the size of its army, better prepare its critical industries to continue operation in wartime, develop new military plans, or stockpile defensive materiel such as rations, fuel and missiles. The most extreme form of internal balancing is probably the development of a nuclear weapons capability, as this can dramatically increase a state's military power. External

\textsuperscript{10} See also Glenn Snyder, 'The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics', *World Politics*, 36:4, 1984, pp.461-495.

\textsuperscript{11} Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.118.

\textsuperscript{12} Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.118. For a review of the literature on internal vs external balancing, see Morrow, 'Alliances: Why Write Them Down?', pp.76-77. On a related subject, concerning whether a state should provide a security partner with either arms, a formal alliance, or both, see Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka and Zack Cooper, 'To Arm or To Ally? The Patron's Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances', *International Security*, 41:2, 2016, pp.90-139.
balancing involves coordination with other nations. A state might find new allies, conclude peace treaties, sign non-aggression pacts, or promise to remain neutral in a conflict.

Some states will lack the necessary human and physical geography to achieve anything more than a low level of security through internal balancing. For such states, external balancing represents the best hope of achieving a higher level of security. Glenn Snyder has contended that in an anarchical system, it is inevitable that states will seek security by pooling their military resources and forming alliance blocs. This is sometimes called the ‘capability aggregation’ alliance model – the military capabilities available to each nation in the alliance exceed those that they might generate through their own internal balancing efforts, and thus the alliance improves their security situation.

But other states, unable to fully know whether these alliances are aggressive or defensive in nature, will likewise seek to improve their own security through the formation of similar alliance blocs. Thus, ‘the eventual result is the division of the system into two rival coalitions’. Snyder’s theory predicts that in a multipolar system, the formation of alliance blocs is inevitable, as the payoff for doing so—regardless of the choices made by other states—always yields a better payoff than not forming alliances. But because most nations will always have other prospective allies, states are gripped by the ‘constant worry about being deserted by one’s ally. The worry arises from the simple fact that the ally has alternative partners and may opt for one of them if it becomes dissatisfied’. Because this possibility exists, allies can never be completely trusted.

Although many states will enter alliances for the purposes of capability aggregation, others will enter alliances in order to increase their influence or

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16 Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.181.
control over other nations. James Morrow has developed a theory of asymmetric alliances, with “asymmetric” referring not to the disparity in military strength between the allies, but for the different payoffs they receive from the alliance. Morrow defines asymmetric alliances as relationships where one ally receives security benefits and the other ally receives autonomy benefits. For a state, Morrow defines autonomy as the ‘degree to which it pursues desired changes in the status quo’. Autonomy benefits might come in the form of political influence over an ally’s internal or foreign policies, or perhaps through the construction of military bases on an ally’s soil.

Security/autonomy alliances are usually between a strong military power and a weaker power. The dominant partner in an asymmetric alliance is willing to provide security for its allies if they provide autonomy benefits for it. The essential nature of those alliances leads to a disproportionate sharing of military expenditures. The asymmetric alliances theory doesn’t conflict significantly with the capability aggregation theory, but expands the cost/benefit equation to include non-military benefits. For the ally providing security benefits, in some cases these alliances can be used to restrain the weaker state. Because there is usually a significant disparity between the military strength of states in a security/autonomy alliance, it is expected that the issue of reliability would take greater prominence. As Miller notes, it seems likely that militarily ‘weak states must care more about reliable allies, since their survival is at greater risk than that of the great powers’.

Common to both the capability aggregation and security/autonomy models is the realist belief that states will pursue their own self-interest above all else. Regardless of whether an alliance is best characterised as one of capability

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19 See Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.75 for a discussion of ‘side payments’. Morrow’s asymmetric alliances theory takes this idea of side payments to a new level, whereby the side payment of autonomy might, in extremis, replace a state’s military contribution to an alliance.
21 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.60.
aggregation or a trade-off of autonomy for security, no state should enter into (or stay in) an alliance when the costs outweigh the benefits. If changing circumstances challenge the cost/benefit ratio of an existing alliance, then a state should renegotiate or abrogate the alliance when the costs exceed the benefits. Because it is impossible to have perfect knowledge about the intent of other nations, then regardless of whether an alliance is best described as one of capability aggregation or a security/autonomy trade-off, states are likely to have concerns about the reliability of their ally. A good alliance ensures that an adequate level of national security is maintained. But alliances can also damage a state's security: the ally may not provide the promised military support, or the ally may attempt to drag the state into an undesired war.

Alliance revision

Once an alliance has formed, changing strategic circumstances can prompt its revision. For example, a more benign threat environment may have reduced the fear that prompted the formation of the alliance, and therefore it may make no sense to persist with it. Alternatively, a state's military capabilities may have increased and as a result it may be less dependent on an alliance to ensure security. Thus, the alliance may now be a liability.

Given realism’s assumptions about rationality, and uncertainty over the intent of other states, alliances should only form and persist when they provide a net security gain for all members. As Michael Altfield argues, ‘it can never be rational for a government to form an alliance which does not increase its security since some increase is always necessary to offset the loss of autonomy which is assumed to occur’.22 For an alliance to form, the question “do the benefits of this alliance outweigh the cost?” must be answered in the affirmative. For an alliance to persist, the question “do the benefits of this alliance still outweigh the cost?” must be answered in the affirmative. At the point when an alliance causes a net

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loss for a state’s security, then the state should withdraw from the alliance.\textsuperscript{23} Alternatively, if another state can offer an alliance deal with greater benefits or lower costs than the present one, then this would be preferred. Based on their pursuit of self-interest, states will seek the best alliance deal possible.

**Alliance management – abandonment and entrapment**

Once an alliance has formed, it will eventually be tested. This might occur through a crisis situation, or it might occur through the gradual shifting of strategic interests, whereby the alliance no longer provides the benefit that it once did, or it precludes the pursuit of some new strategic goal. In all circumstances, realism expects nations to pursue their own self-interest above all else. States should not support an ally, or continue in an alliance, when it does not serve their national interest.

Within alliances, two fears are paramount: these are known as abandonment and entrapment. Snyder describes abandonment as ‘the constant worry about being deserted by one’s ally. The worry arises from the simple fact that the ally has alternative partners [allies] and may opt for one of them if it becomes dissatisfied’ in its current alliance. Snyder argues that concern about abandonment has two aspects: ‘the subjective probability that the partner will defect and the cost to oneself if it does’. Abandonment can also manifest in a refusal to provide promised military support, or the ‘failure to support the ally diplomatically in a dispute with its adversary’.\textsuperscript{24} Miller, another alliance theorist, describes abandonment as ‘the fear that one’s allies will not honor their commitments when the state is threatened’.\textsuperscript{25} The most extreme form of abandonment is to abrogate the alliance in response to an attack on the ally.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} Concepts of alliance institutionalisation and persistence are addressed later in the Chapter.

\textsuperscript{24} Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p.181-182.

\textsuperscript{25} Miller, *The Shadow of the Past*, p.25.

\textsuperscript{26} It is worth noting that fears of abandonment exist despite research demonstrating that approximately 75% of alliance commitments are fulfilled. See Brett Leeds, Andrew Long and Sara Mitchell, ‘Reevaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44:5, 2000, pp.686-699.
According to Snyder, entrapment occurs when one is ‘dragged into a conflict over an ally’s interests that one does not share, or shares only partially...Entrapment occurs when one values the preservation of the alliance more than the cost of fighting for the ally’s interests’.\(^{27}\) In contrast to abandonment, which entails ‘a serious loss of security, the cost of entrapment is an extreme form of lost autonomy’, as a state fights in a conflict it would have rather avoided.\(^{28}\)

These definitions, understandably, place a heavy emphasis on instances of conflict. But these fears may be also present during peacetime. For example, a state may decide that in order to improve its relations with an adversary, which has terse relations with the state’s ally, it is necessary to abrogate the alliance. If the state decides that the cost of its alliance (i.e. the preclusion of a more productive relationship with the ally’s adversary) is higher than the alliance benefit (improved security), then the state will abandon its ally by abrogating the alliance.

As argued earlier, realism expects one basic question to determine the likelihood of an alliance forming, its functional strength, and the manner of its dissolution: “do the benefits of this alliance outweigh its costs?” For an alliance to form and persist, this question must be answered in the affirmative by both parties. If, once the alliance is formed, one or both parties answer the question in the negative, then the alliance should be renegotiated or abrogated. As suggested by Snyder’s claim that a ‘pervasive aspect of alliances...is the constant worry about being deserted by one’s ally’, alliances are never free of uncertainty.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{27}\) Snyder, ‘The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics’, p.467. Other authors use very similar definitions. For example, Miller describes entrapment as ‘a state’s fear of being dragged into an unwanted conflict’. See Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.25.

\(^{28}\) Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.181.

\(^{29}\) Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.181.
Definitions

Though the concepts of abandonment and entrapment are usually confined to wartime or moments of security crisis, they may also be applicable to peacetime scenarios. In slightly modifying the conventional definitions of these concepts, this dissertation extends them beyond times of military confrontation. Regardless of whether it is peacetime, a time of security tensions, or wartime, abandonment occurs when a state’s ally asks the fundamental question—do the benefits of this alliance outweigh its costs?—answers in the negative, and acts accordingly. In this situation—assuming that the alliance cannot be revised to the satisfaction of both states—the ally decides that their interests are best served by either reneging on, or abrogating, the alliance commitment. This occurs most dramatically in a crisis situation, where an ally simply chooses to not provide the promised military support. But this can also happen in peacetime. When Washington abrogated the US-Republic of China Mutual Defense Treaty in 1978, it did so because Beijing made this a condition of establishing diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Washington’s answer to the key question—do the benefits of the US-ROC alliance outweigh its costs?—was negative. As expected, the ROC was abandoned and the alliance was soon abrogated.

Entrapment can also be defined in relation to this key question. Entrapment occurs when a state asks itself—“do the benefits of this alliance outweigh its costs?”—and answers “probably”. This requires some explanation. If the benefits clearly outweigh the costs of the alliance, then no real dilemma arises: in peacetime the alliance happily persists, in times of security tension the state moves to signal its support of the ally, in wartime the state moves to fight alongside its ally (or provide another form of military support). If the costs clearly outweigh the benefits, then abandonment will occur.

The issue of entrapment arises when it is difficult to accurately estimate the prospective costs and benefits involved in alliance action. For example, the state decides that the value of the alliance outweighs the costs of preserving it, but
only barely. Because the state cannot confidently predict the exact outcome of the alliance interaction, there is a risk that it has made the wrong decision. It may turn out that the costs of supporting the ally will be far higher than expected. As the cost/benefit value of the alliance approaches equilibrium, the outcome of the alliance interaction will become more uncertain and the fear of entrapment will increase. The second realist assumption (that states can have only imperfect knowledge of other state's intentions) means that there is a grey area around the point of equilibrium, where a state will not be confident in their cost/benefit analysis. Entrapment occurs when the state—which would have preferred to avoid the question altogether—supports its ally, even though it is unsure that this is the correct decision.30

Snyder states that "entrainment occurs when one values the preservation of the alliance more than the cost of fighting for the ally's interests".31 This dissertation's definition of entrapment—a state supports its ally's policy despite being unsure if the value of the alliance will outweigh the costs of this support—maintains Snyder's emphasis on the cost/benefit calculation, but broadens the concept to both crisis and non-crisis situations.32 It also removes Snyder's assumption that abandonment will result in the abrogation of the alliance.33 For the sake of simplicity the dissertation does not use a different term and this definition does not differ violently from those offered by other authors, but the change of emphasis is meaningful.

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30 Given that states have imperfect and incomplete knowledge, as the cost/benefit ratio approaches equilibrium there is a greater likelihood that an action to support an ally will not be the correct decision. This uncertainty contributes to the fear of entrapment – one cannot be absolutely certain whether the point of equilibrium is approaching, or has passed. If a state is reasonably confident that the benefits of assisting an ally outweigh the costs of doing so, then entrapment fears are assuaged.


33 Another way of conceiving this dynamic is that entrapment occurs when a state's desire to protect its alliance from risk is stronger than its desire to avoid costs, but the state would have preferred the situation had never arisen. Uncertainty is generated by two factors: the costs of supporting the ally might be higher than expected, but the costs of abandoning the ally might also be lower than expected. For example, a state might decide to fight alongside its ally out of a belief that if it doesn't, the ally will abrogate the alliance. But this is not certain – in some cases, an alliance may persist despite such a blatant instance of abandonment.
This dissertation's definition of abandonment—that it occurs when a state decides its interests are best served by not supporting an ally's policy—also slightly broadens Snyder’s concept by extending it to non-crisis situations. A state might abandon an ally by declining to provide it some form of support the ally desires, but is not specifically required by the alliance treaty. This may or may not lead to the abrogation of the alliance, but rather more realistic expectations about alliance support. Further, an ally's “policy” could be one of warfighting, but also a peacetime policy which had previously been agreed within the alliance.

Managing abandonment and entrapment

Within an alliance, each state will normally have a prevailing fear – either that of abandonment or entrapment. The fear need not be severe or particularly influential, but most states will regard their ally as either too aggressive or too timid on particular issues. For example, if a state fears that their ally will abandon them if conflict breaks out with an adversary, they are unlikely to fear their ally entrapping them into a conflict with this adversary. However, they may be fearful of their ally entrapping them into a conflict with a different adversary. Fears of abandonment and entrapment will be highest when allies have different adversaries and/or different strategic interests. A state will experience heightened fears of entrapment if their ally’s behaviour increases the costs, or decreases the benefits, of an alliance. As the cost/benefit payoff approaches equilibrium and it becomes more likely that the alliance is no longer providing a net security benefit, then a state’s fear of entrapment will increase.

There are various ways in which allies can minimise the risks of abandonment and entrapment. Faced with a growing risk of entrapment, a state can attempt to modify their ally’s behaviour. In a crisis situation, the ally might be restrained by the threat of non-support, or they might be reassured and calmed by a strong pledge of support. Faced with the prospect of abandonment, a state might offer

34 However, as Chapter 6 will show, in some circumstances both fears can be held simultaneously.
to modify its behaviour, in the hope of attracting a stronger commitment from
their ally. Another method may be to demonstrate greater loyalty to the ally, in
the hope that this fidelity will be reciprocated.\footnote{35}

These duelling fears are less likely to be present at the creation of an alliance
agreement. A significant likelihood of abandonment or entrapment would
suggest strongly divergent strategic interests, which would complicate—or
perhaps prevent—the negotiation of an alliance. However, it may be possible to
address some entrapment fears through careful drafting—or revision—of an
alliance treaty. A defensive alliance can guard against some entrapment by
specifying that a mutual defence obligation does not apply if one’s ally is an
aggressor. For example, in the US-ROC alliance a secret minute ensured ‘that the
United States need not honor its commitment to Taiwan’s defense if the latter
were to launch an attack on the mainland without prior consultation with and
approval from Washington’.\footnote{36} Abandonment fears can be addressed—at least
partially—by the forward stationing of a state’s forces to an ally’s border with an
adversary.\footnote{37}

In some circumstances, where it is unable to address the risk of entrapment, a
state may allow itself to be entrapped. Its willingness to do so will depend on its
ability to achieve security without the alliance: some alliances might be so vital
that anything which risks their dissolution is unacceptable. Cha notes that ‘the
consequences of defecting from a valued partner (i.e. dealignment by that
partner) can be more disastrous to one’s security than being dragged into the
partner’s conflict’.\footnote{38} Abandoning one’s ally is a risky proposition: the worst-case
scenario is that a friend becomes an enemy, but other options—ranging from
simple cancellation of the alliance to no retribution at all—are also possible.

\footnote{35}{For a more comprehensive discussion on avoiding abandonment and entrapment, see Snyder, \textit{Alliance Politics}, pp.183-186.}
\footnote{36}{Christensen, \textit{Worse Than a Monolith}, p.143.}
\footnote{37}{See, for example, Schelling’s explanation of the American ‘trip-wire’ forces in Europe during
the Cold War. Schelling, \textit{Arms and Influence}, p.47. \ It is worth noting that although this “tripwire
theory” idea is often referenced, it has never been tested in practice. On the deterrence value of
stationing nuclear weapons on allied territory, see Matthew Fuhrmann and Todd Sechser,
‘Signalling Alliance Commitments: Hand-Tying and Sunk Costs in Extended Nuclear Deterrence’,
\textit{American Journal of Political Science}, 58:4, 2014, pp.919-935.}
\footnote{38}{Cha, \textit{Alignment Despite Antagonism}, p.41.}
Faced with the worst-case scenario of alliance break-up, it may be preferable to fully support an ally in their conflict with an adversary even if one does not share the ally’s interests at stake. As Snyder notes, ‘Alliance promises are often made and kept even though they are not fully consistent with the parties’ interests’.39

Of course, it is much better to prevent situations in which either alliance promises must be kept in costly ways (i.e. entrapment), or broken (i.e. abandonment). It is for this reason that, rationally, states should always keep a close eye on the behaviour of their allies. If a state can prevent their ally from behaving in an unreliable fashion, then entrapment and abandonment possibilities might be avoided.

It is important to note that these dynamics do not operate solely in their most extreme forms. For example, a state might be “partially” abandoned by an ally that fails to provide material assistance, but offers diplomatic support. Or a state might be entrapped, but following crisis consultations, it might be mutually agreed that because of their limited or conflicting interests, they provide less military support than the ally might have originally expected. Thus, the state’s entrapment is less severe than it might have otherwise been.

Within alliances, blended strategies might be used: a state might try to simultaneously restrain and reassure its ally. For example, the ally might be told that while the alliance remains in force, decision-makers would consider the origins of a conflict very carefully before a final decision to commit.40 Such a message might restrain the ally in their conduct with the adversary by increasing the ally’s fear of abandonment. A nervous ally, who was perhaps moving towards a détente with the adversary and thus possible realignment, might be reassured by both an intensification of alliance planning and a request to distance itself from the adversary. Thus, alliances can be used as mechanisms of influence, control and restraint. The more dependent a state is on the alliance—the fewer their realignment options, the more limited their ability to balance

39 Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.9.
internally, and the greater the level of adversary threat—the more bargaining power its ally will have.41

Can states be “loyal” allies?

During the Cold War, deterrence and alliance theorists often assumed that just as an adversary could assess a state’s threats based on its reputation for resolve, a friendly state could assess an ally’s reliability based on its reputation for loyalty. Both of these ideas are founded upon the idea of commitments being interdependent. As Schelling wrote, ‘the main reason why we are committed in many of these places is that our threats are interdependent. Essentially we tell the Soviets that we have to react here because, if we did not, they would not believe us when we say that we will react there’.42

Alliance theorists argued that just as threats to adversaries were interdependent, so too were promises to allies. Their language suggests that this idea was premised on moral principles around loyalty: Snyder and Diesing wrote that just ‘As “resolve credit” with adversaries can be earned and “banked” by repeated instances of firmness, so “loyalty credit” with present or potential allies can be generated and drawn upon in the future by repeated demonstrations of support’.43 Elsewhere, Snyder also refers to a state’s interest in ‘maintaining a reputation for loyalty, since the ally can be expected to keep its promise only if it expects oneself to reciprocate’.44 He assumes that a ‘reputational interest in supporting allies’ exists, because any disloyalty risks ‘the defection of an alienated partner’.45 Snyder and Diesing extend this beyond a purely reciprocal relationship by arguing that allies ‘have an incentive to stick by their current partners...to create a general belief among other states that they are reliable alliance partners’.46 The assumptions are that a) states observe their ally’s

41 Snyder, Alliance Politics, pp. 30-2.
42 Schelling, Arms and Influence, p.55.
43 Snyder and Diesing, Conflict Among Nations, p.432.
44 Snyder, Glenn. Alliance Politics, p.53.
45 Snyder, Alliance Politics, p.54.
46 Snyder and Diesing, Conflict among Nations, p.432.
behaviour and b) punish the ally if it is disloyal to another ally. In short, they argue that alliances are interdependent based on loyalty reputations.

In recent years, these ideas about loyalty, reliability and credibility have been questioned. Jonathan Mercer examines whether states can develop advantageous reputations for resolve towards adversaries. His hypotheses are premised on the concept that an observer state will explain the behaviour of another state based on in-group/out-group dynamics. Mercer argues that if the state is an adversary or ally—i.e. if they are part of an out-group—then the observer will attribute their desired behaviour to situational circumstances, but undesired behaviour to their character. For example: if an adversary retreats on their threat (desired behaviour) it is because of situational circumstances, but if they follow through on their threat (undesired behaviour) it is because of their resolute national character. Allies also have their desired behaviour described in situational terms, but their undesired behaviour in character terms: if a state abandons its ally, this is because of a character trait of cowardice or irresolution, whereas if they provide the promised military support this is only because it was in their interest to do so.\textsuperscript{47} Because of this dynamic, Mercer argues that allied states can have reputations for disloyalty, but not loyalty, whereas adversary states can have reputations for resolve, not irresolution.

Like earlier deterrence and alliance theorists, Mercer analyses threats to adversaries alongside promises to allies. Defining resolve as ‘the extent to which a state will risk war to keep its promises and uphold its threats’, Mercer’s primary finding is that standing firm in one crisis will not convince adversaries that a state is equally likely to stand firm in a future crisis, because ‘Decision-makers do not consistently use another state’s past behaviour...to predict that state’s behaviour’.\textsuperscript{48} The alliance corollary of this is that standing firm in one crisis will not convince allies that similar behaviour is likely in future crises. In his conclusion, Mercer suggests that a state should not worry about its allies believing that it lacks resolve. He argues that because America’s allies will

\textsuperscript{47} See Mercer, \textit{Reputation and International Politics}, Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{48} Mercer, \textit{Reputation and International Politics}, p.15, p.227.
explain away our efforts to demonstrate resolve by citing the transient situation...[and] assume that our interests and capabilities determine our resolve', Washington cannot gain a reputation for being a reliable ally. On the issue of reputation amongst allies, Mercer’s policy advice—that ‘fighting to create a reputation for resolution with allies is unwise’—is a bold departure from deterrence theory.49

Gregory Miller posits that a reputation for being a reliable ally might be discrete from a reputation for being a credible adversary, and so he independently considers the issue of reliability within alliance relationships. Miller does not explicitly define reliability, but argues that a state is unreliable if it ‘Fails to fight when it is obligated to do so’, ‘signs a separate agreement with an enemy’, ‘drags its ally into an unwanted conflict’, or ‘fails to support an ally during a crisis short of war’. In doing so, Miller implicitly suggests that reliability is a broader concept than loyalty or resolve. It’s not clear whether a state that ‘drags its ally into an unwanted conflict’ could be accurately described as disloyal, as it is probably not breaching the alliance treaty text, but it could certainly be described as unreliable.50 Miller's four criteria suggest that allies are unreliable if they present a risk of either entrapment or abandonment.

Miller’s research shows that reliable states will maximise their autonomy within alliances and will be able to ally with states of similar reliability, whereas unreliable states will struggle to attract new allies.51 Miller finds that an unreliable state will be ‘more constrained by the design of its alliance’ – its allies will modify alliance agreements to compensate for the state’s unreliability.52 He also considers two hypotheses about alliance termination: that ‘an unreliable

49 Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.228.
50 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.44.
51 Miller uses the term ‘autonomy’ in a similar way to James Morrow, who developed a concept of asymmetric alliances where security was traded off against autonomy, defined as the ‘degree to which it [a state] pursues desired changes in the status quo’. In alliances involving a security/autonomy trade-off, ally A provides security for ally B, who in turn provides something (influence over foreign policies, military bases, etc) that allows A to increase its autonomy. See Morrow, ‘Alliances and Asymmetry’.
52 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.51. Miller’s hypothesis—that ‘an unreliable state will be more constrained by the design of its alliances’—was supported in 95.2% of observations. See also pp.186-7.
state will lose the ally that it entrapped or failed to support’, and ’an unreliable state will lose its allies generally’.53 While Miller does not find strong support for either of these hypotheses, he argues that this does not mean that states should be unconcerned about their reliability reputations, because reliable states will be able to ‘form alliances with other reliable states...[and] preserve their freedom of action within their alliances’.54

Assessing the literature

Mercer’s conclusions about loyalty reputations amongst allies raise more questions than they answer. If a state’s actions towards an adversary, regardless of whether or not they display a character trait of “resolve”, represent real proof of its interests and capabilities—as opposed to mere professions and assurances—then they are likely to be keenly watched by other allies. The allies may be watching the state’s actions not to judge its moral character—its resolve or loyalty—but to obtain better information about its interests and capabilities. After all, it may be the same capabilities, and similar interests, that determine whether the state will fulfil other alliance commitments. If there are discrepancies between a state’s publicly professed interests—expressed and codified through military alliance treaties—and those to which its actions attest, then allies might worry about the reliability of the state’s other alliance commitments. As Stephen Walt argues, the ‘litmus test’ of an alliance ‘comes not at annual summit meetings—which are designed for the ritual incantation of unifying rhetoric—but when member-states are called upon to do something for each other’.55

While deterrence theorists—and also Mercer—expect these states to make dispositional (character) judgements about their ally’s disloyalty, the observer states may instead look for evidence confirming that the interests underpinning their own alliance are still valued by the ally.56 On alliances, Mercer’s core

53 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.49.
54 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.207.
56 Other authors also assume that observer states are monitoring allied behaviour in order to make dispositional judgements. See, Douglas Gibler, ’The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and
argument is that states explain an ally’s desired behaviour in situational terms, their undesired behaviour in character terms, and that only character assessments form reputations (i.e. expectations about future behaviour). But what if states conceive of all allied behaviour in situational terms – as revelations or proof of capabilities and interests? Mercer hints at this likelihood in his conclusion, when he notes that allies will ‘tend to assume that...interests and capabilities determine...resolve’. If that is the case, then what, exactly, are a state's allies observing and assessing? Is it the state's innate moral character, or simply better information about its capabilities and interests? What determines the level of a state’s “resolve”?

Given the realist condition of imperfect information and the insecurity to which this contributes, this dissertation argues that states should monitor their allies for signs of divergent interests in the same way that they monitor adversaries for signs of hostile intent. Snyder implicitly acknowledges that reliable allies, and strong alliances, are driven by convergent strategic interests: ‘when allies have a common enemy, the alliance security dilemma is softened by the unlikelihood of abandonment and the low cost of entrapment...When they face different enemies [i.e. have divergent interests], the dilemma is more acute’. If observer allies expect America’s actions to be determined by its capabilities and interests, not some innate national characteristic such as resolve or loyalty, then it is still logical for these allies to monitor American behaviour to confirm that the interests at stake—those codified by the alliance—are still valued by Washington.

Alliance Formation’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52:3, 2008, p.434, for an interesting example that prioritises interests for adversarial threats, but character-based explanations for alliance promises.


58 The following analysis mainly focuses on how states obtain better information about the interests and intent of their ally, but the alliance audience framework does expect that this desire for better information would also apply in circumstances when an ally's capabilities are in doubt. See, for example, Paul Huth, ‘Reputations and deterrence: A theoretical and empirical assessment’, *Security Studies*, 7:1, 2007, pp.76-79. Also, critiques of Mercer’s work note that even within Mercer’s theory—which allows for the prospect of allies doubting US resolve—it might be worth fighting some conflicts in order to ‘maintain alliance cohesion’. See Dale Copeland, ‘Do reputations matter?’, *Security Studies*, 7:1, 2007, pp.33-71.

A state’s alliance commitments might have been beyond question at the time the treaty was signed, but national interests and capabilities can vary over time as resources grow or diminish, or as political systems and leaders change. As Leeds writes, ‘as conditions change, violation becomes more likely. Reassessing policy as incentives change remains important’.

Knowing this, four questions are likely to weigh heavily upon the minds of national leaders and defence planners. The first two questions concern the risk of abandonment: is my ally willing and able to defend me now, and does an emerging trend suggest they are less or more likely to defend me in the future? The next two questions concern the risk of entrapment: does my ally pose an entrapment risk now, and does an emerging trend suggest they will pose a lesser or greater entrapment risk in the future?

An ally’s present actions attest to their capabilities and interests now, and thus help answer the first and third questions, but it is the history of an ally’s behaviour that establishes the trend line that provides information relevant to the second and fourth questions. Even then, an ally’s past behaviour is not necessarily an indication of their likely future behaviour, but understanding the general trend line of an ally’s interests can allow a state to better assess the ally’s reliability.

Thus, questions about future abandonment and entrapment risks are the most problematic. If a state believes that because their ally’s interests or capabilities are changing over time, and therefore that abandonment risks are also likely to increase over time, then the state will probably address this anticipated security deficit by acquiring new defence capabilities, or through the drawn-out process of settling old scores and forming new alliances (if new allies are available). Alternatively, if an ally’s behaviour suggests that abandonment risks are decreasing over time, then a state may wish to reduce its defence spending in favour of health, education or infrastructure investment. It may seek to “free-ride” and spend less on its own defence, relaxed in the belief that the ally will protect them. The same dynamic applies to fears of entrapment – if a state

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believes entrapment risks are growing more acute, it should seek to mitigate these risks through plans to restrain the ally or distance itself from the ally’s aggressive stance. This contrasts with Mercer’s implicit assumption, that a state will worry about their ally’s reliability only at the next significant crisis in which the state might require military support.

In considering issues of alliance management, Mercer’s conclusion—that allies will ‘tend to assume that our interests and capabilities determine our resolve’—is not particularly satisfying.61 It offers little predictive power about if and how a state’s actions might influence alliance politics. A realist approach expects that if an ally’s behaviour is proof of its interests and capabilities, then states are likely to keenly observe the ally’s behaviour in order to better understand the ally’s interests and assess its capabilities, and thus better judge whether the ally poses risks of abandonment or entrapment.

Miller’s hypotheses on alliance formation emphasise the value of being perceived as reliable when seeking new allies, but another of his hypotheses—that ‘an unreliable state will lose its allies generally’—provides a hard test for the concept of reliability in alliance management.62 Some alliance relationships, once they have commenced and have become institutionalised, create few regular and ongoing costs.63 In such circumstances, even if a state believed that its ally would be unlikely to support it in a conflict, is there any advantage to abrogating the alliance? The state could simply allow the alliance to stand, but its disposition may shift in that it will intend to renege on the alliance commitment if the ally requests support. Prima facie, the decision to terminate an alliance could only increase the chance of the ally’s disloyalty, whereas if the alliance is left intact then some possibility of loyalty might remain. Additionally, the retention of the alliance might pose some deterrent value to possible

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61 Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.228.
62 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.49.
63 It might be more accurate to say that the costs of the alliance become accepted and normalized to the extent that they do not register as being at all onerous or burdensome. The persistence of NATO and various alliances in Asia after the end of the Cold War challenges the argument that the decline of a threat will result in the dissolution of an alliance. See Walt, ‘Alliances in a Unipolar World’, and Walt, ‘Why Alliances Endure or Collapse’.
adversaries. However, having judged that the ally is very likely to prove unfaithful in the moment of alliance need, it would be rational for the state to address the likelihood of a sudden security deficit through balancing behaviour.

In sum, Mercer suggests that a state should be unconcerned about whether or not it is perceived as a reliable security partner, as allies will believe that the state’s actions reflect its interests and capabilities (and not innate national character traits). However, as noted earlier, if these capabilities are the same as those that would be used to defend other allies, and if the interests challenged are similar to those held by other allies, then it would be unsurprising if a state’s behaviour in one alliance relationship had an influence on the abandonment/entrapment complexes of its other allies. This would establish clear interdependence between seemingly discrete alliance commitments. In observing and assessing the state’s behaviour, the other allies would be making situational judgements about the state’s interests and capabilities, not dispositional or character-based judgements about the state’s moral qualities.

Miller’s study finds that a state perceived to be unreliable will be more constrained by the design of its alliances. Unreliable states ‘will have to make greater concessions to their allies to prevent an alliance from ending’.64 In short, its allies will attempt to mitigate the risk of disloyalty by demanding greater degrees of obligation, precision or delegation in alliance texts. However, while this hypothesis provides a suitable test for the multipolar and continental environment of pre-WW1 Europe, it seems less suited for other regions and times, where treaty texts may be more difficult to amend or renegotiate. For example, since 1954 there has been significant caution in how America’s bilateral alliances in Asia have been handled, in case any revision was not approved by the US Congress.65 Also, modifications of an alliance text may not

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64 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.50.
65 This was a concern during the “ANZUS Crisis” of the mid-1980s. The United States sought to punish New Zealand for refusing to allow nuclear-armed vessels of the US Navy to visit ports in New Zealand. There was fear that if the trilateral ANZUS Treaty was abrogated, then Congress might not approve a bilateral treaty with Australia to replace it. See Gerald Hensley, Friendly Fire: Nuclear Politics & the Collapse of ANZUS, 1984-1987, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2013, pp.192-193.
actually mitigate the abandonment or entrapment risk posed by an ally – it changes their public proclamation, but again, this is no guarantee that it will result in changed behaviour. In such circumstances, it seems more likely that states would hedge against their ally’s unreliability by improving their own defence capabilities, making new alliances or settling disagreements with adversaries.

Both Mercer and Miller make very significant contributions to the debate about reputation, threats, promises, loyalty and reliability. In short, Mercer counsels policymakers to not worry about the views of allies. Miller finds that states are unlikely to abrogate alliances based on perceptions that their ally is unreliable, but if a state is perceived as unreliable then this reputation will negatively influence the terms of its alliance(s). Neither author considers the possibility that states might monitor their ally’s conduct, in other alliances, to make a more informed judgement about the ally’s reliability, and that these judgements might affect security behaviour and alliance politics in subtler ways.

**What is reliability? How does it differ to loyalty or resolve? Do reputations exist?**

Before progressing, two points require elaboration. The first point is that Mercer’s oft-used term—“resolve”—is somewhat imprecise. Mercer defines resolve as ‘the extent to which a state will risk war to keep its promises and uphold its threats’, and describes ‘a reputation for loyalty among allies’ as the ‘flip-side of a reputation for resolve’, but he never fully explains what determines a state’s level of resolve or loyalty: is it their national character, or their interests and capabilities?66 Mercer also assumes that states will want their ally to display resolve, and be loyal to its other allies. He does write (in his conclusion) that allies ‘will tend to assume that...interests and capabilities determine...resolve’, and this is a far more useful starting point for an examination of alliance

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66 Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*, p.15. Other authors have noted the shortcomings of “resolve”. See, for example, Huth, ’Reputations and deterrence’.
behaviour. Here, Mercer implicitly argues that any observer state will regard its ally's loyalty (or disloyalty) toward another ally as having revealed the common ally's interests and capabilities. The second point—explained further below—is that it is not clear whether states actually do have "reputations" for resolve, loyalty, or reliability.

This dissertation uses the term reliability, instead of loyalty or resolve, for five reasons. Firstly, the concept of loyalty in an alliance relationship places significant emphasis on times of conflict: a loyal ally will provide the state military support; a disloyal ally will abandon it. Inter-state war and conflict occur rarely, so this concept of loyalty establishes an extreme and infrequent test. If beliefs about loyalty or resolve are formed only by a response to conflict or crises, then few events will influence these perceptions.

Secondly, reliability incorporates the risks of entrapment as well as abandonment. The idea of alliance loyalty is often applied to abandonment—a state was disloyal because it abandoned its ally. But if the ally launched an unprovoked attack on an adversary, then is it disloyal to not support this aggression? And how should the aggressive ally be described? Have they been disloyal by creating the risk of entrapment their alliance partner into a conflict? The concept of loyalty is not easily applied to such circumstances, but the idea of reliability can be used to describe such behaviour. While the idea of loyalty focuses predominantly on abandonment risks, reliability can be used to assess both abandonment and entrapment—a wider range of alliance behaviour.

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67 Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.228. On p.43, Mercer talks about excluding 'other factors...such as capability or interests' from the hypotheses he generates for deterrence theory, but his acknowledgement (on p.228) that allies 'will tend to assume that our interests and capabilities determine our resolve' suggests that these two factors are actually contained within his own hypotheses. The approach of focussing on interests and capabilities, instead of resolve, is also supported by Press, in Calculating Credibility. Press argues that threats to adversaries are most credible when the issuer has the capability to follow through, and when the state's vital interests are obviously at stake.

68 This concept of reliability is quite similar to Miller's, although it is explained in a different way. See Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.44. The term "credibility" was considered, but decided against, on the basis that it is usually used to describe an adversary's assessment of an opposing alliance's unity or strength.

69 The terms 'reliability beliefs' and 'reliability perceptions' are used interchangeably.
Table 1 illustrates this understanding of reliability in tabular form. This scenario, depicting how two allies (states A and B) are considering their policy toward another nation, shows how the idea of reliability addresses both the risks of abandonment and entrapment. Policy options run along a spectrum from “conciliate” to “confront” (make concessions, or go to war). If both A and B desire a conciliatory approach, or a confrontational one, then their interests are aligned and each will be a reliable ally for the other. But if the two allies desire different policy approaches, then one will fear abandonment, and entrapment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE B</th>
<th>CONCILIATE</th>
<th>CONFRONT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONCILIATE</td>
<td>Convergent interests</td>
<td>Divergent interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither A, nor B, fears abandonment or entrapment</td>
<td>A fears abandonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allies are reliable</td>
<td>B fears entrapment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allies are unreliable</td>
<td>Allies are unreliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFRONT</td>
<td>Divergent interests</td>
<td>Convergent interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A fears entrapment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B fears abandonment</td>
<td>Allies are reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – alliance reliability during security tensions/wartime

Of course, this table is an idealised type – rarely will the interests of two states in alliance be perfectly identical. And even if they agree on a desired outcome, they may disagree on which strategy gives the best chance of realising it. So while each state will have its own specific policy preferences (based on its interests), there will be some room for negotiation on how the alliance can cooperate in achieving its shared interests. States heavily reliant on the alliance for security may have to sacrifice some of their preferences in order to prioritise their most
important interests, such as preservation of the alliance and the security it provides.\(^7\)

Thirdly, when compared to alternatives such as “loyalty”, the concept of reliability captures a broader range of alliance interactions, and therefore has greater explanatory power. Two questions occupy the minds of leaders: is my ally reliable now, and is there reason to think that they will be more or less reliable in the future? The nature of a peacetime alliance relationship affects these considerations. If two allies work together on defence technology, share intelligence, conduct joint military exercises, have honest exchanges about their national interests, treat each other fairly and coordinate their diplomatic efforts, then this trend of cooperation is likely to provide a reassuring answer to both questions. An ally can be perceived as reliable even though the ultimate test of alliance loyalty—military support against an enemy—has not occurred. The ally is perceived as reliable because their peacetime behaviour suggests that the interests of the two allies are convergent, and therefore they do not pose risks of abandonment or entrapment. But an ally that takes a unilateral approach to security affairs—fails to consult, pays little regard to their ally’s interests, treats an ally poorly in comparison to other allies, or abruptly changes previous agreements to coordinate policy—is likely to be perceived as unreliable, because its behaviour suggests that it does not value the alliance and has interests that run contrary to those of its ally. The constancy of a good-faith approach to alliance issues matters, because an inconsistent approach, regular disagreements, or abrupt changes to previously agreed policy, will suggest the ally is unreliable due to divergent interests.

Applying the concept of reliability to peacetime interactions hinges on the slightly broader definition of abandonment that was outlined earlier in this

\(^7\) For a game theoretic explanation of such bargaining dynamics, see the "Hero" and "Leader" games in Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, p.144. See also their discussion of the "Protector" game: in alliances between great and small powers, the value of the alliance to the small power may be so significant that their ability to influence the ally is negligible, and thus they have to adopt many of their ally’s interests as their own.
chapter.\footnote{A state abandons its ally when it ‘decides its interests are best served by not supporting an ally’s policy’. See pp.36-38. This dissertation’s definition of entrapment could also apply to a peacetime policy coordination issue within an alliance, though for clarity of explanation this has not been included in \textit{table 2}. One example of peacetime alliance entrapment is when, in 1951, Japan reluctantly accepted America’s policy preference that Tokyo not recognise, nor trade, with Communist China. In doing so, Japan’s decision met the dissertation’s definition of entrapment: Japan supported its ally’s policy despite being unsure if the value of the alliance would outweigh the costs of this support.}

As shown in \textit{table 2} below, if two allies (states A and B) had agreed to coordinate their policy on an issue (i.e. the top left cell), but then A decides that its interests will be best served by abruptly changing its own policy and no longer supporting State B’s policy (i.e. the top right cell), then A has abandoned B and is an unreliable ally on this issue. Where states have never agreed to coordinate policy on an issue, or have deliberately agreed to not coordinate their policy on an issue (i.e. the lower right cell), there are no expectations of alliance support and thus divergent policies on this issue are not evidence of unreliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STATE A</th>
<th></th>
<th>STATE B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COORDINATE POLICY</td>
<td>INSIST ON OWN POLICY</td>
<td>COORDINATE POLICY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alliance cooperation: agreed policy on an issue</td>
<td>Divergent interests</td>
<td>Divergent interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allies are reliable on this issue</td>
<td>A abandons B</td>
<td>A is unreliable on this issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No expectations of coordinated policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Table 2} – alliance reliability in peacetime
Of course, the consequences of peacetime abandonment on an issue of agreed policy are unlikely to be as severe as wartime abandonment on an issue of coalition fighting strategy, but such instances still fit the definition. Just because the consequences are not calamitous, this does not mean they are unimportant. Unreliability in peacetime can generate doubt about an ally’s likely reliability during wartime. For example, throughout the Cold War Tokyo feared that the United States would depart from their agreed position and abruptly recognise Communist China without first consulting Japan (i.e. Japan feared the US would abandon it). This is, of course, exactly what happened in 1972. The spectrum of policy choices was essentially bound by “exclude Communist China from the international system” (the agreed policy) at one end, and “recognise Communist China” (America’s new policy) at the other. When the US abruptly changed its policy and recognised Beijing, this upset Japan and sparked fears as to what further policy reversals might be imminent. Despite the fact that Tokyo had long-desired this policy change, the way in which it occurred made Japan worry about America’s reliability: what other sudden changes of US policy might be made, without prior warning?72

![Diagram](image.png)

*Figure 1 – illustration of A-B and A-C alliances*

Fourthly, the idea of reliability deemphasises the prospect of a state having immutable character traits that will be observed in a uniform fashion by different allies. In certain situations, a state might actively desire that their ally be disloyal to its other security partners. Consider the alliance structure

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illustrated in *figure 1*, where State A has two alliances (one with State B, and one with State C). If, for example, State A only has military capabilities sufficient to defend one of its two allies (States B and C), and both of these allies have come under simultaneous attack threatening national destruction, then each ally will earnestly desire that State A be disloyal to its other ally.

In another scenario, State B might desire that its ally, State A, be disloyal to State C, which has needlessly provoked an unwanted war. From State B’s perspective, State C’s rogue behaviour might justify a decision to abandon it as a way of punishing its adventurism. State B might also be relieved that State A’s military capabilities won’t be tied up in a defence of the rogue ally, State C.

*Figure 2* – illustration of A-B, A-C and A-D alliances

This is also one of several reasons why this dissertation also rejects the idea of “reputation”. The collective aspect of the term is problematic; this dissertation argues that because states have different strategic interests, they will each have a different assessment of international events and state behaviour. For example, if State A has three allies (States B, C and D), as depicted in *figure 2*, then its decision to abandon State B might be welcomed by State C, but condemned by State D. Because different states have different interests, they will view the behaviour of their ally through a different lens. Mercer’s framework expects that
State A’s disloyalty to State B will lead States C and D to attribute this behaviour to dispositional (character) explanations, but that a state’s loyalty to one ally will lead its other allies to attribute this behaviour to situational explanations.\(^{73}\) In contrast, this dissertation argues that observing allies always make situational attributions but will—depending on their own interests—hold different views about what behaviour is desirable or undesirable. Further, the ally’s behaviour is important not because it proves the nation’s moral character, but because it is public proof of capabilities and interests.\(^{74}\) Based on the realist belief that the declared policies of other nations can never be fully trusted, the alliance audience effect framework argues that states observing an ally’s behaviour will not rush to make dispositional attributions, but will instead assess the behaviour as newly revealed information about their ally’s capabilities and interests. Based on this information, states can better assess not only their ally’s likely reaction to future or present conflict scenarios, but also its likely alliance reliability. Though leaders might occasionally use value-laden language to describe the conduct of another state, the behaviour is important primarily for the information it reveals or confirms about interests and/or military capabilities.

This is a significant departure from Mercer’s approach, as he argues that only reputations (i.e. character assessments), and not situational judgements (i.e. assessments of capability and interest), govern expectations of future behaviour. Mercer defines reputation as ‘a judgement of someone’s character (or disposition) that is then used to predict or explain future behaviour’, and contrasts this with a ‘situational attribution [which] has only within-situation validity; it cannot be used to predict or explain behaviour in a different situation’.\(^{75}\) If Mercer’s reasoning is correct, then a state should never be encouraged by the fact that its ally has stood by one of its other alliance commitments, as the state will make a situational attribution: the ally’s action in

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\(^{73}\) See Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.47. In table 1, Mercer hypothesises that an ally ‘standing firm’ will lead an observer to making ‘situational attributions, because the ‘standing firm’ is desired behaviour.

\(^{74}\) For more examples of how nations had previously attributed adversarial behaviour to interests, and not innate character traits such as resolve, see Ernest May, *Lessons* of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press: New York, 1973, pp.118-119.

\(^{75}\) Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.6 and p.17.
those circumstances that is irrelevant to other situations.\textsuperscript{76} In contrast, this dissertation argues and demonstrates that states do indeed use situational judgements to assess the reliability of their ally and its likely behaviour in a different situation.

Finally, avoiding the moral connotations associated with disloyalty is another reason to prefer the more neutral term of reliability. Realism expects states to act in their self-interest, regardless of whether this conduct is loyal or disloyal, moral or immoral.

In short, the concepts of resolve and loyalty reputation seem tied to character tests of loyalty, the most obvious of which is violent conflict and the promise of military support. Whether one's ally is disloyal to its other allies is also likely to matter far less than whether it remains, and is likely to remain, a reliable ally for one's own state – this is determined not by national character or disposition, but by interests and capabilities. Further, the term “reputation” creates the impression of a collective judgement which rarely, if ever, exists. By focusing on how states perceive their ally's reliability, this dissertation emphasises the importance of convergent strategic interests in determining a state's alliance reliability. So instead of referring to a state's reputation for loyalty, this dissertation instead talks about perceptions of, and beliefs about, allied reliability.

As the above analysis has implied, this dissertation defines reliability as the extent to which two allies share convergent interests about an issue on which they expect to cooperate.\textsuperscript{77} If two states in alliance have convergent or near-convergent interests on an issue, they agree on how to pursue these interests, and then they work cooperatively to achieve these interests, then they will view each other as reliable allies. Divergent interests will raise risks of entrapment or

\textsuperscript{76}This sentiment is echoed in Miller's assessment of Mercer's book. Miller deduces three hypotheses of how Mercer's theory should apply to reliability in alliances – all three suggest that a state's reliability should not influence its alliance relationships. See Miller, \textit{The Shadow of the Past}, p.57.

\textsuperscript{77}This use of convergent or divergent interests as a way of assessing the strength, health, or reliability of an alliance is implicit in Walt, 'Why Alliances Endure or Collapse', p.167.
abandonment, and will result in each ally being unreliable for the other (the first state will pose risks of abandonment to the second, while the second state will pose risks of entrapment to the first state). Furthermore, in contrast to the idea of loyalty, reliability can describe a broader gamut of alliance behaviour and thus be more useful when assessing whether the management of one alliance might affect other alliance relationships.

The alliance audience effect framework

So far, this chapter has considered why policymakers and scholars have often assumed that a state’s conduct within one alliance will affect other alliances. It has also evaluated the existing academic literature on resolve, alliance loyalty and reliability. In both the theoretical and practical realms, several simple but important questions about alliance politics have not been settled. Does a state observe interactions between their ally and its other allies? Do these observations affect the observer state’s beliefs about their ally’s reliability, and do they have an impact on security fears and defence policy? How, if at all, are alliance commitments interdependent? How do states manage this interdependence?

As noted earlier, many authors argue that a state’s actions—not its rhetoric—are the truest indication of interests and intent. Considering the alliance system depicted in figure 2, if State A fails to defend its ally, State B, then this reveals previously unknown information about State A’s interests: the costs of defending State B were too high relative to the benefits of standing firm alongside it. State A’s decision to abandon State B reveals a gap between its publicly proclaimed interests (as expressed through the A-B alliance) and the interests for which the state is actually willing to bleed.78 This may not even be private information, but rather previously unknown information. It is the revelation of a gap between

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78 Of course, this assumes that the alliance was not a secret one. Also, it may not be the case that this was simply private information – in may be more accurate to describe it as previously unknown information. The state may have never entertained the thought of abandoning their ally, but when the moment of truth arrived they found this course to be in their best interest. As an analogy: few people get engaged without a genuine desire to get married, but many engagements end not in wedding ceremonies, but in heartbreak.
professed and actual interests—and not the disloyalty itself—that might concern other allies, such as State C. Daryl Press put it best by noting that ‘Public statements uttered before or during a crisis are worse than cheap talk; they are the words of people with a powerful motive to deceive’.

Given the risks that can be posed by an unreliable ally, State C should monitor State A’s behaviour in order to better understand its interests and capabilities, and thus its alliance reliability. In this context, the term “reliability” should not be understood as an innate character trait, like “loyalty”. Rather, it is the extent to which State A’s actions in the A-B alliance demonstrate that its interests remain convergent with those of State C. As explained earlier, convergent interests between States A and C will make for a strong and reliable alliance. Actions that demonstrate convergent interests are evidence of alliance reliability, whereas actions that demonstrate a divergence of interests will cause State C to experience fears of abandonment or entrapment, and thus cast doubt on State A’s alliance reliability.

The framework’s first hypothesis determines whether or not states do monitor the actions of their ally, in order to assess the ally’s reliability.

**Hypothesis 1:** State C will monitor allied State A’s behaviour in the A-B alliance in order to better understand State A’s interests and capabilities. These observations will affect State C’s perceptions of State A’s reliability.

For this hypothesis to be supported, State C must observe State A’s behaviour in the A-B alliance, and these observations must influence State C’s beliefs about State A’s reliability. As State C monitors State A’s behaviour in another alliance, State C will consider what this behaviour reveals about State A’s interests and capabilities. Behaviour which suggests that State A has no interest in defending

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State C, or is likely to entrap them into a conflict, will cause State C to regard State A as an unreliable ally.

One scope condition should be made clear: the framework does not expect every minor interaction within the A-B alliance to be meticulously observed by State C, and for these observations to have tremendous effects on its perceptions of State A’s alliance reliability. To generate an alliance audience effect, the behaviour must be significant – it must suggest a discrepancy between State A’s publicly professed interests, and those to which its behaviour attests. Further, behaviour which shows that State A doesn’t have the capabilities required to defend its interests will also affect State C’s perceptions of State A’s alliance reliability.80

This hypothesis, by itself, is not particularly powerful. But State C’s security policies should be influenced by its beliefs about State A’s reliability. A number of factors affect State C’s security: its geography, military capabilities, the disposition of other states, and the military capabilities held by adversaries. But the A-C alliance also provides security: the possibility of military support in the case of attack can be a powerful deterrent in the eyes of adversaries, and a powerful support if war eventuates. But, unlike State C’s own military capabilities, the security support promised by State A cannot be relied upon with absolute certainty – there is always a risk of abandonment. Furthermore, alliances also create risks of entrapment: State C will need to be wary of any evidence suggesting that the A-C alliance poses risks of entrapment. Thus, if State C comes to believe that its ally, State A, is now unreliable, then State C’s security situation has worsened and it should attempt to mitigate the risk posed by its ally’s unreliability. If State C does react in this way, then the two discrete alliance commitments are, at least to some degree, interdependent.

But another prospect is also possible: because it is in State C’s interests to maximise the benefits, and minimise the costs, that result from the A-C alliance, State C could attempt to manipulate the ally, State A, into providing greater

80 Because American military capabilities remain substantial throughout the 1949-1969 period, this aspect does not appear prominently in the dissertation’s case studies. However, it remains an important component of the overall framework.
benefits by complaining about its unreliability. Alliance theorist Stephen Walt has voiced concern that America’s ‘credibility obsession’ creates a situation where US allies could ‘free-ride...because they could always get Uncle Sucker to take on more burdens by complaining that they had doubts about American resolve’.81 Walt criticises some allies for not doing enough to provide for their own defence – it is ‘easier to complain about U.S. credibility than to dig deep and buy some genuine military capacity’.82

Expressed another way, the doubts voiced by allies might be just like the promises uttered by allies or the threats issued by adversaries: they might be ‘the words of people with a powerful motive to deceive’.83 Thus, Walt is suspicious when an ally expresses concern about American reliability, but does not balance internally: he recommends that US interests are best served by making it clear to allies that “the United States won’t be buffalod into unwise actions by self-serving allied whining”.84

However, actions support or undermine a state’s declaratory policy, and if State C—based on concerns about State A’s alliance reliability—attempts to improve its own security situation, then this suggests that its fears are real, influential, and not duplicitous attempts to free-ride on a gullible ally. This is the subject of hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 2:** If State C perceives its ally, State A, to be unreliable—as posing a risk of abandonment, or a risk of entrapment—then State C will attempt to mitigate this risk.

To support this hypothesis, State C’s beliefs about State A’s unreliability must prompt C’s efforts to mitigate the risk posed by State A’s unreliability. If, based on its observations of State A’s behaviour, State C fears abandonment, it might acquire new arms or increase the size of its defence force. It could introduce

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81 Walt, ‘The Credibility Addiction’.
84 Walt, ‘The Credibility Addiction’.
conscription, or improve the responsiveness of military coordination and decision-making. State C might attempt to develop closer relations with State A, in order to better assess A’s reliability, or State C might seek new alliances. If State C fears entrapment, it might diplomatically distance itself from State A as a way of expressing disapproval. In an effort to restrain State A, State C might launch a peace plan, threaten to withhold military support or—in extremis—threaten defection to the opposing side in a conflict.85

This hypothesis is less severe than two tested by Miller: that ‘An unreliable state will lose the ally that it entrapped or failed to support’ and ‘An unreliable state will lose its allies generally’.86 Miller’s study does not find strong support for these hypotheses.87 But this hypothesis does extend beyond another tested by Miller, that ‘An unreliable state will be more constrained by the design of its alliances’.88 If a state’s ally is regarded as unreliable, the state may mitigate the risks of allied unreliability without alliance treaty text variation.

Hypotheses 2 may appear, at first glance, to be unfalsifiable – nations are usually modifying their defence policy in some way, whether it be through training military personnel, acquiring new capabilities, or other such measures. However, a detailed process tracing method will be used to demonstrate a causal link between State C’s concerns about State A’s unreliability, and State C’s attempts to mitigate the risks posed by this unreliability.

If hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported, and State C does act to mitigate the risks posed by its unreliable alliance with State A, then this possibility should affect State A’s policy deliberations. When State A’s behaviour in the A-B alliance could reasonably be expected to influence the A-C alliance, this should affect State A’s

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85 Critiques of Mercer’s Reputation and International Politics also note that ‘Mercer’s policy conclusion—that great powers should never fight solely for the sake of their reputation—does not follow from his causal logic…the state’s reputation for weakness could lead allies to defect from the alliance…such a defection could be devastating’. See Copeland, ‘Do Reputations Matter?’
86 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.49.
87 See Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.187.
88 Miller, The Shadow of the Past, p.51.
cost/benefit calculations—and perhaps its decisions—within the A-B alliance. This possible interdependence is the focus of hypothesis 3.

**Hypothesis 3:** State A’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in the A-B alliance will affect State C’s reliability perceptions.

Two forms of behaviour could support this hypothesis. Firstly, State A could deliberately adopt a particular policy in the A-B alliance because of how it will be perceived by State C. The dissertation describes this as the “set the example” approach. Alternatively, State A could adopt a policy of “simultaneous alliance management”, in which it tries to ensure that events in the A-B alliance do not adversely affect the A-C alliance.

**Set the example approach.** State A might believe that if it abandons one ally, State B, then its other ally, State C, will assess State A to be unreliable. As a consequence, State C might then act to mitigate the risk of unreliability – for example, it might decide to build nuclear weapons. But State A might regard this consequence as very undesirable – it could spark an arms race, or undermine international arms control treaties. The possibility of this response increases the likely costs of State A’s decision to abandon State B. State A might have been quite prepared to abandon State B, but only if this didn’t prompt State C to develop nuclear weapons. This possible consequence might convince State A that the best course of action is not to abandon State B, but to stand firm alongside it. The prospect of interdependence has influenced State A: because abandoning State B is likely to have important second-order consequences, the costs of abandonment are now too high. This scenario represents one “set the example” approach – State A uses the example of its conduct in the A-B alliance to reassure State C of State A’s reliability.

Another “set the example” approach is also possible, and that is one of a state publicly showcasing what behaviour it will accept from allies. This comes back to the credibility issue discussed by Stephen Walt. If State A believes that its two alliance commitments are interdependent, then it has a vested interest in not allowing its allies to manipulate it by appealing to this interdependence – e.g. by
complaining about loyalty or reliability. If State A believes that its behaviour in the A-B alliance is observed by, and influences, State C, then State A will be reluctant to grant State B a concession or arrangement that it is not willing to grant State C. For example, during the ANZUS crisis of the mid-1980s—an alliance dispute prompted by New Zealand's refusal to allow port visits from US Navy vessels unless it was confirmed that they were not carrying nuclear weapons—some US officials wondered 'whether it would be better to have New Zealand cast out [of ANZUS], as a useful example of how allies should not behave'. Media reports at the time noted that Washington's decision to punish New Zealand by suspending its alliance obligation was made 'primarily because the Reagan administration fears that the antinuclear policy could spread unless firmly rebuffed'.

Simultaneous alliance management approach. In other circumstances, a state with multiple alliances might choose not to avoid the undesired consequences caused by alliance interdependence, but to try and manage them instead. For example: State A might believe that if it abandons one ally, State B, then its other ally, State C, will assess State A to be unreliable. But State A might decide that it can still abandon State B if it can prevent any undesired developments in the A-C alliance. State A might be able to abandon State B, but also convince State C that it remains reliable by carefully explaining its policy choice, by demonstrating a strong commitment through troop placements or weapons deals, or through some other measure, and thus prevent the undesired behaviour. This is described as "simultaneous alliance management".

This dynamic is analogous to Snyder's description of the 'composite security dilemma', which involves simultaneous interactions with an adversary and an ally. In Snyder's construct, interactions with the ally affect those with the adversary, and vice-versa. For example, Snyder argues that it is difficult to

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89 Hensley, Friendly Fire, pp.192-193.
restrain an ally while simultaneously standing firm against the adversary, as this involves sending conflicting messages. Similar complications are likely when a state simultaneously interacts with two allies. In this composite alliance dilemma, it could be difficult for state A to abrogate the A-B alliance without generating abandonment fears in State C. However, if State A expects this interdependence, then it could attempt to minimise State C’s abandonment fears by simultaneously managing both alliances: reassuring State C that the A-C alliance is strong, even though the A-B alliance has been abrogated.

Nations will not want to appear unreliable, but neither will they want to appear gullible or susceptible to manipulation. For example, State A might be reluctant to support State B if it carelessly provoked an adversary, for fear of generating the impression (in the minds of State C’s leaders) that State A can be easily entrapped into conflict. Likewise, State A might be reticent to negotiate a particular alliance agreement with State B—such as intelligence sharing, military equipment sales or status of forces agreements—unless it is willing to give State C the same deal. Such instances would also support hypothesis 3 of the alliance audience framework.

**Conclusion**

Previous scholarship has assumed that alliance interdependence must be underpinned by loyalty, as an equivalent of deterrence theory’s focus on “resolve”. However, as argued earlier, this equivalence is problematic: the concept of loyalty emphasises times of conflict, which are absolute and infrequent “tests” of an alliance. Further, it incorrectly assumes that in all circumstances, states will desire their ally’s loyalty to its other allies. Rather than watching for loyalty, this chapter has explained why states might monitor the behaviour of their allies not to make dispositional (character-based) judgements, but to obtain better information about the ally’s capabilities and interests, and thus their alliance reliability.

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Based on this analysis, this chapter has proposed the three hypotheses which form the alliance audience effect framework. This framework expects alliance interdependence to be underpinned not by a common ally’s loyalty or disloyalty to other allies, but by whether its actions demonstrate its alliance reliability. What happens in one alliance will affect how other states perceive the common ally’s reliability, and in turn this will result in changes to their strategic behaviour. The prospect of interdependence and second-order effects will predispose the common ally to carefully consider their alliance politics. The alliance audience effect means that the common ally may need to simultaneously manage different alliances, or they might be able to “set the example” within one alliance in order to induce or discourage certain behaviour from other allies.

This dissertation now applies the alliance audience effect framework to the foundation of America’s network of alliances in Asia.
**Dramatis Personae – Chapter 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean Acheson</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Butterworth</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (29 September 1949 – 4 July 1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Kai-shek</td>
<td>President of the Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Connally</td>
<td>US Senator, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Foster Dulles</td>
<td>Special representative of the President of the United States (Ambassador rank)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hayato Ikeda</td>
<td>Finance Minister of Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philip Jessup</td>
<td>US Ambassador at Large</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis Johnson</td>
<td>Secretary of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas MacArthur</td>
<td>Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Muccio</td>
<td>US Ambassador to the Republic of Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myun Chang</td>
<td>Republic of China’s Ambassador to the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elpidio Quirino</td>
<td>President of the Republic of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Royall</td>
<td>Secretary of the Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Rusk</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (28 March 1950 – 9 December 1951)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sebald</td>
<td>US Political Adviser in Japan (Ambassador rank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy Spender</td>
<td>Foreign Minister of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Truman</td>
<td>President of the United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shigeru Yoshida</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Japan</td>
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Chapter 2

Forming the alliances in Asia, 1949-1951

no single Pacific nation, or any combination of such nations, can be expected, unless it has reason to believe it will be backed by the US, to commit itself to a course which might prove futile and even disastrous.

Pete Jarman
US Ambassador to Australia

Between 1951 and 1954, the United States formed the hub and spoke system of bilateral alliances in Asia. However inevitable this appears in retrospect, prior to America’s entry into the Korean War there was considerable doubt as to the extent and nature of its security interests in Asia. Although the US had demonstrated a strong commitment to the security of Western Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) in 1949, it was uncertain as to whether—and if so when, where and how—the US would draw a similar defensive line in Asia. Within President Harry Truman’s administration there was debate about Asia’s importance and whether America needed to play a substantial security role in the region, given America’s new alliance commitments in Europe.

Historical debates about this period typically focus on why a system of bilateral alliances formed, instead of a multilateral or collective defence pact. Victor Cha argues that America’s desire to maximise control over client state allies led it to prefer bilateral alliances. Hemmer and Katzenstein argue that a lack of collective identity inhibited efforts to realise a multilateral alliance. Several authors examine the region’s unsuccessful efforts toward a multilateral ‘Pacific Pact’, and suggest that these efforts were mainly national attempts to secure

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1 The Ambassador in Australia (Jarman) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 24 March 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Volume VI, East Asia and the Pacific, pp.66-67. The quote refers to the views of the Australian Foreign Minister, Percy Spender.
2 See Cha, ‘Powerplay’ and Cha, Powerplay.
bilateral alliances with the United States.\textsuperscript{4} The main architect of the alliances, John Foster Dulles, then a Special Representative of the President, attributed the hub and spoke structure to residual fear of Japan.\textsuperscript{5}

This chapter, and the two following it, present a new explanation of how America's Asian alliances were created. This chapter argues that during the first stage of the hub and spoke system's development—i.e. the creation of alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand—the alliance audience effect influenced when and how each alliance was formed. It also ensured that the treaty texts were remarkably consistent: interdependence between seemingly discrete commitments meant that the US had to treat each of its prospective allies equitably. Later chapters show that the development of alliances with the Republics of Korea and China were also influenced by the interdependence expected in the alliance audience effect framework. In contrast to Cha's argument that the US deliberately constructed a system of bilateral alliances in order to maximise its influence over client allies, this chapter emphasises the historical conditions which resulted in the alliance audience effect manifesting. Rather than addressing the oft-examined question of 'why is there no Asian NATO?', this chapter explores why and how alliance interdependence affected the formation of the hub and spoke alliance system.

Through an examination of international developments throughout the 1949-1951 period, this chapter provides supporting evidence for the alliance audience effect framework. Due to regional uncertainty about America's post-war security role in Asia, states monitored how the US behaved within its other relationships. As expected by hypothesis 1, these observations influenced allied assessments of American security reliability. Before the Korean War, states observed Washington's policy toward the Republics of Korea and China, and concluded that the US might not be willing to provide security to non-Communist countries.


\textsuperscript{5} John Foster Dulles, 'Security in the Pacific', \textit{Foreign Affairs}, January 1952.
in Asia. States also monitored America’s conduct toward Japan, and were unnerved by the prospect that the wartime enemy would receive a de facto security guarantee through the presence of US forces, but that wartime allies would not receive any security assurances. As expected by hypothesis 2, doubts about American reliability prompted US allies to change their strategic policies – most responded by encouraging (or attempting to coerce) the United States to adopt a greater role in Asian security. This involved seeking formal alliances with the United States, or offering to host US forces in the region. When their initial efforts to this end failed, states like the ROK and ROC investigated the possibility of an Asian anti-Communist alliance (a “Pacific Pact”). Finally, as expected by hypothesis 3, US decision-makers instinctively understood that these relationships were interdependent. They sought to prevent developments in one alliance adversely affecting other relationships by either reassuring the concerned ally, or avoiding behaviour likely to cause concern. In particular, the decision to defend South Korea against Communist attack—a dramatic reversal of policy—was influenced by the belief that to not do so would damage regional beliefs about America’s security reliability. If America “lost” South Korea in the same way that it “lost China”, it was feared that the loss of Japan would be a foregone conclusion.6

This chapter proceeds as follows: first, it provides a brief overview of the major historical events in the 1949-1951 period. Then it considers the alliance audience effect framework against the policies of Korea, Japan, and Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand. Each of these sections includes an assessment of the framework against the evidence presented. The chapter concludes with an overall assessment of the framework against the regional security dynamics from 1949-1951.

Before proceeding, two methodological notes are necessary. This chapter applies the alliance audience framework to a group of states that were not yet formal (i.e. treaty) allies of the United States. However, in 1949 the basic

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6 This is not to endorse the view that China was ever America’s to “lose” – this remains a point of historical debate. See, for example, Warren Cohen, ‘Symposium: Rethinking the Lost Chance in China’, *Diplomatic History*, 21:1. 1997, pp.71-75.
structure of the hub and spoke system existed even though no formal alliances had been signed. By Walt’s definition of an alliance—‘a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states’—America’s relationships with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and the Republics of Korea and China would already qualify as informal alliances. Through its colonial relationship and basing arrangements, the US was clearly committed to the defence of the Philippines. Through post-war arrangements and the presence of occupying forces, at the start of 1949 the presence of American forces guaranteed the security of both Korea and Japan. Previous military cooperation with wartime allies Australia and New Zealand established the bedrock of security cooperation that would soon be formalised by security treaties.

Secondly, this chapter draws mainly from the Foreign Relations of the United States publications. In contrast to FRUS volumes for later periods, these volumes are very comprehensive, and it was not necessary to conduct significant archival research in order to assess the alliance audience effect framework. However, selected boxes at NARA were examined in order to search for disconfirming material, and verify the FRUS narrative.

**Historical Overview: 1949-1951**

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the United States occupied both Japan and South Korea. In 1948, the Korean Peninsula was divided and two separate nations were established: the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea), led by President Syngman Rhee, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), led by Kim Il-sung. Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces from North Korea in 1948, the US withdrew its forces from South Korea in 1949.

In Japan, the purpose of the US occupation was to create a strong nation, anti-Communist in outlook, which could assist American efforts to counter

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Communist aggression in Asia. Unlike Korea, American officials considered Japan—with its significant manufacturing capacity, advantageous location and island geography—to be of immense strategic significance. But there were outstanding issues yet to be resolved: a peace treaty to conclude the Second World War still had to be negotiated, and the Chinese Civil War complicated the issue of Chinese representation at any peace conference.

Although the United States had previously supported the Nationalist Chinese, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, in their civil war against the Chinese Communist Party, by 1948 ‘U.S. leaders concluded that the Nationalist regime was doomed...[and] By early 1949 the Truman administration had concluded that the United States should disengage from the Chinese civil war and...“let the dust settle” before formulating a new policy.8 Truman decided the best strategy was to attempt to prevent Communist domination of Formosa—the island to which the Chinese Nationalists had fled—by providing economic and diplomatic support, but that America’s resources were insufficient to provide the Nationalists with military aid.9

Throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, America’s policy choices cast doubt on its willingness to play a substantial security role in Asia. In May 1949 the US withdrew its military forces from South Korea, despite Seoul’s pleading for them to stay. This decision was consistent with the Pentagon’s long-held view that ‘Korea was of no long-term strategic interest to the United States’.10 In August 1949 the Truman administration published the China White Paper, which ‘attempted to demonstrate that the United States had done all that it could for the Nationalists...[their] defeat could not, it contended, be attributed to any lack of aid from Washington...but rather was due to [their own] military ineptitude and political corruption’.11 In January 1950, Truman announced that the US would not use military force to intervene in the ongoing Chinese Civil War. As

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Nancy Tucker writes, the US sought to further distance itself from the Nationalist regime: ‘Expecting that Taiwan would fall, the administration directed American diplomatic missions worldwide to explain to host governments that the island possessed no strategic significance and that Washington had no responsibility for it’.\textsuperscript{12}

On 12 January 1950, the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, outlined America’s Asia policy in a speech to the National Press Club in Washington. After voicing his firm commitment to the defence of Japan, Acheson described a ‘defensive perimeter [that] runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus...to the Philippine Islands’.\textsuperscript{13} The geographical limits of this defensive line were immensely important. Korea and Taiwan were on the wrong side of the line and as will be explained later, the seeming abandonment of these two anti-Communist countries unnerved even those countries explicitly incorporated into America’s defensive perimeter.

As John Lewis Gaddis has written, the US ‘endorsed, but then almost immediately backed away from, a strategy of avoiding military commitments on the Asian mainland’.\textsuperscript{14} This policy reversal was prompted by North Korea’s invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950. Within a matter of days, the US decided to defend not only South Korea, but also to place the US Navy’s Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait. This second measure served two purposes: deterring Communist attacks against the Nationalists, but also restraining the Nationalists from attacking the mainland and thus widening the Korean War. Within a few days of the North Korean attack, two countries that had previously been excised from America’s defensive perimeter—the Republics of Korea and China—were brought back in.

Despite initial successes and an advance deep into North Korea, once Communist China entered the war in November 1950 US and allied forces were driven back

\textsuperscript{13} Dean Acheson, 'Speech on the Far East', delivered to National Press Club, 12 January 1950.
into South Korea. The front line eventually stabilised around the 38th parallel, and the last two years of the conflict (July 1951 – July 1953) were essentially a stalemate at this border.

The Korean War placed renewed emphasis on the negotiation of a peace treaty to conclude World War II. In January 1951 John Foster Dulles was appointed as a Special Representative of President Truman, with Ambassador rank. Truman assigned him responsibility to conclude not only a peace treaty with Japan, but also a ‘mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia)’. These negotiations were conducted over the following months and on 8 September 1951, the Peace Treaty of San Francisco was signed. The US also signed bilateral security pacts with Japan and the Philippines, and a trilateral pact with Australia and New Zealand.

The events of the 1949-1951 period provide strong support for the alliance audience framework: states observed America's treatment of other allies, and their beliefs about American reliability influenced their security policies. Knowledge of this interdependence was a strong influence on US policymakers, encouraging them to reconceive their interests and redraw their defensive line in Asia. Gaddis writes that 'Korea, hitherto regarded as a peripheral interest, had...become vital if American credibility elsewhere was not to be questioned'. While some theorists argue that 'fighting to create a reputation for resolution with allies is unwise', the following analysis will show that states were strongly influenced by their beliefs about US reliability.

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17 Mercer, Reputation and International Politics, p.228.
Korea

America decides to withdraw from the Korean Peninsula

From the nation’s beginning in January 1949, South Korea’s situation was extremely insecure, and its leaders looked to the US for assistance. In late 1948 the American Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, John Muccio, had warned Washington that only the US military presence ‘guarantees minimum Korean external and internal security’.18 Muccio felt that American support for Korea ‘would appear to render more secure US position in Japan...[and] preserve democratic showcase in northeast Asia...and thereby in measure restore faith of Asiatic people in US professions of interest and help’.19 For Muccio, the significance of the American commitment to Korea extended beyond the shores of the Peninsula: it would affect regional perceptions of American reliability in the face of a Communist threat.

On 21 February 1949, the Secretary of the Army, Kenneth Royall, conducted a press conference in Tokyo. His off-the-record comments alarmed and distressed many nations in the Asia-Pacific. The American Embassy in Tokyo subsequently reported that Royall ‘advanced and developed the thesis that in case of war with the Soviet Union...Japan is, in fact, a liability, and that it might be more profitable from the viewpoint of United States policy to pull out all troops from Japan’. The American Political Adviser in Japan, William Sebald, wrote that Royall’s words suggested that ‘the United States has no moral obligation towards Japan....even though it was our duty to disarm Japan it is not our responsibility if someone else cuts Japan’s throat as a result’.20 Royall’s statement hinted at some of the conflicting views within the administration of President Harry Truman. There was significant disagreement about which countries, areas and peoples were of

18 The Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman) to the Under Secretary of the Army (Draper), Top Secret, 25 January 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, The Far East and Australasia, p.944.
19 The Special Representative in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 27 January 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.951.
20 The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 12 February 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.648. Under the occupation, there was no American Ambassador in Tokyo – Sebald, as the Political Adviser, was the highest ranking diplomat.
vital strategic interest to the US. Some civilian decision-makers and generals felt that America’s presence in Asia was a distraction from the main theatre of Europe, whilst others—particularly General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan—feared that an excessive focus on Europe could prove calamitous. In February 1949, the South Korean President, Syngman Rhee, expressed his view that one of the ‘principal difficulties’ of the regional security situation was ‘the vacillation of the US State Department, which...had played a strong part in the loss of China, and might be seriously harmful in Korea’.  

The 1948 withdrawal of Soviet forces from North Korea raised the question of whether America needed to maintain its own forces in South Korea, and the National Security Council (NSC) reviewed its Korea policy in March 1949. Defense officials emphasised that the withdrawal of Russian forces from North Korea provided the best justification for a reciprocal withdrawal of US forces from South Korea. For others—mainly in the State Department—it was essential to increase the Republic of Korea’s military capacity prior to a wholesale US withdrawal. Though some US officials were concerned about being entrapped into a conflict in mainland Asia, Muccio noted that President Rhee specifically promised ‘that he would refrain from any action that might embarrass the U.S. position in the Far East and that he would not take any offensive military action against north Korea’.  

The NSC felt that while ‘abrupt and complete U.S. disengagement could be expected to lead directly’ to Soviet domination of Korea, it would also ‘be interpreted as a betrayal by the U.S. of its friends and allies in the Far East and might contribute substantially to a fundamental realignment of forces in favor of

21 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of the Army (Royall), Top Secret, 8 February 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.958.
22 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of the Army (Royall), Top Secret, 8 February 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.958.
the USSR’. Despite South Korea’s lack of strategic importance, the need to avoid reputational damage ruled out the idea of a complete abandonment of Korea. According to John Lewis Gaddis, US policymakers now framed policy choices with reference to competition between the Communist and “Free” world. This meant that ‘judgements based on such traditional criteria as geography, economic capacity, or military potential now had to be balanced against considerations of image, prestige, and credibility’.25

Despite a desire to protect US credibility, the NSC had no intent of entering into a formal alliance with Korea. This would risk ‘involvement in a major war in an area in which virtually all of the natural advantages would accrue to the USSR’.26 Such a promise would also be an over-commitment of US policy, given that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) believed that ‘the US has little strategic interest in maintaining its present troops and bases in Korea’.27 As one historian notes, America’s military leaders thought Korea to be ‘a strategic liability, regardless of its symbolic importance’.28 William Stueck writes that although ‘leaders in the Pentagon were inclined to simply write off the Peninsula’, the US could not abandon Korea completely.29 If US inaction resulted in South Korea following ‘China along the path of communism [then] the Japanese, responding to prevailing winds, might be difficult to keep in the Western camp’.30

The NSC split the difference between these two extreme options, and adopted the middle-ground policy of providing technical, economic and military support to Korea in order to minimise ‘the chances of south Korea’s being brought under

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Communist domination’. Though the US desired the establishment of a sovereign and democratic Korean state, these objectives were to be pursued in a manner ‘which would enable the U.S. to withdraw from Korea as soon as possible with the minimum of bad effects’. As Gaddis argues, ‘what American policy-makers sought in Korea was a graceful exit, followed by a “decent interval” in which the South Korean Government could pull itself together as a bulwark against further Soviet expansion’. The US wanted a successful outcome for South Korea, but it was also intent on departing the Peninsula at the first available opportunity. The NSC’s Korea policy paper noted that MacArthur ‘has expressed the opinion that troop withdrawal from Korea at this time would not adversely affect the U.S. position in Japan’. As such, the NSC recommended that US forces should be withdrawn from Korea by May 1949.

Rhee reacts to withdrawal plans, but also to US behaviour toward other states

When Muccio informed President Rhee that the US planned to withdraw its forces, Rhee was reluctant to publicly announce this news. Muccio felt that Rhee was ‘tarrying, hopeful of more concrete confirmation that the US really intends to carry out assurances of military aid I have given him verbally’. Rhee also ‘expressed hope for some kind of agreement by which the US would guarantee Korean independence and protection in case of attack’. Rhee believed ‘the withdrawal of American troops without such a preliminary undertaking as I have suggested would be open to serious misunderstanding in Korea, in the United States, and in other countries, and might, therefore, have disastrous consequences’.

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32 NSC 8, as quoted in NSC 8/2, Position of United States with Respect to Korea, Top Secret, 22 March 1949, FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.970.
35 The Special Representative in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 14 April 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.988.
36 Draft Letter from the President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to the Special Representative in Korea (Muccio), Top Secret, 14 April 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.991.
Although Rhee announced the withdrawal in April, he continued to push for an explicit US security guarantee and made his case by referring to US policy towards other Asian countries. After the United States suspended the provision of military support to the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa, Rhee told Muccio that ‘there was a question in the minds of the Korean people whether the United States can be relied upon. The Korean people never thought, he said, that the United States would drop China’. For Rhee, the most important question was ‘if the United States has to be involved in a war to save Korea, how much can Korea count on the United States’? As Rhee explained it, America’s decision to cease supporting the Chinese Nationalists affected his beliefs about America’s reliability. Despite Ambassador Muccio’s efforts to reassure him, Rhee continued to express doubts. Rhee suggested that ‘the United States has decided it is not worth while to try to defend Korea’. In particular, he cited Secretary of the Army Royall’s February 1949 statement on Japan as ‘indicative of the American position in this respect. If Japan was outside the United States defense line, the President suggested, then Korea must well be outside that line’. If Rhee’s worded can be believed, America’s treatment of Tokyo influenced South Korean assessments of US reliability.

Washington’s unwillingness to provide Korea with a formal defence guarantee vexed Rhee, and in May 1949 he attempted to coerce the US into a more explicit security arrangement. The South Korean press, ‘unquestionably inspired by governmental circles’, began to hint at a ‘mutual defense agreement’, with one paper even reporting that an alliance would be concluded within a month. Rhee issued ‘a press release demanding inclusion of the ROK within the

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37 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Korea (Muccio), Secret, 2 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1004.
38 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Korea (Muccio), Secret, 2 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1005.
39 The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 6 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1009.
American “first line of defense”’.40 With this effort, Rhee attempted to shame or blackmail Washington into a policy reversal.41

But, perhaps unsurprisingly, Rhee’s rhetoric failed to get the desired results. Ambassador Muccio told him that the ‘US had never entered into a mutual defense pact with any single nation, adding constant public reference here was embarrassing and would be productive of no favorable result’.42 The reaction in Washington was even stronger. Acheson cabled Muccio and instructed him to seek an urgent meeting with Rhee. Muccio was to tell Rhee that ‘this apparent attempt [to] force [the] hand [of the] US Government through resort [to] public press is regarded not only as [a] grave breach [of] ordinary diplomatic courtesy but also as sharply inconsistent with [the] spirit of mutual friendliness and good faith upon which relations [between] our two Governments [are] based’.43 Washington was unwilling to succumb to Rhee’s under-handed attempts to extort a greater level of American assistance.

Rhee had previously expressed some of his concerns about American reliability with reference to Washington’s policies toward Japan and the Republic of China. In a meeting with State Department officials, the Korean Ambassador to the US adopted a similar approach. He noted that Communist radio broadcasts liked to criticise American policy by arguing that the US had ‘washed its hands’ of China and ‘was now preparing to do the same thing in Korea’. This idea was refuted by American policy-makers, who suggested that US aid to China failed because the Chinese Nationalists ‘“put their hands in their pockets” by failing to put up any effective resistance to the Communists’. The Korean Ambassador was also told that a formal defense pact was ‘out of the question for the U.S.’.44

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41 The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, 7 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1012.
42 The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 9 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1013.
43 The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Korea, Confidential, 9 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1014.
Despite being rebuked by Muccio, Rhee continued to publicly express his hope of a bilateral security treaty. But he also began to note that a ‘Pacific Pact similar to the Atlantic Pact’ could assist Korea against the Communist threat.\textsuperscript{45} Bruce Cumings writes that ‘Rhee and his scribes spilled oceans of ink in tracts and speeches calling for a Pacific treaty’.\textsuperscript{46} In the absence of a solid American commitment to Korean security, the idea of a Pacific equivalent to NATO had some appeal, but one author concludes that ‘the primary objective of forming the Pacific Pact was not, however, to construct an independent and autonomous regional security system’. Rather, it was to ‘provoke the U.S. into engaging actively in the regional order’.\textsuperscript{47}

Meanwhile, American policymakers continued to manage these relationships with an awareness of the interdependence between them. The US knew developments in the US-Korea relationship could affect other states – especially Japan. In describing the importance of Korea’s continued survival, the Acting Secretary of State noted that the ‘abandonment of Korea would raise grave doubts in the minds of those Japanese who are trying to establish a democratic nation...regarding our determination to help them do so’.\textsuperscript{48} For their part, Korean officials continued to regard US policy toward China as having relevance to American reliability. The Korean Foreign Minister, in a meeting with Rhee, Muccio and the Korean Defence Minister, ‘flew into a rage, [and] declared United States had sold China down river and were pursuing same course respecting Korea’.\textsuperscript{49}

Reflecting American reluctance to become too involved in Asian security, on 18 May Acheson released a statement downplaying the prospects of a Pacific Pact. While noting the ‘serious dangers to world peace existing in the situation in Asia’, Acheson’s statement claimed that ‘a Pacific defense pact could not take

\textsuperscript{45}The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, 16 May 1949, in \textit{FRUS, 1949, Vol VII}, p.1023. See also Dobbs, \textit{The Unwanted Symbol}, pp.171-175.
\textsuperscript{46}Cumings, \textit{The Origins of the Korean War}, p.382.
\textsuperscript{47}Park, ‘Frustrated Alignment’, p.221.
\textsuperscript{48}Memo from the Acting Secretary of State to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget (Pace), Top Secret, 16 May 1949, in \textit{FRUS, 1949, Vol VII}, p.1025.
\textsuperscript{49}The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 20 May 1949, in \textit{FRUS, 1949, Vol VII}, p.1034.
shape until present internal conflicts in Asia were resolved. Undeterred, Rhee continued to talk up the possibility of such a pact, and informed the US Embassy in Seoul that it was the subject of preliminary discussions between the Korean and Filipino Governments. The idea of a Pacific Pact was also the subject of discussions between the President of the Philippines, Elpidio Quirino, and the President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, in July 1949.

In late May, as US troops withdrew from South Korea, Muccio was taken aback at the depth of nervousness in Seoul. He cabled Acheson, noting that a ‘sense of crisis bordering on panic has enveloped high circles Korean Government which has in turn spread to people at large. Among factors responsible are propaganda line espoused by government at retention US troops...China debacle, et cetera’. Korea continued to request that a final withdrawal be delayed, and that a firmer security guarantee be articulated, but these pleas fell on deaf ears in Washington. In place of an explicit security guarantee, on 8 June 1949 the State Department issued a tepid statement concerning ‘US Policy Toward Korea’. This stated that the withdrawal of US troops ‘in no way indicates a lessening of United States interest in the Republic of Korea, but constitutes rather another step toward the normalization of relations with that republic’.

In late June 1949, senior Defense officials considered their possible response options to a North Korean invasion of South Korea. Their assessments were grounded in the belief that ‘Korea is of little strategic value to the United States and that any commitment to United States use of military force in Korea would be ill-advised and impracticable in view of the potentialities of the over-all world situation’. Though the Truman Doctrine had been applied to Greece and Turkey, it was not fit for Korea: this ‘would require prodigious effort and vast

51 See Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor of the Embassy in Korea (Drumright), Confidential, 28 May 1949, in *FRUS, 1949, Vol VII*, pp.1145-1146.
52 See The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, 12 July 1949, in *FRUS, Vol VII*, pp.1154-1155.
expenditures far out of proportion to the benefits to be expected’. Eager to avoid any recommitment of US forces to Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that in the event of a North Korean invasion, US nationals be evacuated and the problem referred to the United Nations.

Privately, the US had decided its position. It had drawn its defensive line, and South Korea was on the wrong side of it. Military planners regarded it as strategically unimportant, and diplomats in the State Department were exasperated at Rhee’s attempts to publicly blackmail the US into providing a security guarantee.

**The China White paper and Acheson’s “defensive perimeter” speech**

Concurrent with these events on the Peninsula, the Chinese Nationalists suffered several defeats against their Communist foes. In August 1949, the Truman administration issued a China White Paper, which detailed the extensive support the US had provided to the Chinese Nationalists and attributed their defeat not to a lack of US support, but their own ‘military ineptitude and political corruption’. On 5 January 1950, President Truman announced that the US would no longer provide military assistance to the Chinese nationalist forces on Taiwan.

This official abandonment of Nationalist China further alarmed President Rhee, who raised this issue with Philip Jessup, an American Ambassador at Large who was tasked to consult with Asian leaders and report back to Acheson. The fact that Rhee raised the issue of Formosa was considered ‘very significant’ by Jessup, who wrote it was ‘clear that all of the Koreans were disturbed by the President’s recent statement on Formosa and still hope that we may do something to help the Nationalists there’. During Jessup's visit to Korea, Rhee again raised the

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56 Memorandum by the Department of the Army to the Department of State, Top Secret, 27 June 1949, in *FRUS, 1949, Vol VII*, p.1056. The Truman Doctrine was to provide financial support to non-Communist states threatened by the Soviet Union.


issue of a possible Pacific Pact, but Jessup downplayed the suggestion that America might adopt a leadership role in such an organisation.

One week later, on 12 January, Acheson outlined America’s Asia policy in a speech to the National Press Club in Washington. Acheson proclaimed a ‘defensive perimeter [that] runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus...to the Philippine Islands’.\footnote{Acheson, Dean, ‘Speech on the Far East’, delivered to National Press Club, 12 January 1950.} Acheson’s speech immediately alarmed Korean officials. Korea’s Ambassador to the United States, Myun Chang, said that ‘the fact Korea found itself on the other side of that line....appeared to raise the serious question as to whether the United States might now be considered as having abandoned Korea’.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr John Z. Williams of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Confidential, 20 January 1950, in \textit{FRUS, 1950, Vol VII}, p.12.} In an interview years later, Chang described Acheson’s speech as ‘sort of an invitation to the Russians or the Communists to come in’, and recalled that he ‘begged them to reconsider that policy’.\footnote{Interview with Myun Chang, 27 September 1964, Seoul, \textit{John Foster Dulles Oral History Project (JFD OHP)}, Mudd Library, Princeton University.} In discussion with US officials in April 1949, he expressed the hope that ‘the American defense line in the Far East could be extended to include South Korea’ and stressed ‘the importance to which the Korean Government and people attached to their apparent exclusion from the defense plans of the US in the Far East’.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Korean Affairs (Bond), Confidential, 3 April 1950, in \textit{FRUS, 1950, Vol VII}, p.42.} Downplaying the importance of the defensive line, the new Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Dean Rusk, cited the economic and material aid the US was providing as proof of their interest in Korean security.

Despite America’s efforts to reassure Rhee, he continued to doubt American reliability. In January 1950, Soviet intelligence reports suggested that Rhee felt South Korea, like Formosa, would not be defended by US forces. According to Thomas Christensen, Korean leaders felt that ‘the ROK would receive the same treatment as the KMT’ (i.e. the Chinese Nationalists).\footnote{Christensen, \textit{Worse than a Monolith}, p.54. KMT is an abbreviation of Kuomintang (the Chinese Nationalist Party).} However, it seems Rhee believed that America’s conduct toward Korea would be, to some degree,
influenced by developments in Japan – Christensen writes that Rhee felt the US ‘would not write off South Korea entirely...until after the issue of Japan was resolved’.64 Rhee anticipated some level of material assistance in the event of conflict, but not the direct support of US forces. This, as it happens, was in fact the policy pursued by the United States until the North Korean attack in June 1950.

Importantly, evidence like these Soviet intelligence reports suggests that Rhee’s pleas to Muccio, Jessup and others were genuine. It is possible that a leader such as Rhee, in an effort to secure a greater American commitment, might exaggerate the extent to which he and other Korean leaders were observing, and were influenced by, developments in the US-ROC and US-Japan relationships. But this evidence suggests that Rhee’s fears of abandonment were genuinely amplified by apparent US vacillation towards Formosa and inconsistent rhetoric about Japan. These Soviet reports also suggest that Rhee’s fears were so acute that he was willing to pursue a closer security relationship with Japan. Christensen notes that Rhee ‘was discussing the need for closer collaboration with Japan in the future as a solution to the potential for abandonment by the United States’.65

Given the extreme historical tensions between Korea and Japan, such reports place further emphasis on the severity of Rhee’s doubts about US reliability: Rhee would have considered such an option only if he believed America’s security reliability to be very poor.

Unfortunately, public remarks from the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Tom Connally, soon amplified abandonment fears in Korea. Asked whether the US would seriously consider the abandonment of South Korea, Connally replied that ‘it is going to be seriously considered because I’m afraid it’s going to happen, whether we want it to or not’.66 When a reporter queried as to whether Korea is ‘an essential part of the defense strategy’, Connally replied ‘No. Of course, any position like that is of some strategic

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64 Christensen, *Worse than a Monolith*, p.54.
65 Christensen, *Worse than a Monolith*, p.54.
66 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of States for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Under Secretary of State (Webb), Confidential, 2 May 1950, in *FRUS, 1950, Vol VII*, p.65.
importance. But I don’t think it is very greatly important. It has been testified before us that Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines make the chain of defense which is absolutely necessary’.  

The same day, Rusk wrote to the Undersecretary of State, noting that these remarks were likely to cause alarm in South Korea. He emphasised that the issue of the defensive perimeter was something about which ‘the Korean Government is particularly sensitive’. Because the US was not going to provide Korea with a security guarantee, ‘any public reference to the Japan-Ryukyus-Philippine line can only serve to undermine the confidence of the Korean Government and people, and consequently their will to resist the ever-present threat of Communist aggression’.  

Exactly as Rusk feared, Connally’s remarks provoked a strong reaction from Rhee, who regarded them as ‘an open invitation to the Communists to come down and take over South Korea’. The Chargé of the American Embassy in Korea thought Rhee’s ‘faith in the determination of the United States to assist Korea in the event of North Korean aggression has been shaken to an appreciable extent by Senator Connally’s remarks’. These remarks, combined with a perceived lack of economic and military support and ‘persistent “talk” that Korea lies outside the United States’ Far Eastern strategic defense zone, is having a decidedly unsettling effect on Korean officials’.  

In Seoul, Ambassador Muccio became more concerned that Korean officials were closely observing how the US was treating other countries in Asia, and that these observations were affecting their beliefs about America’s reliability. Muccio cabled Rusk to express his concern about public US government statements ‘from which the name of Korea very frequently is omitted. These omissions are always noted here in Korea and they add to the sensitivity and fear of the Korean

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67 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of States for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Under Secretary of State (Webb), Confidential, 2 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VII, p.66.
68 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Under Secretary of State (Webb), Confidential, 2 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VII, p.65.
69 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chargé in Korea (Drumright), Secret, 9 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VII, pp.77-78.
Government and Korean citizens that the United States Government is not fixed in its determination to assist Korea and will abandon Korea at the earliest opportunity.70

One week later Muccio again cabled Rusk, this time concerning the travel plans of senior Government officials. Muccio felt that the tendency of officials to visit Japan, but not Korea, gave ‘credence to Korean fear and suspicion that the United States is more interested in developing and sustaining their recent enemy than their long friends! For example, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff visited Tokyo, although the President of Korea invited them to visit Seoul none of them came’. On a separate occasion, after learning that Secretary of Defence, Louis Johnson, would visit Tokyo but not Seoul, President Rhee ‘was much distressed...he had become depressed and angered at what he took to be not only a slight to Korea but important that the U.S. Department of Defense was showing its indifference to the fate of Korea’.71 A historian, Peter Lowe, wrote that ‘the absence of distinguished American visitors seemed to underline lack of interest in the fate of Korea’.72

On 18 May 1950, Acheson appointed one of his advisers, John Foster Dulles, to investigate a peace settlement with Japan. As part of this process, Dulles visited Korea and met with President Rhee on 19 June. Rhee repeated his familiar pleas for further assistance, and again ‘expressed deep concern over the fate of Formosa, saying that its loss would be greatly deplored by Korea’. Dulles said that the Formosa issue was ‘under-going constant review within the Department of State’ and pointed out that economic aid was continuing, and some military aid would soon resume. Despite Dulles’ attempts to reassure Rhee by noting that ‘formal pacts, alliances or treaties were not necessary prerequisites to common action against a common foe’, his assuring words could not repair the damage

70 The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk), 25 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VII, p.88.
71 The Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk), 1 June 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VII, p.97.
already done.⁷³ Rhee continued to frantically search around for possible allies, and in April 1950 he dispatched Myun Chang to Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines to ‘sound out some possibility of military alliances, anti-Communistic alliances – something similar to NATO’.⁷⁴

**Korea and the alliance audience effect**

Throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, Korean fears of abandonment were inspired, and then bolstered, by a number of events. Several events directly concern the US-Korea relationship: the withdrawal of US troops in 1949, the exclusion of Korea from Acheson’s “defensive perimeter” speech, Connally’s remarks concerning Korea’s unimportance, and Washington’s unwillingness to provide a security guarantee all gave Rhee good reason to doubt the reliability of US support in the event of Communist attack.

But a second category of events—American actions towards other Asian states, which were observed by Rhee and other South Korean officials—amplified these fears of American abandonment. Royall’s statement, which cast doubt on America’s obligation to defend Japan, had a significant impact on Rhee. He lamented US vacillation over the issue of Formosa, believing that a similar dynamic could occur if Korea ever needed greater levels of assistance. The publication of the China White Paper, and Truman’s subsequent declaration that the US would cease to support the Chinese Nationalists, only intensified these fears. Other factors—such as the omission of Korea from many official statements and the reluctance of senior officials to visit Seoul—added insult to injury, especially given that Japan was regularly mentioned and visited. Rhee could observe a clear difference between the way the US treated Korea and the way it treated Japan. Knowing this, he feared that Korea’s treatment would parallel that of Formosa. Regardless of how the US sought to allay Rhee’s fears, he first suspected—and later knew—that America’s defensive line was drawn

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⁷⁴ Interview with Myun Chang, 27 September 1964, Seoul, JFD OHP, Mudd Library, Princeton University.
down the Sea of Japan, and Korea was on the wrong side of this line. These facts support the framework's first hypothesis, which expects that a state will monitor its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability.

Hypothesis 2 expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk. Due to his doubts about American reliability, Rhee attempted to mitigate the risk of abandonment in several ways. He first attempted to obtain a security guarantee from the United States. When Rhee's initial pleas fell on deaf ears, he sought to blackmail the US into providing assistance, but this only strengthened American determination to not provide such a guarantee. Rhee also encouraged efforts towards a wider Pacific Pact, which might have provided a regional front against Communist aggression. These efforts persisted until the outbreak of the Korean War. Because of South Korea’s economic dependence on the US, it was unable to improve its own military efforts in an effort to deter North Korea – Seoul would have to continue to rely on America’s military might.

Hypothesis 3 expects that America's actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. The evidence presented in this section supports this concept of interdependence. When US officials became aware that Korea’s fears of abandonment were being aggravated by their observations of American behaviour towards Japan and Formosa, they sought to counteract this influence by carefully explaining why Korea’s security remained important to the US. Muccio noted that the US, by modifying its rhetoric about other relationships and ensuring equality of senior official visits, might avoid further aggravation of Korean abandonment fears.
Japan

Tokyo unnerved by America’s treatment of Korea and Nationalist China

As noted earlier, during the 1949-1950 period there was significant debate within the Truman administration about the nature of America’s commitment to Japan and whether a peace treaty should be concluded. The Political Adviser in Japan, William Sebald, felt that Royall’s comments in February 1949 could not have been ‘better designed to revive Japanese interest in the possibility or desirability of an orientation towards the Soviets, particularly in the light of recent events on the continent of Asia’. They struck a ‘heavy blow to America’s prestige in Japan and possibly in the Far East generally’.75

Though Royall saw no obligation for America to defend Japan, the US military saw significant value in the air and naval bases developed during the occupation. The JCS viewed Soviet aggression as the main threat to Japan, but this clashed with the State Department’s assessment which regarded the main threats to Japan as internal: ‘agitation, subversion and coup d’état. The threat is that of a conspiracy inspired by the Kremlin, but conducted by the Japanese’.76 The State Department felt that ‘the early conclusion of a peace settlement’ was the best chance to cement Japan’s status as an anti-Communist state.77 They were particularly concerned that the Defense Department’s desire for military bases in Japan would ‘constitute an irritating and not a stabilizing influence on the Japanese population’.78 Though the need to maintain US forces in Japan would complicate an overall peace treaty, a British official had earlier suggested that America’s security needs in Japan could be met through ‘a US-Japanese bilateral pact providing for post-treaty US base facilities in Japan in return for US

75 The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 12 February 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.649.
77 Department of State Comments on NSC 49 (June 15, 1949), Top Secret, 30 September 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.872.
protection of Japan'. But at this time, the disagreements between State and Defense hindered the development of an agreed Japan policy.

These disagreements persisted into early 1950, when developments in the US-China relationship changed America’s calculus. When President Truman decided to cease providing support to the Chinese Nationalists, some Republican critics lambasted this as ‘a final betrayal and sellout of an American ally’. From the Pentagon’s perspective, the decision to cut Formosa loose only increased the value of bases on Japanese soil. However, in April 1950, MacArthur felt that 95% of Japanese would oppose US bases on Japan’s main islands. Fearing that a peace treaty with Japan would lead to the loss of these bases, Defence officials dismissed diplomatic advice that Japan was eager for the occupation to end. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson ‘was convinced that the only propaganda for a peace treaty was that which came out of the Department of State’.

Japan feared that an early withdrawal could damage its security if some US forces did not remain. In August 1949 Sebald cabled Acheson, noting that many Japanese feared that a US ‘withdrawal would open wide the flood-gates of Communism. They point to what happened in China, and reinforce their position by saying that our military withdrawal from Korea has made Soviet control of all Korea inevitable’. Sebald felt a withdrawal of US troops meant that the US ‘might lose considerable prestige not just in Japan, but in the far East as a whole’, and that ‘any withdrawal must accordingly be accompanied by a serious publicity campaign to counteract the thought that the United States is “writing off” Japan as we have in effect the Chinese National Government’.

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81 Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, p.556.
82 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Special Assistant to the Secretary (Howard), Top Secret, 24 April 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.1178.
Although the Japanese Prime Minister, Shigeru Yoshida, desired a peace treaty that avoided US bases on Japan's main islands, he felt that some bases were 'preferable to an indefinite continuation of the Occupation'. Because MacArthur had 'forbade Yoshida to negotiate directly with Washington on security matters', a ruse was used to enable three Japanese delegates to visit Washington (ostensibly to attend economic discussions). The true purpose of the mission was to discuss the conclusion of a peace treaty and an end to the occupation. This delegation met with Joseph Dodge, the Financial Adviser to SCAP, in Washington on 2 May 1950. Hayato Ikeda, the Japanese Finance Minister,

> conveyed a personal message from Prime Minister Yoshida to Mr Dodge to the effect that the Government desires the earliest possible treaty. As such a treaty would require the maintenance of U.S. forces [at bases in Japan] to secure the treaty terms and for other purposes, if the U.S. Government hesitates to make these conditions, the Japanese Government will try to find a way to offer them.

Ikeda stated that in considering the implications of this offer, Japan had paid close attention to Royall's February 1949 statement, but that 'Emphasis had been given [to] this by later public statements of the United States Government in writing off Formosa [and] the fact that South Korea is not strong and could, perhaps, easily be abandoned'. Japan had observed America's behaviour towards Korea and Formosa and was concerned that they too could suffer the same fate: 'The Japanese people are desperately looking for firm ground...They were skeptical on just what and when and where the United States would stand firm, and particularly with respect to Japan'.

Some writers note the issue of Formosa held special significance for Japan. Thomas Christensen notes that 'In the Taiwan case in particular, the arguments within the American government about the island's limited strategic importance seemed to carry direct implications for Japanese observers about the strategic

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84 Schonberger, Aftermath of War, p.244.
86 The Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of the Army (Reid) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Butterwoth), Top Secret, 10 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, pp.1195-1196.
87 The Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of the Army (Reid) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Butterwoth), Top Secret, 10 May 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, pp.1196.
status of the island nation of Japan’. It is noteworthy that unlike South Korea, Japan had been specifically included in Acheson’s “defensive perimeter’ speech. Despite this measure of assurance, Japan was sufficiently unnerved by America’s treatment of the ROC and ROK that it felt it necessary to seek Washington’s recommitment to Japanese security.

But unlike Rhee, with his incessant complaints and extortion-like efforts for a security alliance, Yoshida’s envoy brought a significant offer to the table. Whilst some might argue that Rhee could have been invoking a comparison to Formosa in order to purposefully engage American prestige, or fear of reputational damage, Yoshida was so clearly disturbed by the prospect of American unreliability that he was willing to make a significant concession in order to improve both that measure of reliability, and also Japanese security. His offer of bases in mainland Japan was a decision that would be very unpopular in Japan – MacArthur felt that 95% of Japanese would oppose such bases. Yoshida had no motive to lie or purposefully invoke the issue of American reliability when explaining Japan’s willingness to host US forces. This lends credence to Ikeda’s presentation of the basing offer: after Royall’s statement, and having observed America’s treatment of Korea and Nationalist China, Japan feared that American unreliability damaged its own security. In order to improve American reliability and solidify its role as Japan’s protector, Yoshida made the critical decision to offer basing rights in mainland Japan.

Yoshida’s message came as Dulles was arguing for a reconsideration of American policy on Formosa. Dulles argued that ‘The barometer most closely watched is that which seems to measure the judgement of the United States itself as to its present power and position in the world. If our conduct indicates a continuing disposition to fall back and allow doubtful areas to fall under Soviet Communist

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88 Christensen, Worse than a Monolith, p.39. Christensen (pp.39-40) notes that different areas of the US Government drew different conclusions about Yoshida’s message – one was that ‘the fall of Taiwan would be viewed in Tokyo as a sign of failed American resolve’, the other interpretation was that the similarities between Taiwan and Japan (islands, anti-Communist, etc) meant that Americans would regard their strategic value in the same way. Both possibilities support the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 2.

89 Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, p.556.
control, then many nations will feel...that we do not expect to stand firm short of the North Atlantic area’. Dulles felt that the US had to demonstrate its intent to fight communist aggression, and as to where, ‘Formosa has advantages superior to any other’. Other places, such as the Philippines, Japan, or the Middle East, would not ‘provide good “holding” grounds once the people feel that Communism is the wave of the future and that even we are retreating before it’. Dulles’ desire for recommitment to the Chinese Nationalists would soon be fulfilled, though not in the way any US policymaker had anticipated.

The Korean War demonstrates American reliability, and changes Japan’s calculus

When North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, many US officials believed that their response to this aggression would be viewed by Asian countries as a litmus test of America’s security reliability. US intelligence analysts thought that ‘The consequences of the invasion will be most important in Japan’. An assessment warned that ‘Soviet military domination of all Korea would give Moscow an important weapon...in connection with Japan’s future alignment’. These analysts believed that Japan would ‘regard the position taken by the United States as presaging US action should Japan be threatened with invasion’ and that inaction in Korea would ‘strengthen [an] existing widespread desire for neutrality’, but that ‘Rapid and unhesitating US support for the ROK...would reassure the Japanese...[and] would enhance their willingness to accept US protection and its implications’. Following the American intervention, General MacArthur reported from Tokyo that the Japanese were immensely relieved; they interpreted it to mean that the United States would “vigorously defend them against Russian invasion”.

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US official that ‘99 percent of Japanese supported the Korean operation, despite a widespread antiwar sentiment...throughout the country’.93

Tokyo had earlier outlined its fears of US abandonment and secretly conceded a willingness to host US bases on Japan’s main islands. Now, the North Korean invasion had reaffirmed both the dangers of Communist aggression and the desirability of a US security guarantee. But US intervention in Korea also changed Japan’s calculations: now that Japan had a better assessment of American reliability—and thus its capabilities and interests in Northeast Asia—it could afford to drive a harder bargain on the issue of military bases. On 29 July 1950 Yoshida told a parliamentary committee that he was ‘against leasing military bases to any foreign country’. When asked about how Japan would ensure its security, a Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs intimated that ‘Japan would rely upon UN protection as in the case of the Republic of Korea’. This position puzzled US officials, who found it ‘mystifying in view of the Korean war which has pointed out the true character of Communist aggression and the need for first-class armament and bases to stave off aggression’.94

But the alliance audience effect framework provides an explanation for Tokyo’s puzzling reversal. Now that the US had defended South Korea, Japan could make a more informed judgement of American reliability and adjust their defence policy accordingly. Sebald, the American Political Adviser in Tokyo, was not as puzzled as his colleagues in Washington. He assessed that Prime Minister Yoshida’s comments were ‘laying the groundwork for future bargaining’.95 Officials in Washington came to believe that because the Japanese now knew that ‘US bases in Japan will prove a critical factor in protecting the whole US position in the Far East...it would be logical for the Japanese (who have never hesitated to

94 Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Japanese Affairs (Green) to the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Allison), Secret, 2 August 1950, in *FRUS, 1950, Vol VI*, pp.1262-1263.
95 As quoted in Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Japanese Affairs (Green) to the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Allison), Secret, 2 August 1950, in *FRUS, 1950, Vol VI*, p.1263.
play power politics on a grand scale) to intimate that the price for these all-important bases in Japan is greater than the US had perhaps reckoned.96

US Embassy officials in Tokyo felt that ‘notwithstanding official denials and public confusion on the issue, there exists in Japan a large body of opinion which, in light of the Korea conflict, would be in favor of establishing a Japan defense force’. Whereas the US had once intended to disarm Japan to ensure it would never again threaten its Asian neighbours, the Korean War challenged the feasibility of this policy. The American choice was that ‘either the US assumes the full burden of defending Japan or it must enlist Japan’s assistance in helping to provide such defense’.97

In January 1951, John Foster Dulles was appointed as an Ambassador and given responsibility to conclude not only a peace treaty with Japan, but also a ‘mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia)’.98 He arrived in Japan in January 1951 in order to discuss the peace treaty with Prime Minister Yoshida. By this time, the American position on the Korean Peninsula had worsened – after being pushed back to the Pusan beachhead in September 1950, UN forces counterattacked and moved North of the 38th parallel, but Chinese forces had entered the war in October 1950 and pushed UN forces South.99 Dulles, in a memo to Acheson, argued that these developments had harmed the American bargaining position with Japan: items ‘which in September it seemed we could obtain unconditionally merely by stipulating them’ now had to be the subject of intense negotiation.100

96 Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Japanese Affairs (Green) to the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Allison), Secret, 2 August 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.1264.
97 Memorandum by Mr. Douglas W. Overton of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs to the Deputy Director (Johnson), Secret, 15 September 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.1305.
98 Enclosure 2 to The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Marshall), Top Secret, 9 January 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.789.
100 The Consultant to the Secretary (Dulles) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 4 January 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.782.
In meetings with Japanese officials, Dulles ‘learned that American military reversals in Korea had, as he feared, stiffened the prime minister's spine’.101 Yoshida now knew the value that Japanese real estate had in the eyes of American strategists, but he also better understood the Communist threat in North Asia. US diplomats had earlier mused on how America must either wholly provide for Japan's defence, or convince it to re-arm so that it could assist in its own defense: these circumstances provided an opportunity for Yoshida to press for the former option. He warned Dulles that ‘it was necessary to go very slowly in connection with any possible rearmament’ due to the risks of resurgent militarism and the economic cost of such a decision. Dulles insisted that ‘Japan should be willing to make at least a token contribution and a commitment to a general cause of collective security’, but Yoshida was unwilling to discuss the specifics of rearmament.102 One Japanese official said ‘If we organized 300,000 troops as your Mr. Dulles wanted us to do, your government will insist that we send some of these troops to Korea’.103 Historian Walter LaFeber supports this idea and writes that Yoshida ‘seemed obsessed by the fear that Americans wanted Japanese troops to be used in Korea’.104

Yoshida's responses vexed Dulles. After a difficult discussion on 31 January, Dulles insisted that Japan must create a small army to provide some contribution towards its own defence and ‘Until Yoshida accepted his position, Dulles declined to discuss the terms of the peace treaty’.105 Yoshida conceded and ‘secretly agreed to creating limited ground forces’. At 50 000 men it was not the size Dulles has desired, but it was a sufficient sign of good faith.106 Conveniently for Japan, its small size also meant that it was unlikely to play a role in the defense of South Korea.

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101 Schaller, Altered States, p.34.
102 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy to the Consultant (Allison), Secret, 29 January 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.829.
104 LaFeber, The Clash, p.299.
105 Schaller, Altered States, p.35.
A draft bilateral agreement, which would be signed following the peace treaty, noted that ‘Japan desires...that the United States....should maintain armed forces of its own in and about Japan so as to deter armed attack upon Japan’. This agreement also mentioned the ‘expectation...that Japan will itself increasingly assume responsibility for the defense of its own homeland against direct and indirect aggression’. While one author has argued that although this agreement contained only ‘a vague promise to defend Japan...After Truman’s massive response in Korea...no sane person doubted how U.S. forces would react if Japan were attacked’. Though Dulles wanted a stronger commitment, he achieved only a ‘blurred, complicated commitment from Yoshida to rearm’.

By February 1951, Dulles had achieved substantial progress toward achieving a settlement with Japan, but he knew this had the potential to complicate relations with other friendly states in Asia. In April 1950 he had commented that any defensive guarantee to Japan ‘would be regarded as somewhat anomalous by our Allies because Japan, an ex-enemy country, would be obtaining a U.S. commitment which every one of our friendly Allies coveted’. Although the February 1951 draft agreement did not explicitly obligate the US to defend Japan, US decision-makers knew that it would be perceived as creating this commitment. They saw a ‘danger’ if the US gave ‘Japan guarantees which we did not give to the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand’. The danger was that wartime allies might not support America’s desire for a lenient peace treaty with Japan, and evidence presented later in this chapter will show that the need to address this risk was a key determinant of Asia’s post-war, hub and spoke security architecture.

109 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Special Assistant to the Secretary (Howard), Top Secret, 7 April 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.1164.
Japan and the alliance audience effect

Japan’s behaviour during this period supports the alliance audience framework. As expected by the first hypothesis, Tokyo closely observed America’s treatment of the ROC and ROK, and was unnerved by America’s vacillation toward Taipei and seeming abandonment of Seoul. That these developments led Tokyo to doubt American reliability is quite remarkable when the other side of the ledger is considered: Japan was still under occupation by American forces, and had been explicitly and deliberately included within the defensive perimeter articulated by Acheson. Despite having good reasons to trust that America would defend them against attack, Japan was still unnerved by what it observed in America’s other relationships.

As expected by hypothesis two, when Japan doubted American reliability it acted to mitigate this risk. Tokyo tried to solidify America’s military presence in the region by offering bases in mainland Japan, as such a permanent military presence would have effectively mitigated the possibility of abandonment. However, America’s involvement in the Korean War—and Japan’s reaction to it—provides further support for the first and second hypotheses. After the US decided to defend South Korea, Japan had better information about America’s interests and capabilities in the region. Tokyo believed that if the US would defend South Korea, then it would also defend Japan. This meant that Tokyo could drive a harder bargain on the issue of military bases. As the tide of the Korean War changed, Japan adopted a stronger position on the issue of rearmament. Yoshida feared that the US would pressure Japan to use a newly created army overseas, but was also now confident that the US would defend Japan against any Communist attack. This allowed him to bargain hard with Dulles, and create only a token police force despite Dulles’ desire for a large Japanese army.

Finally, America’s behaviour toward Japan in this period supports the alliance audience framework’s third hypothesis (that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability
perceptions of other allies). US diplomats were aware that America's treatment of Japan was being closely watched by Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. Ambassador Muccio, in Seoul, urged Washington to ensure that Japan not be unduly prioritised over other states, like South Korea. Policy-makers in Washington believed that if Japan received security assurances, it was likely that war-time allies would demand similar agreements. Throughout 1949 and early 1950, America's preference was to avoid such new alliances, but it became clear that new security pacts would be necessary to maintain bases in Japan after the Peace Treaty was signed, and also to secure regional support for a lenient treaty that did not punish Japan excessively. America's need to guarantee Japanese security placed it in a position whereby it could not reasonably refuse requests for similar arrangements with Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

The Philippines, Australia and New Zealand

Before the Korean War, uncertainty about American reliability

Before the outbreak of the Korean War, Japan and South Korea were not the only Asian countries unnerved by their observations of US behaviour. The primary concern of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines after the Second World War was a resurgence of Japanese militarism. But there was also a growing awareness about the threat of Communism in Asia. The US Embassy in Canberra felt while ‘the Australian people...continue to share the complacent assumption that when the next war comes...the US will bail them out just as it did last time...this complacency has been somewhat shaken by the withdrawal of US defenses to the west coast of North America, the collapse of China, and the deteriorating situation in southeastern Asia, and there is evidence of a dawning realization of the dangers of Australia's position'.\footnote{The Chargé in Australia (Foster) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 13 May 1949, in FRUS, 1949, \textit{Vol VII}, p.746.} American officials also
noted a growing concern about American reliability: ‘Australia is anxious to see
the US military position in the Western Pacific strengthened’.112

US officials feared that Australia would tie its acceptance of the Japanese Peace
Treaty to some form of security guarantee. Percy Spender, Australia’s Foreign
Minister, felt that Australia did indeed have some bargaining power in this
matter due to Australia’s role as America’s ‘most important fighting ally in the
Pacific War’.113 But America’s desire for the peace treaty to have lenient terms
alarmed Australian officials – it raised the possibility of Australia facing a
resurgent Japan without allied support.

The Philippines was also concerned about American reliability and the continued
presence of US troops in the Pacific. The development of the North Atlantic
Treaty raised questions as to why a similar Pacific Pact had not arisen, with
President Quirino publicly saying that such an arrangement ‘seems advisable’. In
March 1949 the American Embassy in Manila reported that the idea of such a
pact with the ROC and ROK ‘reflects the anxious search of the Filipinos for some
measure of definite security against possible outside aggression. It does not
indicate any change in their basic hope...that the United States will come to the
defense of the Philippines in the event of an emergency’.114 In a discussion with
an American diplomat, Quirino said that ‘he made the suggestion because he felt
the moral and economic chaos existing in much of the Far East could not be
improved without strong moral and economic leadership. He said he felt the US
is the only country that could supply a leadership adequate to remedy existing
conditions’.115 Quirino was in fact so sincere that he was willing to consider
Japanese membership in such a pact. The Chargé of the American Embassy in
Manila cabled Acheson, noting that because ‘President Quirino holds no love for

113 Spender, Exercises in Diplomacy, p.47.
114 The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, 21 March 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1124.
115 The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, Confidential, 22 March 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1125.
the Japanese, his idea that Japan should form a part of any Pacific Pact is very significant'.

For their part, US officials were reluctant to provide either bilateral security guarantees or support the idea of a Pacific Pact. The Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, William Butterworth, specifically warned Acheson that Australia might ‘try to obtain a US security guarantee in return for concurring generally in the substance of our proposals for a Japanese peace settlement’. Butterworth was concerned that an ‘Australian request would attract requests from the Philippines, Korea, and other quarters and revive discussion of a possible Pacific Pact modeled on the Atlantic Pact’. Beyond his fear that one bilateral pact might cascade into a series of alliances, Butterworth thought a multilateral Pacific Pact might unintentionally signal that ‘these are the states we intend to defend and that the rest are being abandoned’.  

Undeterred by the lack of US enthusiasm, Rhee, Quirino and Chiang Kai-shek discussed the prospect of a Pacific Pact amongst themselves. In July, Quirino raised the pact with US Embassy officials in Manila. While he acknowledged that the US was ‘greatly occupied elsewhere, especially Western Europe’, Quirino felt that the US was ‘making mistake in neglecting real friends in Far East...These friends now feel abandoned, [as a] result [of] US troop withdrawals [from] South Korea...and of US abandonment of policy aiding Chinese Government’. Though Quirino had felt that the US should lead any Pacific Pact, because the US ‘was too indifferent or occupied, the Philippines, China and Korea had gone ahead to develop cooperative measures protect themselves against [the] advance [of] communism. Should the US wish to participate, it would of course be welcome’.  

Officials from China, Korea and the Philippines talked up the prospects of a Pacific Pact. A Chinese minister told the US Embassy in Manila

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116 The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, Confidential, 24 March 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1126.
118 The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, 14 July 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, pp.1157-1158.
that the three nations were ‘determined go ahead with union even if no other states join it. He stated that these three states want US leadership but suggested that leadership might be elsewhere by default’.119

US officials noted the divergent interests between the three nations. With Korea and the Republic of China both desperately in need of US military aid that was not forthcoming, it was assessed that they desired ‘that Quirino take the lead in “pulling their chestnuts from the fire”’, with the expectation that the US would be the ‘eventual cornerstone’ of a Pacific Pact. The surge in Pact-related activity suggested that ‘steps towards Asiatic cooperation will be taken with or without our support or advice’. But to avoid the impression of US interest—which could give credence to accusations of external interference and a new form of colonialism—it was suggested that the US should ‘maintain our present public coolness to the whole idea’.120 Acheson thought Korean and Chinese efforts towards a pact were ‘seeking supplementary means appeal for US military aid and influence US public opinion that end’. For Acheson, the charter membership of the Chinese Nationalists ‘saddles [the] embryonic union with [a] hopeless military problem’. Given his suspicions, Acheson instructed US diplomats to avoid making statements which could be interpreted as either US support or opposition to the Pacific Pact concept.121

Thanks to Acheson’s approach, the Pact was unlikely to succeed. New Zealand believed that absent the involvement of the US and UK, ‘any Pacific Pact would appear to be meaningless’.122 The Philippine Representative to the United Nations, General Carlos Romulo, felt that the ‘SEA [Southeast Asian] union will die unborn unless State Department is willing...to indicate US approves

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119 The Chargé in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State, 15 July 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1159. ‘Elsewhere’ was a reference to Great Britain.

120 Memorandum by the Policy Information Officer of the Officer of Far Eastern Affairs (Fisher) to the Director of the Office (Butterworth), Secret, 15 July 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, pp.1160-1163.


122 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Officer of Far Eastern Affairs (Allison), Confidential, 15 August 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1187.
project...if US evinces lack interest nobody in SEA will have necessary confidence in union's future'.

This lack of confidence became undeniable when the Philippines organised a conference of Asian nations to discuss a Pacific Pact. This meeting, known as the Baguio Conference, did not receive significant support within the region. New Zealand felt the conference would be ‘of no value unless it included the United States and the United Kingdom’. Australia’s response was to seek America’s view, with the US Embassy adding their analysis that the concept of a Pacific Pact would ‘not prove acceptable [to] Australia, unless there were evidence of strong, immediate or ultimate US backing’. The US response was that while Australia’s attendance should not be discouraged, America’s final position could not be determined now, and that the Embassy in Canberra should be aware that the State Department ‘considers development of regional coalition SEA more important to its future plans than it has in the past’. However, Australia sidestepped the invitation to the Baguio conference on the grounds that it could not send the appropriate level of representation (due to Parliament schedules).

Despite America’s cautious attitude, on 10 March the Australian Foreign Minister, Percy Spender, went ‘all out in support of a Pacific pact’. He explained to the Australian Parliament that by this, he meant a ‘defensive military arrangement’ between Australia, the UK and other countries. Spender had ‘in mind, particularly, the US whose participation would give such a pact substance it would otherwise lack. Indeed it would be rather meaningless without her’. In this speech, Spender seemed to be signalling that Australia would throw

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123 The Ambassador in the Philippines (Cowen) to the Secretary of State, Confidential, 24 August 1949, in FRUS, 1949, Vol VII, p.1190.
124 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Lacy), Confidential, 21 February 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.21.
126 The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Australia, Secret, 25 February 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.27.
127 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Philippines and Southeast Asian Affairs (Lacy), Secret, 2 March 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.36.
128 The Ambassador in Australia (Jarman) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 10 March 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.45.
strong support behind a Pacific Pact, if only the US would commit. Perhaps he was publicly urging America to reconsider its position, and commit to a larger security role in Asia. Acheson publicly expressed some approval of Spender’s speech in mid-March, but the diplomatic message to Australia was unchanged: the US felt it could not provide early support, or promise final support, to any Asian association. Any such organisation had to be completely indigenous to the region in order to have the best prospects of success.\textsuperscript{129}

The embassy in Canberra, concerned that the importance of Spender's remarks had not been adequately appreciated, again cabled Washington. Ambassador Jarman emphasised that Spender’s earlier comments ‘represent concessions to US position’ on a lenient peace treaty with Japan, and that the new Government in Australia had ‘gone out of its way to strengthen US-Australian relationship’. Noting that Australia would do ‘everything possible [to] promote Pacific Pact with military commitments’, Jarman reported that Australia had ‘not so much turned down [an] invitation’ to the Baguio conference, but thought it of little value without US involvement. Jarman’s reporting suggested that Australia was ‘anxious come to grips soonest with Communist problem in Asia’. But doubt about America’s regional strategy and reliability caused Canberra to adopt a hedging strategy. Jarman wrote that Spender ‘appears [to] consider that no single Pacific nation, or any combination of such nations, can be expected, unless it has reason to believe it will be backed by the US, to commit itself to a course which might prove futile and even disastrous’.\textsuperscript{130} As Ambassador Jarman explained it, Australian doubts about US reliability meant that it was reluctant to sign up to any Pacific Pact which lacked US support.

\textbf{America’s defence of Korea reassures friendly states}

As discussed earlier, when the Korean War broke out US analysts believed that if American inaction led to the fall of Korea, then this would create the impression

\textsuperscript{129} See cable from the Secretary of State to the Embassy in Australia, Secret, 21 March 1950, in \textit{FRUS, 1950, Vol VI}, pp.63-64.

in Southeast Asia that ‘the USSR is advancing invincibly, and there would be a greatly increased impulse to “get on the bandwagon”’. A ‘high-level State-Defense conference’ in Washington felt that the ‘American reaction was of extreme importance and the United States could not meet the situation with half measures. It either had to take a stand and stick to it or take no stand at all’.\textsuperscript{131}

Historians cite concerns about credibility as one of the primary factors in Truman’s decision to dramatically reverse American policy on Korea. Gaddis writes that ‘There was almost immediate agreement in Washington that Korea, hitherto regarded as a peripheral interest, had...become vital if American credibility elsewhere was not to be questioned’.\textsuperscript{132} Kaufman assessed that ‘the credibility of the administration’s foreign policy was at issue...both among America’s allies and its adversaries’.\textsuperscript{133} Stueck writes that the Korean War’s ‘impact was global...This impact originated not in Korea’s strategic importance, which was merely regional, but in the challenge posed by the North Korean attack on a land controlled by a government created at the initiative of the United States and the United Nations. Washington assumed...that this reflected...a threat to U.S. credibility worldwide’.\textsuperscript{134}

The decision to defend South Korea did influence the views and policies of American allies in the region. Initially, this was represented in diplomatic exchanges. On 30 June, Acheson cabled all US diplomatic missions, noting that ‘Widespread support security council resolution on Korea and US action in support of resolution continue. Pessimism and gloom in Philippines have been succeeded by vigorous approval US actions which viewed as support of democracy in Asia’.\textsuperscript{135} On 28 July the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, met with President Truman and said that ‘Australia was wholeheartedly behind American policy and wished to play its full part in the defense of the free

\textsuperscript{131}See Editorial Note, in \textit{FRUS, 1950, Vol VII}, p.143. This is based upon notes made by the US State Department spokesperson, Mr. Lincoln White.
\textsuperscript{133}Kaufman, \textit{The Korean War}, p.37.
\textsuperscript{134}Stueck, \textit{The Korean War: An International History}, p.4. See also Cha, \textit{Powerplay}, p.56.
\textsuperscript{135}The Secretary of State to All Diplomatic Missions and Certain Consular Offices, Secret, 30 June 1950, in \textit{FRUS, 1950, Vol VII}, p.255.
world’. As Rosemary Foot writes, ‘the allied response to the U.S. decision to intervene in Korea was all that had been anticipated’ by Washington.

Once the full impact of America’s commitment to Korea had been realised, states made new assessments of America’s security reliability and adjusted their policies accordingly. As expected by the alliance audience framework, these judgements led them to adopt particular forms of behaviour. A US official felt that while the Australian Foreign Minister, Percy Spender, had previously focussed on obtaining

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some\ assurance\ that\ the\ United\ States\ would\ defend\ Australia\ in\ the\ event\ of\ aggression...this\ emphasis\ is\ no\ longer\ important\ in\ Spender’s\ or\ other\ Australian\ eyes\ since\ our\ defense\ of\ South\ Korea\ is\ more\ than\ ample\ proof\ to\ Australia\ that\ we\ would\ defend\ them\ if\ attacked...what\ he\ really\ wants\ is\ closer\ participation\ in\ all\ stages\ of\ high\ level\ Washington\ planning.\]

As US intervention in Korea increased Australia’s confidence in American reliability, Australia directly supported the military effort in Korea and instead of focusing primarily on a security alliance guarantee, Australia agitated more strenuously for a closer defence planning relationship with the US.

US policymakers had earlier expressed their concern that Australia and New Zealand might seek alliances as their price for endorsing a lenient peace treaty. Now that America had agreed to provide for Japan’s security, other countries would demand similar arrangements. This issue of consistency was a recurring theme throughout 1950 and 1951. Australia, in particular, freely complained to any US policy-maker willing to listen. According to one US official, Spender had the ‘feeling that “friends don’t get the same consideration as weak sisters” and that the Australians “are not getting a fair go”. Every time we extend the NAT, as to Greece and Turkey, we strengthen that feeling’.

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137 Foot, The Wrong War, p.60.
138 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Perkins) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 27 October 1950, in FRUS, 1950, Vol VI, p.224.
In February 1951, at a trilateral meeting held in Canberra, the Foreign Ministers of Australia and New Zealand bluntly told Dulles that due to domestic political concerns, they could not accept a lenient Japanese peace treaty without some form of security assurance from the United States. Dulles was prepared for this position – a State Department official in that period later described ANZUS as ‘bait to get Australia and New Zealand to sign the treaty. They still had great reservations about a treaty which didn’t put limitations on Japan’s rearmament’. Dulles explained that he had authority to discuss security pacts and noted several possible arrangements, such as a series of bilateral alliances, a trilateral Australia-New Zealand-United States pact, or a quadrilateral alliance that included the Philippines.

By 17 February, a draft trilateral treaty had been developed, although it was still possible that the Philippines and Japan might also join the alliance as charter members. However, Dulles concluded that any arrangement which ‘put the Philippines in the position of being in effect an “ally” of Japan’ would pose significant difficulties, as this was ‘a step for which their public opinion was not yet prepared’. The UK was also concerned that the inclusion of the Philippines in an alliance with Australia, New Zealand and the US would antagonise Southeast Asian countries not included in the agreement. Rather than a multilateral Pacific Pact, it was becoming clearer that the security landscape of Asia would now be dominated by separate, bilateral alliances.

However, this was not the end of the matter. Once the Philippines discovered that a trilateral alliance had been negotiated they ‘strongly deplored the preferred position given to Australia and New Zealand’, believing that the absence of such a treaty with the Philippines suggested that ‘the US does not

140 Interview with John Allison, 20 April 1969, New York City, JFD OHP, Mudd Library, Princeton University.
142 The best and most comprehensive account of these discussions is McIntyre, Background to the ANZUS Pact.
143 Enclosure to The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Marshall), Secret, 5 April 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.184.
144 See Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy to the Consultant (Allison), Secret, 5 April 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.187.
regard the Philippines as a sovereign nation’. The US Ambassador tried to explain to President Quirino that ‘our statements regarding the defense and security of the Philippines do in fact constitute a closer alliance than is the case with Australia and New Zealand’, but this assurance had little impact. Leaders in the Philippines were angered by this apparent inconsistency in alliance commitments and to mollify their concerns, the US agreed to negotiate a bilateral alliance with Manila.

Australia and New Zealand had no objection to the conclusion of such an alliance, but they carefully monitored these developments to ensure that Manila did not receive any preferential treatment. In early August 1951 an Australian diplomat discussed the issue with American officials and ‘expressed concern as to whether any possible arrangement between the United States and the Philippines might contain provisions which would be harmful to the Australian-New Zealand trilateral’. One week later Percy Spender, Australia’s new Ambassador in Washington, noted that ‘if the agreement with the Philippines turned out to be more explicit in its commitments than the treaty with Australia and New Zealand, the reaction in Australia would be very bad’. Rusk indicated that the agreement with the Philippines would be no more explicit than that for Australia and New Zealand.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Philippines had attempted to secure a more explicit security guarantee: their draft of the treaty stated that ‘an armed attack against either country shall be considered an attack against both’. Despite receiving the US draft—which replicated the language of the draft ANZUS treaty—the Philippines urged the US to consider a stronger commitment, along the lines of the North Atlantic Treaty. The US Ambassador in the Philippines, Myron Cowan, assessed President Quirino’s motivation as ‘to obtain something a little different

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145 The Ambassador in the Philippines (Cowen) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 17 July 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.223.
146 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Melby), Confidential, 2 August 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.231.
147 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk), 9 August 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.240.
148 The Ambassador in the Philippines (Cowen) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 6 August 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, p.237.
from Australian New Zealand pact which will give some special recognition to [the] special relationship' between the Philippines and the United States. Cowan assessed that while these requests could be refused without ‘serious consequences’, he suggested the ‘Department put what frosting it can on his cake...to further ease general Philippines disappointment when failure to get cash reparations becomes known’.149

However, the view from Washington was that cake frosting had to be carefully—and equitably—distributed amongst America’s new allies. Beyond the basic fact that the US Senate had made it clear that new alliances would not be approved if they replicated the NAT’s activating clause, the Australians had already indicated that the trilateral ANZUS treaty would be endangered if the provisions of the US-Philippines pact were considered to be more advantageous. When the Philippine Foreign Minister, Romulo, failed to secure this change, he requested that the agreement be titled a ‘Mutual Defense Treaty’. Dulles noted that although the working title of a ‘Security Treaty’ had been adopted ‘to keep it consistent with the U.S.-Australia-New Zealand security treaties’, he had no objection to this minor change – presumably because the difference was not a substantive one, and was thus unlikely to provoke objections from Australia or New Zealand.150

Having failed to obtain extra frosting on their cake, the Philippines was able to secure a small, face-saving garnish to differentiate their treaty from the ANZUS Treaty. Dulles’ own behaviour and private comments throughout 1950 and 1951 show that he was concerned not only with maintaining a degree of consistency across the treaty texts, but also in ensuring that former enemies were not treated better than wartime allies.

Australian, New Zealand, the Philippines and the alliance audience effect

Before the outbreak of the Korean War, Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand were all concerned about America’s security presence in Asia. Although

149 The Ambassador in the Philippines (Cowen) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 12 August 1951, in FRUS, 1951, Vol VI, pp.246-247.
it was often not expressed in the same terms used by Korea or Japan, uncertainty about America’s commitment to security in Asia alarmed these nations and raised questions about American reliability. US diplomatic reporting tied this feeling to the withdrawal from Korea and the China situation, thus supporting hypothesis 1.

Uncertainty over America’s reliability influenced these nations in several ways. Firstly, they were extremely wary of concluding a lenient peace treaty with Japan – they felt that a treaty that imposed no rearmament restrictions raised the risk of a remilitarised Japan making another attempt regional hegemony. Beyond this, the primary impediment to a Pacific Pact arrangement was America’s unwillingness to provide early support – Australia in particular was afraid of becoming involved in something that might ‘prove futile and even disastrous’ without US involvement.\textsuperscript{151} As hypothesis 2 expects, pessimistic assessments of America’s security reliability led these three nations to adopt cautious policies – they were unwilling to countenance a lenient treaty or commit to security agreements unsupported by the United States.

As America negotiated these alliances, it was aware of the need for a level of consistency across the agreements. As hypothesis 3 predicts, the US was aware that developments in its relationship with Japan could affect its relationships with Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand, and this possibility influenced US policy. Specifically, this interdependence led to a degree of consistency across the alliance commitments. The US knew that to offer Japan an alliance—but refuse such arrangements to wartime allies—would likely result in those allies refusing to support the Japanese peace treaty. But within the development of these two alliances, a strange dynamic was also at play: the alliance audience effect was a force for consistency across the alliance texts. America believed that it had to treat its new allies on a basis of equality, lest one ally become disgruntled and refuse to sign the peace treaty with Japan. A belief that an alliance audience effect was at work led America to simultaneously manage its

alliance negotiations and ensure that no ally felt short-changed due to the superior treatment of another ally.

Conclusion

In August and September 1951, a number of security agreements were signed in San Francisco. The first was the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines. The second was the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America – this was to become known as the ANZUS Security Treaty. The third agreement was the US-Japan Security Treaty, which was signed shortly after the overall Japanese Peace Treaty that provided for a multilateral settlement of World War II.

On first glance, there may not seem to be a significant degree of interconnectivity between these relationships. However, this chapter has shown that as these security pacts were negotiated and agreed, the alliance audience effect was clearly at work. Although other examinations of this period have stressed American agency (and an effort to maximise influence over small allies) as the key determinant of the bilateral hub and spoke system, the need to maintain Washington’s image as a reliable ally was a key influence on US policy. The road to this eventual outcome looks straightforward in hindsight, but America was not always viewed as a reliable security partner in Asia. Until it intervened in Korea, uncertainty over America’s security posture in Northeast Asia was very influential, and many states were apprehensive about American reliability.

The fact that America’s decision to defend South Korea resulted in several countries believing the US to be of greater security reliability not only supports hypotheses 1 and 2 of the alliance audience effect framework, but also challenges Mercer’s expectation that a state’s desired behaviour does not create a belief amongst its allies that it will be reliable in the future. If allied beliefs about American reliability had not improved as a result of the decision to defend South

\[152\] See Chapter 1 for a discussion of Mercer’s argument on this point.
Korea, then it is unlikely that Japan would have been prepared to bargain hard on basing rights, or that Australia and New Zealand would have placed less emphasis on obtaining a security guarantee and more emphasis on gaining access to military planning.153

By highlighting the role of historical contingency, the chapter’s evidence also challenges the narrative of Victor Cha’s *Powerplay* account. Cha’s argument is underpinned by the assumption that the United States *chose* to develop a network of bilateral alliances in Asia, and the reverse chorological order in which he examines his three case studies (Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) doesn’t adequately recognise the degree to which America’s “choice” was shaped by the preferences of regional countries.154 As this chapter has shown, the bilateral alliance with Japan was an important priority – it was required to place the American military presence there on a stable footing. But given fears of a resurgent Japan, lack of common interest between regional countries, a desire to avoid conspicuously excluding non-allies, and the need to secure the agreement of wartime allies to the San Francisco peace treaty, it is hard to conceive of how an alternate alliance structure might have evolved at this time. Contrary to Cha’s argument, the United States did not ‘set out to design a security architecture for Asia that contained the communist threat but also managed the risks associated with these newfound commitments’.155 Instead, historical circumstance—and interdependence between seemingly discrete security relationships—best explains the development of the hub and spoke alliance system.

But in September 1951, as alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand were signed, this system was still incomplete. The next chapter examines the formation of America’s alliances with the Republics of Korea and

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153 Mercer has examined the American decision to defend South Korea and reaction of allied nations, but confined his analysis to the reaction of European allies. See Jonathan Mercer, ‘Emotion and Strategy in the Korean War’, *International Organization*, 62:2, 2013, pp.221-252.
154 On the origins of Cha’s argument, and his assumption that the United States *chose* to develop a bilateral alliance system, see the preface to Cha, *Powerplay*.
Taiwan, and also considers how these alliances coped with the opening stages of a significant security challenge: the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.
**Dramatis Personae – Chapter 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Allison</td>
<td>US Ambassador to Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiang Kai-shek</td>
<td>President of the Republic of China</td>
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<td>Allen Dulles</td>
<td>Director of Central Intelligence</td>
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<td>John Foster Dulles</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<td>Dwight Eisenhower</td>
<td>President of the United States of America</td>
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<td>Wellington Koo</td>
<td>Republic of China’s Ambassador to the United States</td>
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<td>Admiral Arthur Radford</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief, Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karl Rankin</td>
<td>US Ambassador to the Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walter Robertson</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs</td>
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<td>Charles Wilson</td>
<td>Secretary of Defense</td>
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<td>George Yeh</td>
<td>Foreign Minister of the Republic of China</td>
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Map 1 – Formosa and Mainland China
Chapter 3

Unleashing and releashing Chiang Kai-shek, 1953-1954

What preoccupied him, continued Secretary Dulles, was to avoid getting the United States into a war which the whole world would believe we were wrong to be in...a major war where world public opinion would be wholly against the United States...was the kind of war you lose. World public opinion was a tremendous force which must be reckoned with.¹

Although hostilities in the Korean War ceased after a mid-1953 armistice, America’s alliance posture in Asia continued to evolve. Syngman Rhee, President of the Republic of Korea (ROK), desired to continue the war and unify the two Koreas, but the US worked toward ending the conflict. In order to reassure Rhee ahead of the armistice, President Dwight Eisenhower publicly promised a mutual security pact if Rhee would agree to a ceasefire and refrain from trying to reunite Korea by force. The Republic of China (ROC) closely observed negotiations over this pact, and America’s behavior toward the ROK made it clear to Taipei that the US would not enter into an alliance if it posed unacceptable entrapment risks for the United States.

Once the US-ROK alliance was realised, it set the benchmark and precedent for an alliance with the Chinese Nationalists. Although the US was initially concerned about the possibility of being entrapped into conflict with mainland China, Taipei demonstrated its willingness to subordinate its interests to those of the United States, and this bolstered their case for a security pact. This agreement, signed in December 1954, completed the “hub and spoke” alliance system, which persisted in that form until the US-Republic of China Mutual Defense Treaty ended in 1979.

Throughout 1953 and 1954, tensions escalated across the Taiwan Strait. Both Communist and Nationalist China were focussed on small “offshore islands”, like Quemoy and Matsu, not for their strategic value, but for their symbolic

significance. For the ROC, which still held the islands and stationed forces on them, they represented a path to reconquering the mainland. For the People's Republic of China (PRC), they were stepping stones to finally subduing the Chinese Nationalists and unifying all of China under Communist rule. Though the United States reversed its earlier policy of non-involvement and decided to protect Formosa in early 1953, it was unclear as to whether the US would assist the ROC to defend these islands.

In September 1954, tensions across the Taiwan Strait escalated and threatened to erupt in war. Thus, America’s alliance negotiations with the ROC occurred during a time of security crisis. As expected by the alliance audience framework, other allies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand closely observed developments in the US-ROK and US-ROC relationships. These developments influenced their beliefs about American reliability and resulted in changes to their alliance behavior. Most US allies, fearful that a conflict with Communist China could lead to general war, tried to restrain the United States and encourage a diplomatic settlement. Only President Rhee welcomed the prospect of conflict across the Taiwan Strait, as further escalation might provide an opportunity to restart the Korean War. Furthermore, as the historical analysis shows, the need to consider allied preferences was a very strong influence on US policy, and was a key component of the many debates at National Security Council (NSC) meetings.

This chapter considers the 1953 – 1954 period in two sections. The first section covers the January 1953 – August 1954 period, and demonstrates how the ROC was influenced by its observations of the US-ROK relationship. As the US negotiated an end to the Korean War and an alliance with Seoul, the ROC closely observed these developments and were influenced by the US approach to South Korea. The second section, covering September – December 1954, examines the first few months of the first Taiwan Strait Crisis and the negotiation of the US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty. Each section concludes with an assessment of the alliance audience framework against the empirical evidence. The remainder of the first Taiwan Strait Crisis (i.e. January – April 1955) is considered in the
following chapter. These two chapters provide a complete account of how the alliance audience effect manifested in the first Taiwan Strait Crisis. This chapter focuses on the negotiation of the US-ROC alliance and the opening months of the crisis, while Chapter 4 explores the more acute security tensions of 1955.

Readers might be surprised by this chapter’s analysis of the United Kingdom and Canada – located far from the Asian region. While these countries cannot be strictly considered as part of America’s network of Asian alliances, the UK still had a substantial military presence in Asia (in Malaysia and Hong Kong), and was a member of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). The United Kingdom and Canada were both considered to have “special relationships” with the United States, and both countries had a significant influence on US policy throughout the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Accordingly, this chapter, and Chapter 4, both analyse the alliance politics of these two relationships alongside allies located in the Asian region.

Like chapter 2, this chapter mainly uses the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series of document collections, but some additional archival documents are used to supplement this record. Further, relevant boxes at NARA were examined in order to ensure that the FRUS volumes did not omit any significant material, nor contain any meaningful errors. For ease of replicability, wherever possible FRUS citations have been used in place of decimal archival references.

**January 1953 – August 1954**

The unleashing of Chiang Kai-shek creates entrapment dilemmas

In his first State of the Union address on 2 February 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower announced that he was rescinding part of President Harry Truman’s orders to the US Navy’s Seventh Fleet. To Eisenhower, the current role of the Seventh Fleet was to serve, at least partly, ‘as a defensive arm of the Chinese Communists’. Denouncing their unwillingness to seek a ceasefire in Korea, Eisenhower announced that the US Navy would ‘no longer be employed to shield
Communist China’, because the US had ‘no obligation to protect a nation fighting us in Korea’. The press described this as Eisenhower’s “unleashing” of Chiang Kai-shek, the President of the Republic of China, as he was now free to attack Chinese Communist forces on the mainland.

This new policy was not warmly welcomed by most American allies. ‘The fact that this would almost certainly necessitate American intervention produced an international outcry against the policy. US allies, especially in Europe, objected strongly to what they believed to be unwarranted risk-taking’. The British were ‘not prepared to be drawn into a third World War merely to fulfil Chiang Kai-shek’s squalid ambitions’, while the Prime Minister of New Zealand ‘expressed the hope that the decision will not...increase the danger of another world war’.

In March 1953, the Republic of China’s Ambassador to the United States, Wellington Koo, met with the new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Following Eisenhower’s decision on the role of the Seventh Fleet, Koo enquired as to ‘whether the present would be an opportune time for the Chinese Government to formally propose negotiation’ of a mutual security pact. In doing so, Koo noted that the US had recently formed alliances with ‘Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines as well as with Japan, and expressed the opinion that these should be rounded out by the conclusion of a pact with the Government on Formosa’. Having seen America formalise its security commitment to these nations, it is unsurprising that the Republic of China sought a similar arrangement.

At this point in time, Dulles was able to draw a distinction between these pacts and the possibility of similar alliances with Korea and Nationalist China. While

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2 President Dwight Eisenhower, State of the Union Address, 2 February 1953.
3 See Tucker, Uncertain Friendships, p.36.
5 Memorandum from Mr Allison to the Secretary of State, 11 February 1953, Secret, NARA, Central Decimal Files (CDF), 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4203, 793.00/2-1153.
the US was ‘sympathetic to the general proposition of creating security arrangements in the Pacific’, ongoing conflict made this difficult. ‘The Secretary said that the United States would not want to make a treaty which would result in a commitment for the United States to go to war on the mainland of Asia’ – treaties with Korea or Nationalist China would pose such a risk. Additionally, if the US concluded a treaty with the Republic of China this would create pressure for a similar agreement with Korea, which ‘had long been urging the conclusion of some form of similar mutual security pact’.7

While the Seventh Fleet was no longer tasked with restraining Chinese Nationalist aggression against the mainland, they were still tasked with defending Formosa against the Chinese Communists. Divergent interests between Nationalist China and the United States created a dilemma for US foreign policy. Chiang Kai-shek, who desired the defeat of the Communist Government on the Chinese mainland, would likely be discouraged by the conclusion of an armistice in Korea. The Deputy Undersecretary of State noted that Chiang ‘wants to broaden the conflict, not end it’, as a general conflict with Communist China offered the ROC the best opportunity to restart and win the Chinese Civil War. As the US delivered F-84 aircraft to the Republic of China, the State Department was concerned that this deal might tempt Chiang ‘to undertake some adventures with his F-84s either with or without a deliberate intention of involving the US in a broader war with Communist China’.8

These concerns were shared by the US military and they sent modified orders to the Commander-in-Chief of US forces in the Pacific, Admiral Arthur Radford. His orders were to defend Formosa and the Pescadore Islands, but he was not permitted to strike targets on the Chinese mainland without first clearing this with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Furthermore, unless the Communists attacked

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Formosa or the Pescadores, Radford was not permitted to defend the offshore islands held by the Chinese Nationalists.\(^9\)

The entrapment risks posed by Nationalist China were discussed at an NSC meeting on 8 April 1953, as the Council discussed the delivery of the F-84 aircraft. Dulles argued that the US needed ‘to secure very quickly a commitment from Chiang Kai-Shek that he would not use these aircraft recklessly and in a fashion to embarrass United States policy’.\(^10\) The Nationalist Chinese, unlike the Koreans, proved quite willing to acknowledge America’s concerns and adjust their expectations accordingly. The Chinese Foreign Minister, George Yeh, assured the US Ambassador to the Republic of China, Karl Rankin, that Nationalist China would ‘under no circumstances initiate operations which it considered might harm US interests whether political or military, national or international’. Noting that their opinions might differ on certain actions, Yeh sought to eliminate whatever wriggle room might have remained, and requested ‘clarification regarding practical methods of determining what operations US would consider inimical to its best interests’.\(^11\) Through these messages, Nationalist China was trying to showcase its credentials as a reliable ally – though it had its own preferences, it was signalling its willingness to hew closely to US desires regarding operations that might prompt conflict with Communist China. The reply from Washington was that the Nationalists should consult prior to conducting ‘any operations which would radically alter the pattern or tempo of current operations of the Chinese armed forces, including specifically any offensive use of aircraft’.\(^12\)

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**Nationalist China observes America’s treatment of South Korea**

As armistice talks in Korea progressed, Eisenhower wrote to President Rhee that he was willing to conclude a mutual security treaty, but only under certain conditions. This letter, which was published in the publicly available *State Department Bulletin*, pledged that the United States did ‘not intend to employ war as an instrument to accomplish the world-wide political settlements to which we are dedicated’, and implored Rhee to not pursue the unification of Korea by force. It outlined Eisenhower’s willingness to negotiate an alliance with South Korea, but conditioned this offer by noting that it would only apply to ‘territory now or hereafter brought peacefully under the administration of the ROK’.

This caveat was designed to restrain Korea, as any territory it captured by force could be freely counter-attacked by North Korea without fear of US reprisals.

On 1 October 1953, the Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States was signed. The treaty clearly served as both a security guarantee, and as a pact of restraint. Rhee tried, on a number of occasions, to secure an agreement that might allow him to restart hostilities with North Korea. President Eisenhower was clearly skeptical of Rhee’s intentions and in November 1953, sent Vice-President Richard Nixon to Seoul. Nixon’s message was that if Rhee did not write to Eisenhower, pledging to refrain from hostile action against the North, then the treaty would not be submitted to Congress for ratification. Through this treaty mechanism and efforts like Nixon’s visit, the US mitigated the entrapment risks posed by President Rhee’s desire for reunification.

Throughout this period, the Chinese Nationalists observed Washington’s treatment of Seoul and were unnerved by the possibility that the US might not guarantee the ROK’s security after an armistice. President Chiang wrote to Eisenhower on 7 June 1953, urging him to ‘give emphatic assurance to the anti-

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Communist countries in Asia, more especially those that are under the direct menace of Soviet Russia and Communist China, namely, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China, Thailand and Indo-China. Later in June Chiang wrote to Eisenhower a second time, again expressing his concern about the consequences of an armistice unaccompanied by a US-ROK alliance. He urged Eisenhower to conclude a mutual security pact with the Republic of Korea before the agreement of any armistice, so as to reassure Korea and the other non-Communist nations in Asia.16

Dulles saw this overture from Chiang Kai-shek as an ‘apparent backing’ of Rhee’s intransigent approach and asked Ambassador Rankin to urgently brief Chiang that ‘Rhee’s attempt to force US troops to fight indefinitely in Korea...will not succeed. Plans are being formulated so that if Rhee persists responsibility for Korea will be left wholly to ROK forces...We believe this will be disastrous for Korea but see no alternative to Rhee’s absolute refusal to accept armistice’.17 Eisenhower also replied to Chiang’s earlier letter. Noting that ‘there cannot be leadership of those who may be determined to go their separate ways’, Eisenhower drew Chiang’s attention to his own public letter to Rhee, in which Eisenhower expressed a willingness to conclude a treaty with South Korea.18 In a meeting with Ambassador Koo, Dulles explained the US position and noted ‘danger to the whole anti-Communist position in the East if Rhee should force a break with the United States’.19 Dulles also wrote to Chiang, noting that while ‘free world unity is a fundamental necessity in the face of the aggressive Communist threat...Unity and common purpose, however, must imply certain

15 The President of the Republic of China (Chiang Kai-Shek) to President Eisenhower, 7 June 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.204.
sacrifices and certain limitations on freedom of action on the part of all partners in a common effort’.20

Dulles and Eisenhower went to some length to explain their actions within the US-Korea relationship to the ROC: while they did not want to abandon Rhee, they threatened to do so if he was unwilling to temper his desire to reunify Korea by force. This message was blunt and unambiguous: American objectives in Asia could not be determined by the preferences of local allies. Dulles had been clear with Rhee, writing him that ‘The principle of unity cannot work without sacrifice. No one can do precisely what he wants...Because the fighting has not given you all that you had hoped, you seem to be on the verge of wrecking allied unity...You know that for your Republic to now attempt to go its separate way would be a horrible disaster’.21 Dulles tasked Ambassador Rankin to convey a message to Chiang: if Rhee refused to accept an armistice, the ‘possible US withdrawal from Korea would doubtless require reconsideration of US-Formosa policy with result not now predictable’.22 Robert Accinelli has noted that ‘The tenor of Dulles’ message, with its dire intimation of a withdrawal of support from the Nationalists...[was] an implied threat to remind Chiang that the United States would brook no mischievous interference from him’.23 Rankin, in Taipei, wrote that Chiang interpreted Dulles’ message to be a ‘thinly veiled threat’.24

Dulles wanted Chiang to know that if Korea did not accept America’s conditions, it would not receive a security guarantee. Dulles’ actions and words suggest he believed that an alliance audience effect existed, and he could use it to America’s benefit: adopting a strong position with Rhee would deliver a warning shot across Chiang Kai-shek’s bow and set the example of what behaviour the United States would not tolerate. Similarly, other American diplomats and military

21 Letter from the Secretary of State to President Syngman Rhee, 22 June 1953, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4287, 795.00/6-2353.
24 Letter from Ambassador Rankin to Walter Robertson, 18 January 1954, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4292, 795.00/1-1854.
officers worried about what conclusions Japan might draw from its observations of the US-ROK relationship. Later in 1953, as Rhee threatened to restart the war, the US Ambassador to Japan warned Dulles that Tokyo was ‘closely watching US-Korean relations’. The Ambassador was concerned that if the US let Rhee go on ‘writing his own ticket’, then this would have an undesired effect on Japan. If ‘Rhee appears to be gaining his ends by continued intransigence, Japanese Government will undoubtedly apply [the same] lesson in their own reaction to American desiderata in Japan’. US officials were aware that other allies were watching relations between Washington and Seoul, and this influenced their thinking and actions: if Seoul got its way through obstinacy, then other allies—like Japan and the ROC—might attempt to replicate South Korea’s success.

Although Dulles worried about the possibility of the ROC mischievously interfering with US-ROK relations, it seems his fears were misplaced. In July, Ambassador Rankin reported that President Chiang was ‘evidently hurt and annoyed by what seemed to him a threat to withdraw support from Formosa because of his supposed backing of Rhee, when actually he had not supported or even been in touch with Rhee’ on this issue. In fact, on other occasions, Chiang cautioned Rhee to ‘seek agreement as soon as possible...[and to] do everything possible to avoid a break in the negotiations between Korea and the United States’. In Rankin’s view, the Nationalists assured the United States that ‘no action which they took had been inspired by Rhee.

Chiang Kai-shek nursed his wounded pride, but it appeared to escape State Department notice until late December 1953. It was only in January 1954 that Dulles reached out to Chiang, writing that he was unaware of Chiang’s efforts to encourage restraint and cooperation on Rhee’s part. Dulles noted that he ‘had not known of this and greatly appreciate what you did. We highly value your friendship and I am personally grateful for the cooperation you have shown in

27 Letter from Ambassador Rankin to Walter Robertson, 18 January 1954, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4292, 795.00/1-1854.
meeting our common problems’. Chiang Kai-shek was clearly anxious that neither he nor Nationalist China be associated with Seoul’s intransigent approach to alliance politics. The difference between the ROC and ROK conduct was appreciated by US officials: the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, Walter Robertson, later recalled that ‘Never...did the Chinese ever threaten, at any time, that they would take offensive action against the mainland, except in consultation with us. Now, the exact opposite was true with our friend Syngman Rhee’.29

Notably, even during these six months when Chiang felt to have been unfairly admonished by the US, he did not conduct any adventurous or reckless military manoeuvres that might have imperilled US interests. But the ROC had observed and processed an important lesson – the US would not enter into an alliance with a state fighting a civil war unless the entrapment risks could be adequately mitigated.

US considers its policy towards the offshore islands

By July 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was warning of a Chinese Communist threat to the offshore islands. Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence, noted that several smaller islands had been captured by the Chinese Communists and there was an ‘obvious danger’ that the Communists might attack the larger offshore islands, such as the Tachen island group.30 For the next two years, the Eisenhower administration would struggle to decide the importance of the offshore islands. The JCS believed that while there were ‘there were important political and other considerations involved...from a strictly military standpoint the islands could not be considered essential to the defense

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29 Interview with Walter Robertson, 23 and 24 July 1965, Richmond, Virginia, JFD OHP, Mudd Library, Princeton University. This is not, of course, to suggest that the US-ROC alliance was without disagreement – e.g. Chiang’s reinforcement of Quemoy and Matsu following the first Taiwan Strait Crisis.
of Formosa'. For Dulles, Eisenhower and others, the importance of the islands was not their military value, but their psychological value to the Chinese Nationalists. It was believed that if these islands fell, Chiang’s dream of returning to the mainland and toppling the Communist Government would be destroyed. Dulles and Eisenhower thought if this occurred, morale on Formosa would be so damaged as to risk its loss to the PRC through subversion or defection.

Even though the US-ROC security pact would not be signed until December 1954, one US ally was already concerned about America’s security commitment to Formosa. As the Chinese Communist threat to the Tachen Islands increased, British diplomats in Washington enquired as to ‘whether the 7th Fleet was now charged with the protection of the Nationalist-held [offshore] islands’. This early British inquiry highlights the divergent interests that would influence US alliance relationships over the next two years, and it came as the US began to seriously consider its own position. NSC 166/1, the Statement of Policy by the National Security Council on Communist China, noted that US objectives and preferences were not shared by all non-Communist countries in Asia. The document warned that ‘It is all too evident that the Free World will not act as a unit toward Communist China’:

- ‘Southeast Asian states, impelled by fear of Communist China, by desires to expand trade, and by desires to prevent or avoid involvement in a general Asian war’, tended to support India’s policy of attempting to split Communist China from the Soviet Union,
- ‘the Japanese...have overweening expectations of what trade with the mainland might achieve for the Japanese economy, and also fancy themselves as possible mediators between Communist China and the West’,

31 Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Johnson) to the Acting Secretary of State, Top Secret, 3 August 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.240.
32 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Martin), Confidential, 19 August 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.246. At this stage, the British were told that ‘the 7th Fleet’s mission remained the same’ (i.e. they were not tasked with defending the offshore islands).
‘the South Koreans and Chinese Nationalists are fearful that any accommodation with Communist China might quash their particular ambitions’.\textsuperscript{33}

This document specifically notes that Japanese ‘collaboration with respect to over-all objectives in the Far East will be tempered to some extent by the strong Japanese desire to restore commercial relations with the China mainland. Japanese leaders seek—and appear to consider feasible—a modus vivendi with Communist China which will leave internal and external security unimpaired’.\textsuperscript{34} NSC 166/1 concluded by noting that ‘U.S. policy toward China must take account of the welter of variant, opposing and emotionally supported views which are held [by US allies]...it obviously cannot please everybody. But the United States can avoid the most dangerously divisive potentials of the Chinese Communist issue, by refraining from excessive pressure on its friends to follow American policies with respect to Communist China’.\textsuperscript{35} The document makes clear the general dispositions of US allies in the region – only Korea and Nationalist China would welcome any action that increased the risk of a general war with China. Other states would prefer the US pursue moderate and restrained policies.

On the same day, the US President approved NSC 146/2, a policy statement concerning US objectives for Formosa. This endorsed the incorporation of ‘Formosa and the Pescadores within U.S. Far East defense positions by taking all necessary measures to prevent hostile forces from gaining control thereof, even at grave risk of general war, and by making it clear that the United States will so react to any attack’. However, this defensive guarantee did not extend to the offshore islands: US policy was to ‘Without committing U.S. forces, unless Formosa or the Pescadores are attacked, encourage and assist the Chinese

\textsuperscript{34} NSC 166/1, Statement of Policy by the National Security Council, Top Secret, 6 November 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.301.
\textsuperscript{35} NSC 166/1, Statement of Policy by the National Security Council, Top Secret, 6 November 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.306.
National Government to defend the Nationalist-held off-shore islands’. This limited strategy recognised the strategic importance of keeping Formosa and the Pescadores out of Communist hands, but America was reluctant to risk a general war over the offshore islands, which were of far lesser importance. But the goal of the Chinese Nationalist regime conflicted with American interests. As Garver writes, ‘The Nationalist objective, however, was nothing less than the destruction of the Communist regime...Out of this divergence of objectives arose troublesome dilemmas’.37

America’s policy recognised that while many US allies considered the Republic of China to be important to regional defense, few would welcome the outbreak of hostilities over the offshore islands, and if this occurred, it was possible that no allies would provide the US or ROC with military support. Like the US policy on Communist China, this document noted that ‘Important Southeast Asian opinion...fears that Nationalist operations might develop into general war in the Far East which might envelop Southeast Asia. Japan, while desiring...to reduce the power of Far Eastern communism, has been apprehensive lest U.S. support to the Nationalists result in a serious reduction of U.S. strength available to defend Japan’.38

The ROC tries again for an alliance

In mid-November, Ambassador Rankin reported on renewed Chinese calls for a mutual defense treaty with the US, ‘along the lines of those signed with Philippines, Japan and Korea’. Rankin felt that such a pact would have ‘considerable political significance’ in Taipei and ‘Grievance that security pact given to ex-enemy Japan and withheld from ally China would be removed’.39 Two weeks later, Rankin cabled Washington with a summary of several recent

37 Garver, The Sino-American Alliance, p.54.
39 The Ambassador in China (Rankin) to the Department of State, Confidential, 18 November 1953, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.333.
high-level visits to Taipei. President Chiang had expressed to these visitors a hope of returning to the Chinese mainland by armed force. However, he was ‘careful to point out...[that] United States policy will determine whether such an operation is to be made possible’. Again, President Chiang sought to emphasise his credentials as a reliable security partner by noting that he would subdivide his own strategic goals to US interests.

In early 1953, Dulles had justified his reservations about a US-Republic of China alliance: he feared the entrapment risks posed by possible conflict with Communist China, and cited the lack of a defence pact with Korea as evidence of this universal concern. Once the US had concluded a pact with Korea, it was hard for this objection to serve as a defence against Nationalist Chinese requests for a pact. As Townsend Hoopes writes, ‘with the end of the Korean War and the conclusion of the U.S. security treaty with South Korea in August 1953, Chiang began a sustained effort to obtain comparable treatment’. The conclusion of the US-ROK treaty provided the Chinese Nationalists with opportunity to again press the US for a firmer defence commitment. In their meetings and communications with US officials, Nationalist Chinese leaders emphasised their reliability by noting that they were subordinating their desire to unify China and would not act in any way that endangered US strategic interests. Chiang Kai-shek, in particular, was careful to note that he had not encouraged Rhee to squabble with the US, but instead had encouraged him work cooperatively on the armistice and security pact issues.

Over the course of 1953, the ROC had observed US-Korea interactions and had sought to distance themselves from President Rhee. Now, they began a renewed push for their own bilateral alliance. On 19 December 1953, the Republic of China escalated its efforts to achieve an alliance with the US. Foreign Minister Yeh handed to Ambassador Rankin a draft pact, noting that it was ‘based on ANZUS, Philippine and Korean pacts’ and that the ‘Chinese Government would

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41 Townsend Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles, Andre Deutsch Limited: London, 1974, p.263.
welcome US comments on [the] draft’.42 Yeh wrote to Vice President Nixon, noting that ‘Since the signing of the US-Korean pact, the feeling has been gaining ground that if the United States would afford to conclude a pact with Korea, she could equally well, if not better, afford to conclude one with Free China along similar lines’.43

In late February 1954, Yeh again pressed the US Embassy on the possibility of a mutual security pact. In doing so, Yeh noted the conclusion of security pacts with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Korea, arguing that it was ‘difficult for Chinese to understand omission of their country where so much military aid already invested’.44 The State Department supported the proposed pact, provided it contained ‘safeguards against the involuntary extension of current United States commitments as to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores’ (i.e. as long as the pact did not include the offshore islands).45 Although some officials felt it would be best to secure a pact before the Geneva Conference, Dulles decided that negotiations would occur only afterwards.46

With intelligence assessments continuing to warn of a Communist threat to the offshore islands, Ambassador Rankin was concerned about the ambiguity of America’s new policy: the Seventh Fleet was tasked with protecting the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa, but the Nationalists were free to conduct retaliatory attacks against the mainland. It had also been decided that the Military Advisory and Assistance Group on Formosa would be responsible for providing logistical support to Nationalist troops on the offshore islands. For Rankin, this policy

46 The Geneva Conference was a four-power conference with the purpose of settling issues on the Korean Peninsula, in Vietnam and Indochina. For Dulles’ decision to postpone treaty negotiations, see Memorandum for the File by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy), Secret, 27 February 1954, pp.368-370, and Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 31 March 1954, pp.399-401, both in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV.
posed a significant risk of escalation – he likened it to ‘Uncle Sam tickling the Communist tiger with a feather duster’. In April, Rankin pushed for greater clarity in US policy. He noted that the islands ‘lie outside our announced defense perimeter’, and asked State Department officials whether the US was prepared to defend them, or would it stand aside and ‘risk their loss in the near future, with consequent damage to the defenses of Formosa and serious loss of face by both Free China and the United States’? Rankin acknowledged that the offshore islands might seem to have only minor importance, but he emphasised that ‘we in Formosa regard them as having considerable significance for good or ill’.

This theme would pervade American considerations of Formosa throughout 1954 and 1955 – the offshore islands, while not particularly important from a purely military perspective, were seen as vital to maintaining the morale of the Nationalist government on Formosa. For their part, the Nationalists also became more concerned about the possibility of a Communist attack on the offshore islands. Through Rankin, they requested that the US ‘make a public statement to effect “Seventh Fleet is continuing and strengthening its patrols and surveillance of waters surrounding islands”’.  

In May 1954, China’s Ambassador to the US, Wellington Koo, again raised the issue of a security pact with Secretary Dulles. Noting that it was ‘not a simple matter to negotiate a security pact with a country which is actually carrying on military operations’, Dulles informed Koo that the US ‘is not prepared to assume treaty obligations the terms of which might bring about its direct involvement’. Dulles explained US reluctance by referring to the US-Republic of Korea pact, noting that it served a dual function: a guarantee of Korean security but also the restraint of President Rhee. While Koo suggested that the defensive purpose of a pact between Free China and the US could be made clear through careful language, Dulles was ‘doubtful whether this could readily be done’ for Nationalist

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Dulles said that the US does ‘not want to commit our military resources or prestige in the vast area of mainland China’, but it did want ‘the Chinese Government to have the ability to exercise initiative against the Chinese Communists’.50 Dulles’ view was that this could not occur if the two sides concluded a mutual defense treaty along the lines of the US-ROK pact.

In an effort to leave open the possibility of a treaty at a later date, Koo enquired as to whether ‘changing circumstances might lead to an altered situation. Might an altered situation make the prospect for a mutual security treaty more favourable?’ Dulles concurred, and a similar exchange was repeated at the very end of the meeting, where it was agreed that the issue of a pact remained ‘under study and that the situation will continued to be reviewed in light of the current situation’.51 Despite Dulles’ attempts to downplay the prospects of a treaty, it was acknowledged that the matter was not yet settled. One leading China scholar, Nancy Tucker, believes Dulles’ hesitance at this time can be attributed to the possible ‘negative effects on Washington’s more important relations in Europe’, as allies there would be displeased by a US-ROC treaty and the increased risk of war this would likely create.52

A few days later, on 22 May, the issue of Formosa and the offshore islands was discussed by the President, Dulles, and other senior officials. Intelligence advice suggested that the Chinese Communists might launch an attack against the Tachen island group, which ‘could not be held by the ChiNat53 forces without US air power’. Eisenhower felt that any public statement committing the US to the defense of the offshore islands would be ‘too big a commitment of US prestige and forces. It was agreed that no public statement should be made’. However, Eisenhower decided that the Seventh Fleet would ‘visit’ the Tachen island group

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53 Chinese Nationalist.
and that such a ‘show of strength would make our position clear’. Days later, at an NSC meeting, intelligence analysis warned that the Communists were planning an attack on the Tachen Islands. The President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Robert Cutler, briefed the meeting on the President’s new instructions to the Seventh Fleet.

US allies wary of risks, as Chiang hints at his willingness to be “releashed”

In May, Chiang Kai-shek lobbied American officials visiting Taipei for a mutual security pact. He expressed ‘great disappointment and disillusionment over what he understood to be [the] present US position’. During a conversation between Rankin and Foreign Minister Yeh on 17 June, Rankin asked whether the Republic of China would be willing to give the US a ‘further commitment on their part not to initiate major military action independently’, as opposed to the status quo arrangement of ‘prior consultation’. Yeh said that Chiang ‘preferred to discuss this point only after the conclusion of a bilateral treaty was substantially assured’. Rankin, for his part, was ‘confident...that guarantees could be obtained on this point’.

The ROC policy shift was incremental, but significant. Having been rebuffed by Dulles, who explicitly expressed his concerns about a US-ROC pact with reference to the entrapment risks, the Republic of China modified its position. It was willing to go beyond the status quo of “prior consultation” before any attack. In order to secure an alliance, Taipei was essentially willing to subordinate its goals and freedom of action to the US strategic interest. On 8 July, President Chiang sent a message to Eisenhower and Dulles. In this, he pledged that if a security pact was concluded, he would ‘be prepared to expand its consultative commitments. He would seek the prior agreement of the United States before

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undertaking any important military action'.\textsuperscript{58} This was a strong signal of how important a security pact was to Taipei. Having observed the US grant Korea a pact once entrapment risks were mitigated, the Republic of China moved to demonstrate its reliability to the US. One official in the Far East division wrote that Chiang ‘seems to be offering a secret commitment not to engage in any offensive operations against the advice of the United States, conditioning the commitment upon the conclusion of a bilateral pact’.\textsuperscript{59}

The British had enquired earlier as to the extent of America’s defence commitment to the offshore islands, but new events highlighted the Japanese concern about the prospect of American action precipitating a general conflict. In July 1954 Chinese Communist forces shot down a commercial passenger aircraft. While US forces were conducting search and rescue operations, they were attacked by Communist aircraft. The US aircraft returned fire and shot down two of the attackers. These developments, combined with the activities of the Seventh Fleet, caused consternation in Tokyo. The US Ambassador to Japan, John Allison, cabled the Secretary of State, noting that recent US actions had ‘resulted to date only in alarming our friends...and obscuring what I believe is your firm long-term policy for the Far East’. Addressing specifically the issue of the Seventh Fleet visiting the offshore islands, Allison wondered ‘if full implications of this action have been weighed by all competent US authorities. Repercussions if anything goes wrong could be most serious. Japanese Government and people could be thrown into panic which only advance preparation could mitigate’.\textsuperscript{60}

Allison was annoyed that he had not been formally notified of some of these developments – particularly the orders given to the Seventh Fleet. He complained that he had ‘no authority to explain purpose and to warn appropriate high Japanese officials so they can take necessary steps to reassure

\textsuperscript{58} Memorandum by the Ambassador in the Republic of China (Rankin) to the Secretary of State, Confidential, 8 July 1954, in \textit{FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV}, p.491.
\textsuperscript{59} Letter from Mr Drumright to the Secretary of State, 24 July 1954, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4297, 795.5/6-2254.
public should it be necessary’. For Allison, this was a vital issue given the ‘almost unanimous Japanese belief that our shooting down Chinese Communist planes off Hainan was deliberate act of provocation’. Seen from Tokyo, the ambiguous American commitment to the defense of Formosa’s offshore islands damaged America’s security reliability – according to Allison, Japanese policy-makers and the public at large were very concerned about the possibility of American conduct sparking a general war with Communist China. This would pose entrapment risks to Japan, which hosted significant US forces in bases throughout the Japanese island chain.

This issue of allied support featured prominently in an August NSC meeting, where the main topic of conversation was a review of US policy in the Far East. Dulles explained that his main preoccupation was ‘to avoid getting the United States into a war which the whole world would believe we were wrong to be in’. While this did not mean ‘that we should run away from anything and everything that might involve us in war with Communist China’, a ‘major war where world public opinion would be wholly against the United States…was the kind of war you lose’. The conversation then turned to the issue of Formosa’s offshore islands. Eisenhower ‘commented that he had imagined that these islands were vital outposts for the defense of Formosa, and that we should go as far as possible to defend them without inflaming world opinion against us’. Dulles also expressed concern that because a defence of the offshore islands would risk war with Communist China, it would require Congressional approval. The NSC meeting concluded without a firm decision on policy toward the islands, but Eisenhower’s own words highlight that America regarded the views of allies as an important influence on US policy.

However, for State Department officials in Washington, it seems that the need to consider Japan’s opinion was paramount only in the event of actual conflict.

Ambassador Allison’s objection to the activities of the Seventh Fleet were essentially dismissed by the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson. In a memo to Dulles, Robertson noted that ‘planning for this visit is highly classified, and it would be a breach of security, as well as unnecessary, to notify the Japanese Government in advance’. Writing to Allison, Dulles did ‘not think that the Japanese need be alarmed because I do not believe that the Chinese Communists are in fact now prepared to challenge us in any major or sustained way’. The reaction of Dulles and Robertson was typical of Washington decision-makers at this time: Allison lamented that ‘There was little to show that Washington read our messages very carefully’, and that many in Washington were intent on making ‘Japan into a forward bastion of American strategic strength with the Americans calling the tune and the Japanese meekly accepting their secondary role’. Allison’s concerns were dismissed by Dulles and Robertson, but events would soon prove that Tokyo’s apprehensions were well-founded.

With the Geneva Conference over, the Far East division recommended to Dulles that he authorise the negotiation of a security pact between the US and the Republic of China. Several factors influenced the timing of this decision. Firstly, Robertson noted that the Chinese Communists had recently ‘launched a violent propaganda campaign promising to “liberate” Formosa and denouncing U.S. “occupation” of the Island’. Secondly, Chiang had signalled his willingness to seek US permission before he conducted any offensive action, and this would ‘provide us with greater control than we now enjoy over the circumstances under which our armed forces might become involved in a major conflict’. Thirdly, it was noted that the negotiation of the Manila Pact—the treaty which underpinned the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO)—did not include

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64 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 19 August 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.543.
66 As quoted in Dower, Empire and Aftermath, pp.430-434.
the Republic of China, and this ‘heightened its desire for treaty ties with the U.S. and its sense of being discriminated against’. 67

This memo noted the ‘desirability of keeping the Communists guessing as to our intention respecting defense of the off-shore islands’, but felt that this could be preserved by announcing, at the conclusion of the treaty, that ‘a number of these islands may be so intimately connected with the defense of Formosa that the military would be justified in concluding that the defense of Formosa comprehended the defense of those Islands’. 68 The Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Robert Bowie, suggested a similar formulation of words, that the US would defend Formosa, the Pescadores, ‘and such other islands as are mutually agreed to be militarily important to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores’. 69

Before Dulles departed on a visit to the Philippines and Formosa, in a meeting with Robertson he recognised ‘the probability that it will be necessary for us ultimately to negotiate a Mutual Defense Treaty with the GRC but would prefer delay decision as to timing because of the complexities of the offshore island problem’. 70

The alliance audience effect from January 1953 – August 1954

During this period, the alliance audience effect was plainly at work in Asia. The ROC closely watched the conclusion of the Korean War, and was unsettled by the prospect of an armistice unaccompanied by a US-ROK alliance. The UK and Japan observed US policy toward the ROC, and were spooked at the possibility of America’s ambiguous commitment to the offshore islands escalating tensions and precipitating either a localised conflict across the Taiwan Strait, or a general war with the Communist bloc. These dynamics support hypothesis 1 of the

69 Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), Top Secret, 27 August 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.553.
70 Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), Top Secret, 1 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.555.
alliance audience effect: US allies monitored the US-ROC relationship and events within it affected Tokyo and London’s perceptions of US reliability.

As expected by hypothesis 2, when allies doubted US reliability they acted to mitigate the risks this posed. When the ROC learned—through the US-ROK example and through direct communication with Dulles—that concerns about entrapment were behind America’s reluctance to sign an alliance, Taipei moved to demonstrate its reliability in the hope of attracting a firmer defence commitment. Chiang made explicit his willingness to be releashed if, in exchange, he was granted an alliance. The UK and Japan began to pay closer attention to US policy toward the offshore islands, and both countries would soon adopt more proactive policies to reduce the risk of war.

Finally, hypothesis 3 expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. As the US negotiated with Syngman Rhee, it was well aware that these interactions were being observed by both the ROC and Japan. When Dulles believed that Chiang was encouraging Rhee’s obstinacy, he didn’t hesitate to ominously allude to negative repercussions in the US-ROC relationship. When Rhee continued to play hardball and resist America’s efforts to restrain South Korea, the American Ambassador to Japan was concerned that if the US allowed itself to be manipulated, then Japan might emulate these tactics. US officials knew that firm but fair handling of the South Korean issue was needed – the US needed to reassure Rhee and other nations that would have been spooked by an abandonment of Korea, but also needed to ensure that Rhee’s intransigent approach was not emulated by other countries.

_Why did Dulles dismiss Tokyo’s concerns, and does this challenge hypothesis 3?_

When Ambassador Allison cabled Dulles in July 1954 about concern stemming from the ‘almost unanimous Japanese belief that our shooting down Chinese Communist planes off Hainan was deliberate act of provocation’, Dulles seemed utterly unconcerned. Referring to ‘uncoordinated US Government activity in the
Far East’, Allison conveyed Japan’s concerns about the possibility of entrapment in a conflict with Communist China. Dulles cabled Allison, in August 1954, saying that he did ‘not think that the Japanese need be alarmed because I do not believe that the Chinese Communists are in fact now prepared to challenge us in any major or sustained way’. Prima facie, Dulles’ disregard for Japan’s view might suggest that Tokyo’s concerns did not influence his decision-making, and thus might falsify hypothesis 3.

As the preceding analysis has shown, intelligence material assessed that Japan, desiring to establish trade links with Communist China, feared any provocative action which might increase the risk of conflict between the US and China. Dulles’ subsequent considerations of how US policy could alienate its allies focus mainly on non-Asian countries such as the UK, European allies and the ANZUS countries. But, on the other hand, there were occasions where he expressed awareness that a firm commitment to Formosa would alienate Japan. Given the US presence in Japan, and the fact that the US occupation ended only a few years earlier, Dulles may not have considered it to be a peer of other allies whose foreign policy preferences had to be considered. Ambassador Allison was frustrated with American officials who ‘seemed to think it would be possible to make Japan into a forward bastion of American strategic strength with the Americans calling the tune and the Japanese meekly accepting their secondary role’. It seems most likely that Dulles believed Tokyo’s concerns could be disregarded because Japan had few options other than to rely on the United States for security. However, as Chapter 5 will show, Japanese perceptions of US reliability were significantly influenced by their observations of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, and Tokyo’s entrapment concerns were an important influence on their desire to revise the terms of the US-Japan alliance.

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73 See, for example, Memorandum Prepared by the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 12 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, pp.611-612.
74 Dower, Empire and Aftermath, p.434.
**September – December 1954**

**Communist China attacks Quemoy, prompting a rethink of American policy**

On 3 September 1954 the PRC commenced a heavy artillery attack against Nationalist troops on the island of Quemoy. US leaders immediately considered their response to an attempted invasion of the island. In a message to the President, the acting Secretary of Defense noted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were split as to whether Quemoy was of significant importance to the defence of Formosa. The ‘majority opinion’ was that the islands ‘are important but not essential to the defense of Formosa from a military standpoint’. But there was concern about the ‘psychological effects on the Chinese Nationalist troops and other Asiatic countries inclined to support U.S. policy’ if Quemoy was lost.\(^{75}\)

Though Quemoy was not strategically vital, Gaddis writes that the ‘psychological effects could not be disregarded’.\(^{76}\) Dulles thought the ‘loss of Quemoy would have grave psychological repercussions...which could jeopardize entire off-shore position’. He thought that the US should help ‘hold Quemoy if it is judged defensible with our aid’, even though this ‘committal of US force and prestige might lead to constantly expanding US operations against mainland’.\(^{77}\) Despite his earlier reluctance to pursue a security pact with the ROC due to the fear of entanglement on the Chinese mainland, Dulles’ initial response was to stand firm alongside the Nationalist Chinese in their defense of Quemoy. The Far East division in the State Department argued that if the Chinese Communists attempted to capture one of the offshore islands, the attack ‘should be met with a positive though limited U.S. military response’ which avoided ‘a U.S. commitment to hold or retake any island’.\(^{78}\) Washington tried to balance two conflicting goals: prevent the Communists capturing the islands, but limit US involvement.

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\(^{77}\) The Secretary of State to the Department of State, Top Secret, 4 September 1954, in *FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV*, p.560.

\(^{78}\) Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Acting Secretary of State, Top Secret, 4 September 1954, in *FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV*, p.562.
A Special National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was provided to senior decision-makers on 4 September. This paper paid particular attention to how US policy towards Formosa might be perceived by America’s allies. Noting that the ‘Chinese Communists will be increasingly willing to undertake probing actions designed to test US intentions’, the assessment warned that a US defense guarantee of the islands would be perceived in different ways by different US allies. It ‘would be considered ill-advised and provocative by the UK’ and would ‘cause uneasiness in Japan, which would fear that it increased the likelihood of war in the Far East’. However, in contrast, a ‘US guarantee would encourage the governments of the ROK, [and] the Philippines’.79

This intelligence analysis challenged the domino logic which would soon come to dominate US policymaking. It assessed that if the US did not guarantee the defense of the islands and if they then fell to the Chinese Communists, the primary effect would be limited to Taiwanese morale. ‘Korea would express great concern at the turn of events’, but other allies such as ‘Japan, the UK and Western Europe would be generally relieved that no crisis had developed. Southeast Asian governments, including that of the Philippines, would not place great importance on the loss of the islands’.80 However, if the US did guarantee the defense of the islands, but then stood aside if they were attacked, the Estimate predicted a far greater impact: 'US prestige throughout the Far East would suffer a serious blow. Japan would probably reappraise its US alignment, and non-Communist states in Southeast Asia would question seriously the willingness and ability of the US to back up defense commitments in that area'.81

The Korean Prime Minister stressed Seoul’s view in a meeting with the American Ambassador, urging President Eisenhower to remember that ‘in this part of [the] world Quemoy can be [a] symbol, loss of which...would have serious

80 Special National Intelligence Estimate, Top Secret, 4 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.570. Interestingly, against this point several senior US officials noted their dissent and desired an addition: ‘but they would tend to interpret US inaction as a demonstration of irresolution’. See the footnote on p.570.
repercussions in Asia’. The American Ambassador assessed that the “Foregoing views are undoubtedly those of President Rhee also.”

As expected by the alliance audience effect, it is unsurprising that different allies perceived US policy in different ways. When the Korean War broke out, Nationalist China viewed it as an opportunity to further its own security: If hostilities widened in the early 1950s, then the resulting ‘third world war could be the salvation of the Kuomintang’. Dulles even went so far as to say that Chiang had a ‘vested interest in World War III’. The same logic could be now applied to a possible conflict across the Taiwan Strait. If America went to the defence of Taipei, and if this included escalating hostilities against the Communist mainland, then this could be an opportunity to restart the Korean War (either with or without American approval). It is thus unsurprising that Seoul lamented American caution and encouraged Washington to regard Quemoy as having symbolic importance.

President Eisenhower instinctively grasped that other countries would closely observe America’s conduct and his contemporaneous comments reveal how this influenced his thinking. In a conversation with the Acting Secretary of State, Eisenhower agreed that ‘if we go in, our prestige is at stake. We should not go in unless we can defend it’. His ‘hunch’ was that ‘once we get tied up in any one of these things our prestige is so completely involved’. Eisenhower was particularly concerned about the possibility of American action over Formosa causing a split with the United Kingdom, and he considered cabling Prime Minister Winston Churchill, asking him for his view of the Formosa situation. However, it was decided that before this occurred, the US should decide its own position on the matter.

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83 Lowe, The Origins of the Korean War, p.130.
85 Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President and the Acting Secretary of State, 6 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.573.
On his return to the US from a visit to the Philippines, Dulles stopped over in Taipei, where he discussed these matters with President Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang lamented America’s lack of a ‘firm policy for Asia and reluctance to give free China treaty similar to those extended [to] other countries’. While Chiang affirmed his belief that Nationalist forces could eventually recapture mainland China, he again repeated his intent to not engage in aggressive actions without prior US approval. Even in the face of Communist aggression against Quemoy, Chiang continued to signal that the ROC would be a reliable and compliant ally.

The NSC met in Washington on 9 September. The JCS remained divided on the importance of the offshore islands. Most JCS members regarded ‘retention of the off-shore islands as of very great importance’ and recommended US forces be committed to their defence, though this should not be publicly announced. This same majority view held that the US could defend the offshore islands without the commitment of US ground forces. But it was also agreed that a defense of the islands, particularly Quemoy, would require authorisation for the US commander to strike targets on the Chinese mainland. Among the NSC, opinion was also split as to what policy the US should adopt. Dulles (who was represented by Acting Secretary of State Smith) believed that if the islands were defensible, the US should defend them. The Secretary of Defense, Charles Wilson, argued that there was ‘a great deal of difference between Formosa and the Pescadores, on the one hand, and these close-in islands, on the other’. Wilson believed that it ‘would be extremely difficult to explain, either to the people of the United States or to our allies, why, after refusing to go to war with Communist China over Korea and Indochina, we were perfectly willing to fight over these small islands’.

The Acting Secretary of State outlined his own position, that while the loss of Quemoy would have a ‘very serious adverse effect on the prestige of the United States’, this would be far worse if the island was captured despite a pledge of US assistance. He believed that the defense of the Quemoy island group would

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87 The Ambassador in the Republic of China (Rankin) to the Department of State, Confidential, 9 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.582.
‘involve action on a considerable scale against the Chinese communists’. Wilson noted that this would be an act of war, requiring Congressional authority. Vice-President Nixon then asked whether the US could commit not to the defense of the islands, but instead to their evacuation. Would the US suffer a significant loss of prestige? Allen Dulles said that US prestige ‘would suffer much less if we completely evacuated the islands...as opposed to a simple abandonment’ of the islands. But there was disagreement as to what effect this would have on Chinese Nationalist morale – Allen Dulles thought it would have little impact, but Admiral Radford thought it could precipitate a collapse of Nationalist morale and result in the defection of Formosa to the Communists.89

Confusion over American policy continued for the next few days. There were three options: guarantee the islands, maintain an ambiguous policy, or encourage a Nationalist withdrawal. On 12 September, Dulles wrote a memo that bluntly began with the assessment that ‘Quemoy cannot be held indefinitely without a general war with Red China’. He noted that a commitment to defend Quemoy ‘would alienate world opinion and gravely strain our alliances, both in Europe and with ANZUS. This is the more true because it would probably lead to our initiating the use of atomic weapons’.90 When the full NSC met on 12 September 1954, Dulles briefed the meeting on his recent talks with Chiang Kai-shek, noting that Chiang had again emphasised his willingness to use military force only after US approval. One example of this was the fact that ‘before retaliating for the artillery shelling of Quemoy’, Nationalist forces had waited four days ‘in order to get U.S. approval’.91

89 Memorandum of Discussion at the 213th Meeting of the National Security Council, Top Secret, 9 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, pp.589-591. Radford’s hawkish position would persist throughout the crisis. He believed that ‘a showdown with the Mao regime was inevitable’, and this led him to put forward recommendations that were ‘thinly disguised effort[s] to provoke war with China’. See Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles, p.265.
90 Memorandum Prepared by the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 12 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, pp.611-612. Emphasis original. This memo was designed as Dulles’ talking points for the 12 September NSC meeting.
91 Memorandum of Discussion at the 214th Meeting of the National Security Council, Top Secret, 12 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.614. Admiral Radford ‘doubted this was an accurate statement’, but no evidence was offered to support his opinion.
President Eisenhower believed that the ‘Quemoy was not really important except psychologically’, and was ‘personally against making too many promises to hold areas around the world and then having to stay there to defend them. In each crisis we should be able to consider what was in the best interests of the U.S. at that time...If we get our prestige involved anywhere then we can’t get out’. Eisenhower clearly felt the gravity of the situation and of his decision – he remarked that ‘the Council must get one thing clear in their heads, and that is that they are talking about war’. Voicing his belief that due to the risk of war the defense of Quemoy would require Congressional approval, Eisenhower ‘reiterated that the islands were only important psychologically’.  

Dulles equivocated: ‘An overwhelming case can be made on either side’. He felt that ‘A powerful case can be made that...a Chinese Nationalist retreat from the islands would have disastrous consequences in Korea, Japan, Formosa and the Philippines’. However, the ‘other side was that to go to the defense of the offshore islands...would involve us in war with Communist China. Outside of Rhee and Chiang, the rest of the world would condemn us...The British fear atomic war and would not consider the reasons for our action to be justified’. It was against this backdrop that Dulles suggested an approach to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), with the aim of achieving a ceasefire. If such a measure was vetoed by the Soviet Union, this would increase allied support for the defense of Quemoy, and the plan also ‘offered the possibility of avoiding going to war alone’. The Council acknowledged that this approach would entail certain risks and disadvantages, but the meeting concluded with broad support for Dulles’ plan.

In making this decision, the NSC was clearly influenced by the possibility that their policy toward the offshore islands would affect other US alliance relationships. Dulles’ comments at this NSC meeting go against the intelligence advice provided to the Committee – the 4 September NIE assessed that if, in the

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absence of a US security guarantee, the islands fell to the Chinese Communists, allies such as ‘Japan, the UK and Western Europe would be generally relieved that no crisis had developed. Southeast Asian governments, including that of the Philippines, would not place great importance on the loss of the islands’.94 Dulles’ comment at the 12 September NSC meeting—that a Nationalist retreat from the islands ‘would have disastrous consequences in Korea, Japan, Formosa and the Philippines’—directly contradicts this assessment. This discrepancy might be explained by Dulles’ belief that the loss of the islands would so severely damage morale on Formosa as to guarantee its loss to Communist subversion. It could be the loss of Formosa—not the loss of the islands—that had the potential to unravel the US defensive line in Asia. Even though Dulles’ comments went against the intelligence advice he received, they still show that his beliefs about allied reactions were influential on his decision-making.

**US allies mitigate the risks of America’s ambiguous offshore islands policy**

In mid-September the British again quizzed Dulles about America’s stance on the offshore islands. Dulles noted that the US had ‘made no decision as to whether [we] will commit ourselves to hold offshore islands’, but acknowledged that one factor weighing against such a defence was that an ‘all out assault might carry Quemoy unless A-bomb used tactically in last resort’. The British were encouraged by Dulles’ efforts to avoid a defence or an abandonment of the islands under active attack, and suggested that a withdrawal of Nationalist forces might be possible. Citing the effect that such an action would have on Chinese Nationalist morale, Dulles thought this desirable ‘eventually but not practical now’. Dulles acknowledged the continued indecision within the senior levels of the US Government: referring to the Chinese Communists, he said ‘We’re keeping them guessing partly because we’re guessing ourselves’.95

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The Chinese Nationalists were annoyed that the US had not increased military assistance to Formosa. Significantly, an ‘obviously disappointed’ President Chiang structured his complaints with reference to other US security partners: ‘when Korea or Indochina were attacked US aid was immediately stepped up. Now GRC\textsuperscript{96} was fighting only hot war anywhere and US seemed “indifferent”’.\textsuperscript{97} But America’s indecision, at this point, can be partially explained by the different pressures on US policy. As argued in Chapter 2, in 1950 American unwillingness to fight in Korea would have weakened security relationships and may have resulted in several countries adopting neutralist positions, or shifting towards friendly relations with the Communist bloc. But in 1954 most allies feared that a US defence of Quemoy could lead to a general or atomic war. Thus, as expected by the alliance audience effect framework, allied fears of entrapment were influencing US policymakers to adopt a more restrained policy.

On 27 September, Dulles and the UK’s Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, developed a plan to place the matter before the UNSC. New Zealand, who was a non-permanent member of the Council, was to raise the issue. At a trilateral meeting on 4 October, Dulles said that the US had to either commit to the defense of Quemoy or risk its loss, which he believed ‘would constitute a serious blow to the prestige of the United States’.\textsuperscript{98} Despite Dulles’ concerns, both the UK and New Zealand were supportive of efforts to avoid a defence commitment to the islands and hoped the US might be able to restrain the Nationalists. When the New Zealand Ambassador ‘expressed the hope of his government that we would be able to “deal effectively” with the Chinese Nationalists’, Secretary Dulles noted that ‘While we are not able to give orders either to Rhee or Chiang Kai-shek, the latter nevertheless has been cooperative in most matters’.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{96} Government of the Republic of China.

\textsuperscript{97} The Ambassador in the Republic of China (Rankin) to the Department of State, Secret, 21 September 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.652.

\textsuperscript{98} The Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, or Manila Pact, was signed in September 1954 in Manila. This agreement formed the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, which included as member states Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

\textsuperscript{99} Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs (Key), Top Secret, 4 October 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, pp.677-679.
On 5 October, Eisenhower approved Dulles’ idea to put the issue before the UNSC and the plan became known as “Operation Oracle”. A few days later and ‘in the strictest confidence’, Dulles also informed the UK that the US had, at the time they delivered the F-84 aircraft to the Nationalist forces, extracted a commitment that these would not be used against the mainland ‘unless there were what we recognized to be unusual and compelling reasons for such action’. Dulles also noted that the Nationalists had not responded immediately to the Communist shelling of Quemoy, but had waited a few days to obtain US concurrence.\(^{100}\) Aware that the UK was monitoring America’s behaviour toward Nationalist China, Dulles revealed that the US was seeking to restrain Chiang Kai-shek and prevent further escalation.

**The US moves toward a formal security commitment**

At an NSC meeting on 6 October, Dulles noted that because the Seventh Fleet’s orders had their inception in America’s Korean War policies, ‘any U.S. action based on Formosa is becoming more and more tenuous as time goes on and the Korean armistice continues more or less in effect’. Dulles argued that this was one reason to give ‘increasing consideration to the conclusion of a security treaty between the United States and Formosa’. The conversation soon echoed the National Security Council meeting held at Denver on 12 September – Dulles noted it was then that the President ‘made it clear that he was not ready to use the armed forces of the United States for the defense of these islands’. Dulles chided one participant, noting that they talked ‘of the bad effect on Asia if the United States does not fight to defend these offshore islands, but you say nothing about the bad effect on Europe if we do undertake to fight and hold these islands. Secretary Dulles warned that we would be in this fight in Asia completely alone’.\(^{101}\)

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The next day, Robertson wrote a memo for Dulles, urging that the US immediately conclude a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China. Arguing that the Nationalists would be spooked by any attempt to put the offshore islands in front of the UNSC, Robertson noted Ambassador Rankin’s belief that ‘the disastrous effect on the morale of the GRC...could only be offset effectively by an immediate U.S. undertaking to sign a mutual defense treaty’.  

After discussing it with Eisenhower, Dulles authorised Robertson to negotiate a defensive agreement with President Chiang. A draft text, attached to Robertson’s memo, restricted the treaty’s scope to ‘Formosa and the Pescadores, together with such other islands as are mutually agreed to be intimately connected with the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores’. The US was wary of how any decision made might be perceived by other powers: it had to keep the Communist bloc guessing, but also reassure its other allies that it was not committed to the defence of the offshore islands. The US Ambassador to the Soviet Union noted that if there was an implication ‘that US has no definite commitments re off-shore islands, this might constitute open invitation to Commies to act with impunity against them’.

Robertson met with President Chiang Kai-shek several times between 12-14 October. He explained that the US ‘had learned of a proposal to be brought before the UN by New Zealand relative to the off-shore islands’. While the US had ‘been careful to keep the Communists in uncertainty as to the probable U.S. course of action...it is highly doubtful that the President could now, without Congressional authorization, thus enlarge the mission of the Seventh Fleet’ to include the defence of the islands. Robertson told Chiang of Eisenhower’s belief that ‘the fate of these off-shore islands, while very important, would not justify him in calling on the American nation to engage in what might become a war of indeterminate scope, intensity, and duration’. Because of this judgement,

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102 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, Top Secret, 7 October 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.706.
Robertson encouraged Chiang to view New Zealand’s action as an opportunity to isolate the Communist bloc in the international community, and informed him that the US was planning to ‘reaffirm, perhaps more formally, its firm intention to associate itself with the security of Formosa and the Pescadores’.  

Chiang spoke strongly against the US plan, believing it to support Chinese Communist objectives to gain UN membership and eventual possession of Formosa. He was concerned that Nationalist acceptance of New Zealand’s effort would ‘be considered as a betrayal...by all Chinese who seek the overthrow of the Communist regime’. Complaining of US vacillation, Chiang ‘said with some bitterness that he had believed for some time and still believes that the U.S. policy as to China may change at any time’. Regardless, he vowed that Nationalist forces on the offshore islands would ‘fight to the last man, with or without the assistance of the U.S. Seventh Fleet’.  

Robertson, again noting that Eisenhower’s power was curtailed without Congressional authorisation, suggested that Free China’s security would be enhanced by the conclusion of a mutual defense treaty and a UN-backed ceasefire. But Robertson told Chiang that such a pact ‘could not include a commitment to defend the off-shore islands...a pact would have to be purely defensive in character, as were the agreements with Korea, Philippines and other countries’. Chiang argued that pact negotiations should be announced before New Zealand’s effort in the UN became public, so that its ‘harmful effects...might be offset or at least greatly mitigated’. Robertson agreed with a suggestion that pact negotiations might be announced on the same day as New Zealand moved a resolution in the UN, but reaffirmed it was important for the pact to ‘use language which would keep the Chinese Communists guessing as to our intentions respecting the off-shore islands’. He noted that the US was ‘very anxious to prevent the Communists from learning that the US is not in a position...’.

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to participate in the defense of the off-shore islands. This would in effect give them a green light to invade these islands'. 107

Chiang expressed numerous concerns about New Zealand’s plan, but Robertson consistently defended the concept and emphasised that it would improve the position of Nationalist China. Robertson pointed out that the Chinese Communists did ‘not know that the President does not have the right to extend the Seventh Fleet orders to include the offshore islands, but they may find this out through a series of probing actions if nothing is done in the UN to stop them’. Chiang did make one final effort to secure a US commitment to the defense of the islands, but Robertson swiftly dismissed this idea with reference to the need for Congressional authorisation for such action.108

US officials briefed their UK and New Zealand counterparts on Chiang’s reaction and informed them of America’s intent to conclude a mutual defense treaty with the Republic of China, regardless of what happened to New Zealand’s resolution in the UNSC. In response to questions from a British official, the US confirmed that it would omit the offshore islands from the defence pact. The US emphasised the defensive nature of the proposed alliance, noting that it would restrain Chiang’s ability to launch offensive operations against the mainland.109 At a later meeting, Secretary Dulles emphasised to the New Zealand Ambassador that President Chiang had given a solemn undertaking to ‘abide by any agreement which the U.S. might wish, to ensure that it would not become involved in hostilities initiated by the Chinese Nationalists’.110 On 23 October, Eden further quizzed Dulles on America’s disposition toward the islands: if the New Zealand ceasefire resolution was vetoed, would the US then commit to their defense?

Dulles’ response was unequivocal – ‘no’. Despite this assurance, ‘the British decided to postpone a decision on Oracle until after they had seen the terms of the U.S. announcement of the impending treaty negotiations’. These efforts directly support hypotheses 1 and 2 of the alliance audience framework: having observed American behaviour within the US-ROC alliance and concluded that it raised the risk of war and thus made the US less reliable, the UK attempted to restrain the United States. In the words of one historian, the UK used Operation Oracle as ‘a useful instrument to monitor and moderate U.S. policymaking’.  

The PRC attacks the Tachens and the US-ROC alliance is negotiated

Chinese Communist forces attacked the Tachen Island group on 1 November and the US was concerned that ‘this might be the development of a new pattern foreshadowing an all-out attack by the Communists’. As this information was communicated to the UK, Dulles again emphasised that ‘the U.S. has been exercising a restraining influence on the Chinese Nationalists to keep retaliatory action to a minimum’.

As US officials considered the best language to articulate a defence commitment to Formosa, two issues weighed heavily on their minds: the need to maintain ambiguity over the offshore islands, and the strategic preferences of allied countries. At an NSC meeting on 2 November, Dulles thought ‘it might be desirable, in the text of the proposed mutual defense treaty with Formosa, to “fuzz up” to some extent the US reaction with regard to a Chinese Communist attack on Formosa as such an attack would affect the Nationalist-held offshore islands’. Such fuzzy language ‘would leave open to U.S. determination whether or not to construe an attack on the offshore islands as an attack on Formosa.

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112 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, pp.170-171.
itself, with the effect of ‘maintain[ing] doubt in the minds of the Communists as to how the U.S. would react to an attack on the offshore islands’.  

The JCS suggested that the offshore islands were of sufficient military importance to be included in any defense pact, but Dulles argued that President Eisenhower had decided at the 4 September NSC meeting that he would not use US military forces to defend these islands. In restating this decision, Dulles’ comments suggest that the views of allies were of critical importance: he noted that ‘public opinion throughout the free world would be against the United States if we went to war with Communist China over these offshore islands. The effect in Japan would be extremely bad…the Chinese communists would win the sympathy of all our allies, and there would be devastating repercussions both in Europe and Japan…Our enemies would have the backing of world opinion’. Eisenhower’s position was unchanged: he believed ‘it was better to accept some loss of face in the world than to go to general war in the defense of these small islands’.

Historian John Garver neatly sums up the dilemma facing US policy-makers. He writes that ‘Eisenhower and Dulles were especially concerned that a general Sino-U.S. war triggered by the offshores would lack American and international support’. But on the other hand, US leaders believed ‘the credibility of the United States as an ally was also at stake…Although the United States had no legal obligations to defend the offshores…this fine point might be lost on the international audiences that would witness American passivity…If the United States failed the test…friends of the United States around the world would be filled with doubt about American resolve’. While it seems obvious that allies were unlikely to hold both concerns simultaneously, Dulles’ words show that he considered these two scenarios to be the horns of the offshore islands dilemma.

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For now, the US decided to straddle this dilemma and pursue an ambiguous policy toward the offshore islands, while providing a clear guarantee for the defence of Formosa and the Pescadores. Foreign Minister Yeh, Ambassador Koo and Dulles began detailed treaty negotiations in November. The US took particular care to minimize the differences between this new pact and other alliance commitments. Yeh and Koo tried to include reference to a treaty ‘Council’ but this was promptly vetoed by the US, which ‘did not feel that it could approve a Council arrangement different from that contained in its other Asian treaties. The Chinese proposal appeared to bear some similarity to the NATO arrangement’. This was not the only similarity to NATO: in the Chinese draft, Article V was modelled on the North Atlantic Treaty, stipulating that ‘Each party regards that an armed attack in the West Pacific Area on the territories of either of the Parties shall be considered as an attack on both Parties’. The US draft contained language identical to its other treaties in Asia, that the US would regard an attack on the ally as ‘dangerous to its own peace and safety’ and would ‘act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes’. US officials stated plainly that NAT-like language would prevent the Senate from ratifying the treaty – the Senate ‘had declared that the formula and language of all mutual security treaties must be consistent in this respect’.118

The US officials clearly prioritised consistency of language between this treaty and other defense pacts. Yeh and Koo wanted to delete certain language involving the UN but Robertson argued against this, saying that ‘If you omit language in one treaty which appears in other treaties in the area, someone will attach unwarranted significance to the omission and ask about it’. Robertson explicitly argued that ‘it would not be reasonable to ask the U.S. to sign a treaty which was out of the pattern established by other treaties in the area’, while another official said that ‘we could not expect the Philippine Government to assume an obligation from which the Chinese Government was exempt’. Against several differences, the US argued for the greatest level of consistency across different treaties. The Chinese requested that two years notice be required to

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abrogate the treaty, but Robertson said noted that ‘we had a one-year termination provision in the Korean, Philippines, ANZUS and Southeast Asian Treaties...an exception for the ROC would simply draw criticism and raise questions...the treaty could not be made more favorable in any respect than the Philippines treaty’. Robertson’s comments show that American policy-makers believed that the text of the US-ROC treaty would be scrutinised by other US allies.

American entrapment concerns were to be addressed in a Protocol to the Treaty, which was intended to ‘formalize the understanding that without mutual consent, the Chinese Government would not take any offensive action which might provoke retaliation by the Communists leading to invocation of the Treaty’. Yeh noted that China had pledged to refrain from offensive action, but this undertaking was ‘secret and needed to be kept so...[as] The Chinese people are not prepared for a public renunciation of the nominal right...to liberate the Mainland’. Yeh argued that this understanding should be formalised in an exchange of notes, not a Treaty protocol that would be subject to approval from the Legislative Yuan. If the US insisted on the treaty protocol, then ‘the world would see a U.S. leash around the neck of Free China’. Yeh ‘said he was prepared to go to any lengths to comply with U.S. wishes, provided it was done by note’ and not by a public protocol. Robertson pledged to discuss the matter with Dulles, who approved the Chinese request for a secret exchange of notes instead of a public protocol. However, the Chinese were informed that the US reserved the right to make the exchange of notes public, if it was required.

Dulles’ desire to keep the Communists guessing about US intentions was accomplished through a slight modification of Article V. In other Asian alliances, this article referred to an attack ‘on the territories’ of the parties. In the US-ROC

\[\text{120 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy), Top Secret, 6 November 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, pp.870-880.}\]
\[\text{121 See Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy), Top Secret, 7 December 1954, p.1002 and Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy), Top Secret, 13 December 1954, p.1019, both in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV.}\]
treaty, this article would specify that an attack ‘directed against the territories’ of the parties would activate the treaty. This would allow the US, if it so desired, to interpret an attack against the islands as the opening move in a campaign against Formosa. Robertson noted that ‘This language represents an attempt to give some coverage to the off-shore islands and to keep the Communists guessing as to what U.S. intentions are’. Following further negotiations concerning the exchange of notes, the treaty texts were agreed and initialled on 23 November 1954.

US allies react to the treaty negotiations

While these negotiations progressed, US allies continued to raise their concerns about the offshore islands. Based on their diplomatic interactions with the Chinese Communists, the British were particularly concerned about the possibility of the islands leading to a general war: they feared that ‘The two opposing sides might find themselves eventually in a position where their prestige would be so deeply involved that war would be almost unavoidable’. The New Zealand Government was ‘anxious to know the terms of the proposed U.S. announcement concerning its treaty negotiations with the Nationalist Chinese’, and thought the US ‘should emphasize as much as possible the defensive nature of the proposed treaty’. Secretary Dulles acknowledged the interdependence between this treaty and the prospects of the New Zealand resolution. He specifically noted that the ‘UK was reluctant to proceed further with the New Zealand resolution until it knew more about the proposed treaty and the form of its presentation...UK representatives had on more than one occasion emphasized that their Government could not finally commit to the

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exercise in question unless and until it felt that our treaty undertaking would be compatible therewith.\textsuperscript{125}

In November 1954 the PRC sentenced several American airmen, captured during the Korean War, to prison terms for espionage. One response considered by the US was to conduct a blockade of Communist China, and a Special National Intelligence Estimate assessed the likely worldwide reaction. This assessment is of relevance to the US-Formosa relationship because it notes the general strategic preferences of these countries and their willingness (or reluctance) to adopt confrontational stances towards Communist China. The paper assessed that 'The ROK, Nationalist China, probably the SEATO nations of Southeast Asia, and elements in other countries would approve such action [a blockade] against the Communists,' but noted that 'In those nations which have been hoping for a general relaxation of tensions...it would be asserted that the US had seized upon the Chinese Communist action as a pretext to bring about full-scale war with Peiping.'\textsuperscript{126}

The estimate gave special consideration to Japan and the UK, as their reactions 'would probably be of the greatest importance to US interests...[they] would probably bring considerable pressure on the US to abandon the blockade'. Specifically, the paper noted that 'Japanese public opinion, at this time strongly influenced by hope of trade with mainland China, and highly fearful of any steps which in the Japanese view involve risk of general war, would probably be comparable to that of the neutralist countries. The Japanese Government probably would seek to avoid direct use of its ports and facilities by US blockading forces'. Support for a blockade would be strongest in the ROK and Free China, as there it would be seen as 'an opportunity to involve the US in war with Communist China. The US would have increasing difficulty in restraining both the ROK and the Chinese Nationalists'.\textsuperscript{127} The possibility of Tokyo seeking

to restrict the use of its ports is important given that at this time the US had the right, under the 1951 security treaty between Japan and the US, to use bases in Japan without Tokyo’s permission.

The conclusions of this NIE are consistent with other intelligence assessments throughout this period. With the exception of Nationalist China and the ROK, and the possible exception of some Southeast Asian nations, most American allies feared entrapment – they were concerned that a confrontation with Communist China could escalate into general war. New Zealand’s Ambassador raised the prospect that President Chiang might ‘engage in bellicose talk for domestic political and psychological reasons’, and thus make statements contrary to the defensive intent of the treaty.\(^{128}\) The UK went even further with their Ambassador delivering a document, which expressed the view of the UK Cabinet, to Dulles. This document suggested that in light of the defence pact and the sentencing of the American prisoners—a development which stirred up no small amount of anger amongst the American people—the plan for New Zealand’s resolution in the UNSC should be deferred. The UK was afraid that the resolution, if introduced now, might ‘do more harm than good’.\(^{129}\)

Dulles acknowledged these concerns, saying that if New Zealand moved its resolution ‘simultaneously with the treaty, it might well be regarded as part of a double-barrelled offensive against the Communists’. Given that the signing of the treaty would come so soon after the sentencing of the US prisoners, Dulles acknowledged that the American people ‘might erroneously interpret it as a form of reprisal’. Dulles took particular care to emphasise to the UK and New Zealand diplomats that ‘he and the President were trying to exert a moderating influence’, but caveat this remark by noting that ‘they would not do so to the extent of abdicating our rights’. Acknowledging that recent events had changed the strategic calculus, Dulles said that if an attack were launched against the


islands now, ‘given the present state of public indignation…he would not dare prophesy the outcome, and that we might even be drawn into the hostilities’. In light of this, it was agreed that the issue would be reconsidered in a week or so.

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of China was signed at 4:00pm on 2 December 1954. Asked about the status of the offshore islands, Dulles publicly answered that ‘Their status is neither promoted by the treaty nor is it demoted by the treaty…the injunction to our armed forces is to defend Formosa and the Pescadores’. But he also continued to note that the US could decide the islands were relevant to the defense of Formosa. Thus, Dulles continued efforts to “keep the Communists guessing” as to America’s true intent. But as America succeeded in obtaining a Nationalist commitment that no attacks against the Chinese mainland would occur without American approval, it was considered that ‘Dulles explicitly (albeit secretly) releashed Chiang’.

The alliance audience effect from September – December 1954

As expected by hypothesis 1, US allies monitored its conduct in other alliances in order to evaluate American reliability. The UK and New Zealand were concerned that America’s desire to support the Chinese Nationalists increased the risk of general war and thus reduced America’s reliability as an ally. When Quemoy and the Tachen island group were attacked, the ROC complained that it was not receiving the same assistance that had been given to Korea, when it was attacked by the Communists in 1950.

For most US allies, Washington’s ambiguous commitment to Nationalist China was a point of concern – it increased the risks of escalation and general war, and thus damaged American reliability. As expected by hypothesis 2, these allies moved to mitigate the risks this posed: New Zealand and the United Kingdom

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132 Tucker, ‘John Foster Dulles and the Taiwan Roots of the “Two Chinas” Policy’, p.244.
were instrumental in influencing America’s negotiations with the Chinese Nationalist. American decision-makers, from Eisenhower down, knew that it was vital to maintain the support of allies. This influenced both the text of the treaty and the mechanisms which underpinned it. Though the Nationalists’ pledge of restraint was incorporated in a secret note instead of being in the treaty itself, the US reserved the right to release this document if it became necessary.

Finally, hypothesis 3 expects that the US would be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance relationship could affect other allies. This dynamic was clearly visible in this period: Eisenhower and Dulles were quite concerned with how other allies would view Washington’s policies. Eisenhower was concerned that allies would disapprove of America’s commitments to Formosa. Eager to reassure these worries allies, Dulles tried to ameliorate their concerns: he reassured New Zealand and the UK that America was working to restrain the Nationalists and reduce tensions in the area. As the text of the US-ROC treaty was negotiated, the need to maintain consistency across alliance relationships was also an influence on US policy. This is another example of the interdependence explored in Chapter 2 – no bilateral treaty could offer more favorable terms than another bilateral treaty, lest this create problems in another relationship.

**Conclusion**

In the 1953 – 1954 period, the alliance audience effect can be observed on a number of occasions. The negotiation of the US-ROK alliance was influenced by alliance interdependence in several ways: signing the armistice without an alliance would disturb the ROC, but succumbing to Rhee’s intransigent approach would also set a dangerous precedent that might be adopted by other allies. Accordingly, the US set the example, bargained hard with Rhee, and finally pulled Seoul in to line. The US did not want the ROC, based on its observations of the US-ROK relationship, to think that America was an unreliable ally. But neither did it want the ROC to see Rhee’s approach as one worthy of emulation. In
refusing to let Rhee set the terms of the US-ROK alliance, the US clearly demonstrated to the ROC that Washington would only agree to an alliance if common interests could be prioritised and pursued. America was not going to be manipulated or blackmailed into an alliance.

Because Chiang had closely observed these negotiations, he knew that a US-ROC alliance was impossible unless he was willing to subordinate his goal of national reunification to American preferences. Although the form of the US-ROC treaty would also be influenced by the views of other US allies like New Zealand and the UK, Chiang’s willingness to be “releashed” ensured that he would obtain his own alliance with Washington. At first, Chiang intimated his willingness to refrain from attacks against the mainland, and later he explicitly promised that the ROC would not launch attacks without American approval. With this entrapment possibility addressed, the US was able to form the US-ROC alliance. The initialling (and subsequent ratification) of this treaty completed the hub and spoke system of American alliances in Asia.

The need to consider allied opinion was a pervasive influence on US policy throughout this period, even though the First Taiwan Strait Crisis had not yet reached its zenith. As the crisis continued and tensions escalated, allied opinion would soon be a critical influence on US policy toward the Republic of China.
Dramatis Personae – Chapter 4

Robert Bowie  Director of the Policy Planning Staff
Chiang Kai-shek  President of the Republic of China
Chou En-lai  Premier of the People's Republic of China
John Foster Dulles  Secretary of State
Antony Eden  Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom
Dwight Eisenhower  President of the United States of America
Carlos Garcia  Foreign Secretary of the Philippines
Ramon Magsaysay  President of the Philippines
Robert Menzies  Prime Minister of Australia
Felino Neri  Foreign Affairs Adviser to the President of the Philippines
Lester Pearson  Canadian Secretary of External Affairs
Karl Rankin  US Ambassador to the Republic of China
Walter Robertson  Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
Percy Spender  Australian Ambassador to the United States
George Yeh  Foreign Minister of the Republic of China
Chapter 4
US allies encourage disloyalty to Taiwan, 1954-1955

War was being risked over what appeared to be, physically, worthless, very small pieces of island real estate. But he [Dulles] believed that actually the issue there was whether we honoured our commitments, or whether we were going to back down when the pressure got on us; and if we ever started that, it would undermine all our treaties.¹

William Macomber
Special Assistant of Intelligence
Department of State

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, throughout 1953 and 1954 US allies carefully observed how America treated the Republic of China. These allies were concerned that America’s association with the ROC’s security could provoke a general war that would be contrary to their own interests. Even as the US formally committed itself to the ROC through an alliance, the views of other US allies were influential: friends like the UK and New Zealand wanted the US-ROC alliance to restrain, not embolden, the Republic of China’s President, Chiang Kai-shek. As the First Taiwan Strait Crisis continued and eventually reached its zenith in March 1955, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and President Dwight Eisenhower believed that their policy toward the ROC had to consider the disposition of other allies. Despite this, allied capitals were concerned and continually attempted to modify US policy in ways that reduced the risk of war.

While most US allies agreed that the defence of Formosa itself was very important, only Washington’s most belligerent ally—the Republic of Korea—welcomed the prospect of conflict over the offshore islands. Other allies used diplomatic efforts to persuade the US to adopt a more conciliatory posture, which decreased the risk of a general war. At first, these efforts worked toward the US encouraging a Chinese Nationalist withdrawal from the islands. When this failed, allies added another incentive: the possibility that a group of nations would join with the United States in guaranteeing the ROC regime’s security on

Formosa and the Pescadores. But this offer came with a critical condition: that the ROC abandon its position on the offshore islands. Throughout the crisis, US policy toward Nationalist China was strongly influenced by the preferences of its allies. While Washington feared the negative consequences of being “disloyal” to Taiwan, the greater fear was losing the support of allies such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Because the events of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis offer an opportunity to decisively assess the alliance audience effect framework’s careful delineation between the concepts of loyalty and reliability, it is a crucial case for examining the framework’s validity.²

This chapter is structured into three sections. The first focuses on the events of December 1954 – February 1955. This includes the PRC’s reaction to the US-ROC alliance, and the passage of a congressional resolution which gave Eisenhower the ability to interpret attacks against the offshore islands as a prelude to an invasion of Formosa itself. However, as expected by the alliance audience effect framework, the views of US allies influenced Washington to adopt a carefully restrained policy toward Taipei. When the small Tachen island group was attacked by the PRC, US allies advocated a Nationalist withdrawal from the islands.³ America encouraged and eventually assisted this evacuation in early February.

The chapter’s second section starts with a February 1955 change in US policy, whereby the Eisenhower administration attempted to convince the ROC to withdraw from the remaining offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Until the crisis receded in April, Washington would regularly implore Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw his forces from the offshore islands. America’s allies in the British Commonwealth desired this outcome, and worked to make it more likely by offering the US an explicit quid pro quo: if Washington could convince the ROC to withdraw from the offshore islands, these allies would join with America in

² On the idea of crucial cases, see Harry Eckstein, ‘Case Study and Theory in Political Science’, in Gomm, Roger, Hammersley, Martyn and Foster, Peter (eds), Case Study Methods, Sage Publications: London, 2009, pp.143-151.
³ These are now called the Dachen Islands, but throughout this dissertation the terminology in use at the time—the Tachen Islands—is used. The same approach is used for Quemoy and its islands, which are now called Kinmen.
guaranteeing the ROC regime’s security on Formosa itself. When the US maintained a belligerent public tone and threatened the use of nuclear weapons against mainland China, these allies took the final step of strongly distancing their states from the US strategy: they publicly announced that they would not contribute military forces to a defence of the offshore islands. This lack of allied support was a key influence on President Eisenhower finally deciding that the United States would not assist the ROC to defend the offshore islands.

Finally, the third section considers the reactions of Korea and the Philippines. As smaller allies more dependent on the US for security, these two nations had less influence on US policy. Each section concludes with a short analysis of whether the events assessed support or rebut the alliance audience effect framework.

Regarding the sources used in this chapter, the diplomatic exchanges between the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia are well documented in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. However, given the lesser focus on South Korea and the Philippines, the final sections of this chapter draw heavily on material from the National Archives and Records Administration. Files from the National Archives of Australia are also used throughout the chapter.

**December 1954 – February 1955**

**UK and New Zealand pause Operation Oracle over US-ROC treaty concerns**

Representatives from the US, UK and New Zealand met shortly after the US-ROC alliance was publicly announced in December 1954. At this meeting, the British Ambassador conveyed the concerns of the UK’s Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, to Dulles. Perturbed by an ‘angry reaction’ in Beijing to the US-ROC treaty announcement, Eden felt that Operation Oracle—the cooperative trilateral effort to place a ceasefire resolution for the Taiwan Strait before the United Nations Security Council—should be paused for the time being. In order to improve the situation, Eden felt that the secret notes exchanged as part of the US-ROC treaty
should be publicly released before proceeding. These notes codified an ‘understanding that without mutual consent, the Chinese Government would not take any offensive action which might provoke retaliation by the Communists leading to invocation of the Treaty’.⁴ Although these notes had not been publicly released, Washington had reserved its right to do so if it became necessary.

Dulles was not enthusiastic about this idea, and noted that it was not intended to release these notes publicly ‘unless it should prove to be necessary in connection with the New Zealand initiative’ (i.e. Operation Oracle).⁵ The UK and New Zealand—in the words of historian Robert Accinelli, ‘still anxious to restrain Washington’—suggested that Oracle be postponed.⁶ When Dulles discussed the matter with Eden in mid-December, Dulles noted that there was no intelligence to indicate an imminent attack against any of the offshore islands. Because of the ‘heated atmosphere resulting from P. W [prisoner of war] issue and signing of US-Chinese Nationalist treaty’, Dulles suggested that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution not be raised yet, and that instead the three countries should ‘adopt a policy of watchful waiting’.⁷

Despite this patient approach, Washington’s dilemma continued to grow sharper. A few days after the US-ROC treaty was signed, a memo from the Office of Intelligence Research questioned the wisdom of the Administration’s policy, designed to “keep the Communists guessing”. The memo suggested that ‘the Communists are unlikely to be deterred by our present policy from progressively expanding their pressure on the offshore islands...they will not only continue probing operations but also eventually attempt to conquer the islands, one by one’. It also noted that given outrage over the prisoner of war issue, then if such attacks occurred ‘some US Congressional and press opinion...would probably call

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⁶ Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.177.
⁷ The Secretary of State to the Department of State, Top Secret, 17 December 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XIV, p.1035. The ‘prisoner of war’ comment refers to the PRC’s capture of eleven US airmen captured during the Korean War (see Chapter 3).
for vigorous action’. But if the US did decide, in this context, to defend the offshore islands, it would ‘find itself completely isolated from major allies’.  

An attack on the Tachens leads the US to encourage their evacuation

As predicted by the American intelligence community, Chinese Communist actions would soon force the US to abandon their policy designed to “keep the Communists guessing”. On 10 January 1955 the Chinese Communists launched an air attack against the Tachen Islands. This was, according to the Chinese Nationalists, ‘larger than any Communist air action in the Korean War’ and the most significant attack against an offshore island since September 1954. The ROC’s Foreign Minister, George Yeh, complained to Dulles that ‘for the last few days all units of the 7th Fleet have given the Tachen Islands a wide berth. They have stayed farther away than usual. This creates an impression of abandonment’. When Yeh requested the Seventh Fleet to make a show of force, Dulles replied that ‘the U.S. Government could not afford to bluff in this situation. We cannot indicate that we may intervene unless we are in fact prepared to do so’.

But Dulles’ position would soon harden. From 18-20 January, Chinese Communist troops attacked and eventually captured the Yikiangshan Islands, which had been held by a garrison of approximately 1000 Nationalist troops. According to Accinelli, these events led Dulles to become ‘certain that the Chinese intended to overrun the Tachens along with the rest of the offshore islands and eventually to try to make good on their pledge to “liberate” Taiwan’. Though Dulles had previously noted that US involvement in the defence of the offshore islands would unnerve and dismay America’s allies, Dulles now accorded the offshore islands immense importance. In Dulles’ eyes,

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11 Acinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.187.
the capture of the offshore islands would almost inevitably lead to the fall of Formosa, which could lead to other Asian countries either adopting neutral positions in the Cold War contest, or even defecting to the Communist bloc. This “falling domino” logic would be a powerful and pervasive influence on US policy throughout the crisis.

At a lunch with President Eisenhower, Dulles expressed his concern that ‘doubt as to our intentions was having a bad effect on our prestige in the area, since it was in many quarters assumed that we would defend the islands, and our failure to do so indicated that we were running away...I felt it important to make our intentions clear and then stick to them’.\footnote{12} Dulles suggested that the US encourage the Chinese Nationalists to evacuate the Tachen Islands, with the US providing logistical support. Concurrently, the US could make clear its intent to defend Quemoy, and possibly also Matsu, through a public announcement. The situation on these islands might then be stabilised by action to bring the matter before the UNSC.\footnote{13}

Eisenhower approved this plan, and Dulles organised to meet with the British, the New Zealanders, and the Chinese Nationalists. Dulles briefed the British Ambassador that the US would encourage the Chinese Nationalists to evacuate their forces from the Tachen Island group. Acknowledging that this action might adversely affect morale on Formosa, Dulles noted that ‘it was contemplated to state that under present conditions the United States would assist the Nationals in the defense of [the] Quemoy’ Islands, as they remained ‘important to the defense of Formosa’. The British Ambassador asked whether the US intended to incorporate Quemoy into the US-ROC treaty. Dulles ‘replied negatively, saying that our action would be provisional pending UN action or, alternatively, the Communists using Amoy as a clear staging base for the invasion of Formosa’.

\footnote{12}This seems to have been an erroneous assumption on Dulles’ part. In the files examined for this dissertation, nothing suggested that US allies assumed that the United States would defend the offshore islands. If they believed this, they (presumably) would not have worked so hard to get better information on the nature of America’s commitment to the offshore islands.

Dulles felt that the time had come for New Zealand to commence Operation Oracle and bring the matter before the UNSC.\textsuperscript{14}

Dulles then presented his plan to the ROC’s Foreign Minister and Ambassador. The US would assist with the evacuation of the Tachen Islands, proclaim its willingness—‘under present conditions and pending appropriate action by the UN’—to defend Quemoy, and finally a UNSC cease-fire resolution would be moved. To facilitate this policy, Dulles noted that the President would have to seek Congressional approval, ‘since we would have to be prepared if necessary to engage in hostilities with Communist China’. Regarding Matsu, Dulles said that it ‘was not believed to be defensible’ and suggested that the Nationalists withdraw from it ‘under cover of the Tachen operation’. Dulles drew a clear line between Quemoy and other Nationalist-held positions, arguing that while Quemoy had genuine defensive value, this could not be said for other positions – ‘It did not make sense to tie up major forces to hold a bunch of rocks’. However, Dulles did specifically note that ‘if all the off-shore islands positions were abandoned there would be a very bad effect on morale throughout the Far East’. This was one of the reasons why the US was willing to assist in the defence of Quemoy.\textsuperscript{15}

Dulles made it clear that ‘If the Chinese Government rejected the proposal, it would lose the whole business’, as it would be unable to defend the Tachen Islands alone. Dulles noted that the US ‘could not play a fuzzy game any longer’. As some US officials had earlier predicted, the

\textit{Communists had already begun to probe and were exposing the indecision. The U.S. must now make clear its position and be prepared to carry out the obligations it was now prepared to assume. Otherwise the U.S. reputation would become tarnished. The U.S. could not afford to back down from any position which it assumed, or to be exposed in a bluff.}\textsuperscript{16}

Interestingly, at an inter-Departmental meeting later that day, Dulles elaborated that his concern about America’s reputation was tied not to the islands

\textsuperscript{14} Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, 19 January 1955, 3:15 p.m., in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II}, p.45.
\textsuperscript{16} Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, 19 January 1955, 3:45 p.m., in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II}, p.49.
themselves, but the Chinese Nationalist forces on them. America had not publicly committed to the defence of any offshore island, but it would be ‘shocking to sit by while the Chinat forces (not able alone to defend themselves) were destroyed or taken captive on these islands, and that their destruction or capture would...have a damaging effect upon all US friends in the Far East (Japan, ROK, Philippines, etc’). Given that the Chinese Communists had made clear their intention to continue probes and attacks against the offshore islands, further uncertainty over US intent would only damage its prestige in the region. Dulles argued that ‘the time had come for the US...eliminate the fuzziness as to what the US would or would not do in the area’.17

When Dulles briefed the Congressional leadership on this plan, he again emphasised how other countries would be impacted by US behaviour towards the Chinese Nationalists. He said that if the Nationalists did not withdraw from the Tachen Island group, they would be killed or captured. He predicted a ‘falling of the islands one by one, including Quemoy’ and that the US ‘would be charged with turning and running and making excuses, and the whole effect on the non-communist countries in Asia would be extremely bad’. Later in the meeting, when one Congressman seems to have questioned America’s commitment to Formosa itself, Admiral Radford observed that ‘Communist control of this area would outflank the Philippines and cut across all our defense’. Dulles agreed, noting that ‘sentiment in the Philippines is extremely sensitive to the Formosan situation’. Radford also ‘pointed out that the psychological effect of the loss of Formosa, in Japan and in other countries in the Far East would be terrific’.18

Dulles expressed similar thoughts an at NSC meeting later that day. He argued that ‘the loss of the Tachen group of islands would have very serious psychological effects not only on the Chinese Nationalists, but in other areas of the Far East such as Korea, Japan and the Philippines, unless this loss were

accompanied by a clearer indication than was now available of United States intentions and where we stood ourselves’. Dulles believed that in light of ‘a series of Communist military operations which are ultimately directed toward the capture of Formosa...it would have a very grave effect throughout all the nations of free Asia if we were to clarify a U.S. position which in effect amounted to abandonment of all the Nationalist-held offshore islands’. Beyond the purely defensive reasons of Quemoy’s outlook onto the harbour facilities of Amoy and Foochow, Dulles thought it important to support the Nationalists in the defense of Quemoy in order to protect America’s reputation as a loyal ally.19

Eisenhower saw several points of merit in Dulles’ plan. He believed that the decision to evacuate the Tachen Island group would ‘at least have the merit of showing the world that the United States was trying to maintain a decent posture. At the same time, the proposed policy would make clear that this U.S. concession with respect to the Tachens would not mean that the United States was prepared to make any concessions with respect to Formosa’. Having previously expressed his concern that world opinion would not support the US in a general war with China over the offshore islands, Eisenhower saw Dulles’ plan as having the right mix of conciliatory and confrontational measures. Some other members of the NSC argued that the US should use this opportunity to persuade the Nationalists to withdraw from all of the offshore islands, but Eisenhower ruled this out on the basis that ‘we probably couldn’t hold Formosa if Chiang Kai-shek gives up in despair before Formosa is attacked’. Dulles also noted that there might be a ‘revolt...in the Congress if the Administration proposed to abandon all the off-shore islands’. Eisenhower agreed, noting that ‘there was hardly a word which the people of this country feared more than the term “Munich”’.20


But US allies did not share Eisenhower’s enthusiasm for Dulles’ plan. The British Cabinet ‘did not like the idea of a “provisional guarantee” of Quemoy, believing that its lack of clarity would confuse all parties and...encourage the Nationalists to hang on to the coastal islands’.

The Australian Foreign Minister was also against the idea of a guarantee for Quemoy. On behalf of Secretary Eden, the British Ambassador also noted that Dulles had previously said that ‘Quemoy could not be defended except with the use of atomic weapons. Eden’s question was whether Quemoy was sufficiently vital to risk such wide-reaching developments’. Dulles’ response was to justify the defense of Quemoy in terms of allied morale, because if ‘the Tachens are evacuated and no other move or explanation given, the impression will be that of a collapse in position. The consequences he foresaw in Japan, Korea, the Philippines and very possibly throughout Southeast Asia would be extremely serious’. On the question of nuclear weapons, Dulles said that ‘his reference...related only to the most extreme hypothesis of the Communists attacking Quemoy in so heavy a human wave as to make it impossible to stop them...this was a remote possibility’. This issue was evidently important to the British officials, who ‘exchanged a glance and...made what was obviously a verbatim note’.

Following British lobbying, Dulles decides against a public guarantee of Quemoy

Briefing the NSC the next day, Dulles noted that the British were unwilling to support the US plan for the offshore islands because ‘we might be obliged to use atomic weapons’ and ‘if there were to be a public declaration at this stage regarding the U.S. course of action, the decision would be irrevocable, and efforts to stabilize the situation in the United Nations would prove futile’. Dulles felt that if the US committed to aiding Formosa ‘without publicly identifying those offshore islands which the United States would help to defend’, then the British

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22 Memorandum of Conversation, 21 January 1955, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3938, 793.5/1-2155.
might support the plan. Dulles concluded that this approach would be best, as the issue of which islands would be defended could be agreed separately and privately with the Nationalists. After some debate, the meeting agreed that Eisenhower would request Congressional authority to protect ‘Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack’ and that this would ‘include the security and protection of such related positions now in friendly hands’. Thus, British lobbying achieved a significant change of US policy: instead of the US publicly committing to the defence of Quemoy and Matsu, this pledge would remain private as, in the words of Accinelli, ‘a concession to the British’.26

Dulles informed Foreign Minister Yeh that the US had decided it was ‘prepared to assist in the defense of Matsu as well as Quemoy. However, no public declaration would be made at present in this respect’. Yeh queried the private nature of this undertaking several times, and Dulles finally answered that ‘the National Security Council had made the decision this morning that it would be U.S. policy to assist in their defense’, but he also noted that ‘This was a matter of U.S. policy and not of agreement with the Chinese Government, and, therefore, could be changed by the U.S. just as any other policy’. The following day, Yeh stated that while the ROC Government had accepted the evacuation plan, President Chiang wanted an undertaking that the US would publicly announce, concurrently with the evacuation of the Tachen Islands, its intent to defend Quemoy and Matsu. Walter Robertson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, swiftly refused this request, noting that the Congressional resolution would refer to the Formosa area but would not name specific offshore islands.28 Chinese Nationalist representatives raised this issue again later in January, but Dulles cautioned that the ROC Government ‘should not through its public statements get the U.S. in the position of apparently having made a formal commitment’ to Quemoy and Matsu, as the ‘U.S. Government might have to deny such an

26 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, pp.190.
implication’. Dulles was making it clear that Washington—despite reneging on its earlier commitment to publicly announce its intent to defend Quemoy and Matsu—could not be manipulated, and that any attempt to do so would prompt a sharp response.

President Eisenhower sent a message to Congress on 24 January 1955, and on 28 January 1955 it passed what became known as the “Formosa Resolution”. This granted President Eisenhower the authority to ‘employ the Armed Forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of security and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, this authority to include the security and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands’. In response, the Premier of the PRC, Chou En-lai, released a statement which reaffirmed Communist China’s intent to liberate Taiwan, and called on the US to cease interference in China’s internal affairs.

Even though the US had deliberately left its commitments to the offshore islands ambiguous, the British were still quite concerned that the situation could lead to a war with China. Prime Minister Winston Churchill made mention of this in a letter to President Eisenhower. In his reply, Eisenhower emphasised that he while he was exercising a ‘sober approach to critical problems’ and had been ‘working hard in the exploration of every avenue that seems to lead toward the preservation and strengthening of the peace’, the US was concerned about the ‘solidarity of the Island Barrier in the Western Pacific’. In this context, he feared that ‘the psychological effect in the Far East of deserting our friends on Formosa would risk a collapse of Asiatic resistance to the Communists’. But Eisenhower also had to carefully consider British opinion and that of other allies. Dulles again emphasised the issue of allied support in an NSC meeting on 27 January.

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He felt that ‘the big danger resulting from a war between the U.S. and Communist China...was the possibility that it would alienate the allies of the United States’. 34

The Formosa Resolution, with its broad remit, did not ameliorate the concerns of US allies. Australian documents show that policy-makers in Canberra instructed their diplomats in Washington ‘to watch how [the] Americans intend [to] use these powers. We must continue to press [the] importance of not getting involved in large-scale hostilities over [the] off-shore islands...we hope this will not lead to [a] U.S. commitment defined or undefined to defend others of these islands’. Of particular concern was an impression that the Americans were now ‘drifting toward widening obligations’. 35 New Zealand’s High Commissioner to Canada observed similar concerns amongst his hosts, cabling Wellington that ‘Parts of Eisenhower’s Message to Congress have disturbed the Canadians and the [Canadian] Ambassador in Washington has been instructed to express the hope that the power given by Congress will be used with great caution’. 36

Shortly following the passage of the Formosa Resolution, President Chiang dug in his heels. Clinging to Dulles’ initial offer—that the US would publicly affirm its intent to help defend Quemoy and Matsu—Chiang was not prepared to withdraw from the Tachens until the US confirmed its intent to make a public announcement. 37 A meeting of US officials reconsidered the issue and affirmed that while the US was prepared to help defend Quemoy and Matsu, this was ‘a unilateral decision on our part...subject to change’ and the US was ‘not willing to make a public statement to this effect’. 38 The Acting Secretary of State cleared a response with Eisenhower and cabled it to America’s Ambassador to the ROC Korea, Karl Rankin, who was to immediately deliver it to President Chiang. It made it clear that the American undertaking to defend Quemoy and Matsu was

35 Cable from Department of External Affairs (Canberra) to Australian Embassy (Washington), 25 January 1955, in National Archives of Australia (NAA), A1838, 852/21/2 Part 3, Formosa, f.28.
36 Cable from New Zealand High Commission (Ottawa) to Minister for External Affairs (Wellington), 26 January 1955, in NAA, A1838, 852/21/2 Part 3, f.49.
unilateral and could not be publicly announced by the ROC. America’s reversal, and its new position—that the undertaking must remain private—was, *prima facie*, the direct result of allied lobbying.

In a personal letter, President Eisenhower reflected on the difficulties of the situation over Quemoy and Matsu. He noted that while the US ‘could state flatly that we would defend...Quemoy and the Matsus’, this would lead only to further problems. Eisenhower felt that the ‘defensive problem could be extremely difficult over the long term and I think that the world in general, including some of our friends, would believe us unreasonable and practically goading the Chinese Communists into a fight’. He lamented the difficulty of finding a policy which served to ‘retain the greatest possible confidence of our friends and at the same time put our enemies on notice that we are not going to stand idly by to see our vital interests jeopardized...Whatever is now to happen, I know that nothing could be worse than global war’. 

*Operation Oracle moves ahead, but US allies remain concerned*

In late January, New Zealand placed their resolution on the UNSC agenda. The PRC was invited to send an official to participate in the Council’s consideration of the ceasefire resolution, but this was refused on the basis that ‘the purpose of the New Zealand proposal was “to intervene in China’s internal affairs and to cover up the acts of aggression by the United States against China”’. 

With tensions continuing, America convinced the ROC to withdraw from the Tachens, and military preparations for evacuation operations began. Nevertheless, US allies remained concerned about the possibility of a military clash over the offshore islands escalating into a general war. When the Prime Ministers of several Commonwealth countries met in London in early February,

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they were united in their apprehension. The Prime Minister of Australia, Robert
Menzies, noted that ‘Australian and other British [Commonwealth] opinion
would be much opposed to accepting a risk of war over the “off-shore” islands’. To
further emphasise the Commonwealth’s desire to avoid escalation, he lauded
President Eisenhower’s ‘coolness, judgement and character at a time when the
truculence of China’s reply must provoke hostile reactions and possibly some
intemperate opinions. It is this feeling about the President which gives me
encouragement and hope’.42

American diplomatic reporting confirmed that Menzies was indeed speaking for
all present at the Conference, and that ‘The view of all the Prime Ministers was
that no precipitate decisions should be taken, nor positions publicly announced,
which might make the situation more difficult. The Prime Ministers wanted at
least forty-eight hours for further reflection, and this might also give time for
public opinion to cool down’.43 A press report on the conference noted that a
‘sound American policy would be to follow up what is being done in the Tachens
[i.e. an evacuation] by doing the same thing in Quemoy and Matsu’, and Foreign
Secretary Eden noted that ‘this sentence expressed the hope of everyone who
was at the Conference’.44 For those attending the Commonwealth Conference,
‘Quemoy and Matsu, like the Tachens, were strategic and political liabilities,
indesdefensible except at the risk of general war’.45 Though the United States
worried about its reputation and the possibility of falling dominoes, these
“domino states” were themselves dismissing the importance of the offshore
islands and thus rejecting the domino theory.46 States like Australia, New
Zealand and Japan worried more about war than about the first two dominos
(Quemoy and Matsu) falling, because they rejected the notion that this would
inevitably cause the third domino, Formosa, to fall.

42 Telegram From the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State, 4
43 See footnote 4 to Telegram From the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the
44 Telegram From the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State,
45 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.205.
46 The author is indebted to Evelyn Goh for suggesting this phrasing.
Bilateral representations to the United States reflected this sentiment. The Canadian and British Ambassadors both took ‘great pains to emphasize...the importance that is attached to making a distinction between the off-shore islands on the one hand and Formosa and the Pescadores on the other’. The Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs reported that the Commonwealth nations ‘are trying to tell us without putting it into words is that they can swing all of the Commonwealth...behind our policy if we will indicate that we are prepared to have the Chinese Nationals withdraw from all the off-shore islands and make our stand on Formosa and Pescadores’. While Eisenhower appreciated this sentiment, he believed that any perceived surrender of Quemoy and Matsu could be catastrophic for the Nationalists, and thus catastrophic for the defensive line in Asia.

On 5 February 1955, the Chinese Nationalists issued a statement concerning their intent to withdraw from the Tachens. President Eisenhower authorised the State Department to issue a release confirming that the US was assisting with the evacuation. When the National Security Council met on 10 February, Admiral Radford briefed that the evacuation was ‘proceeding very successfully in good weather’ and that the ‘task would be completed at the end of the week’. This evacuation did little to allay allied concerns about America’s policy toward the offshore islands. The Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Robert Bowie, carefully analysed the situation and his assessment specifically noted many of the alliance tensions that influenced US policy. The general thrust of his assessment was that ‘the free nations in Europe and Asia distinguish sharply between Formosa and the off-shore islands’. While these nations supported the defense of Formosa,

\[\text{they consider the off-shore islands do not involve our security interests...they look on them as a futile hostage to fortune and the symbol of a rash and quixotic policy...they feel that our protection of those islands greatly enhances the risk of war and thereby endangers their own security. This fear will tend to strain the coalition and generate pressures to restrain us...This attitude would}\]

\[\text{Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant) to the Secretary of State, 4 February 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.213-214.}\]
put us in a difficult position if the Chi-Coms should attack Quemoy or the Matsus. A war arising over Quemoy would alienate our allies in Europe and much of Asia. The lack of allied support would handicap our conduct of even a limited war and might seriously impair our capabilities if hostilities spread... The US must adopt some other course of action which will keep the free world with us...our policy should be directed to disengaging from the offshore islands in a way that will not damage our prestige or leave any doubts as to our will and ability to defend Formosa and the Pescadores.50

Bowie’s suggestion was that the US pressure the Chinese Nationalists to withdraw from all of the offshore islands, thus removing a major point of disagreement between America and many of its important allies. By responding ‘severely’ to any Communist attack during the evacuation, the US could demonstrate ‘both our contempt for the ChiCom military power and our desire not to provoke “useless” conflict’.51

Could the US coerce Chiang to withdraw from the other offshore islands?

Up until this point, many of Dulles’ comments suggest that he believed the loss of the offshore islands would so frighten Asian allies as to lead to their defection or loss to Communist subversion. In a conversation with the Australian Ambassador to the US, Percy Spender, Dulles now believed that ‘in the technical sense’ the loss of the offshore islands ‘would not mean the loss of the Philippines and Japan’.52 But the morale of the Nationalist regime had to be considered. While the offshore islands were ‘neither vital nor important in defence of Formosa’, their loss could so affect Nationalist morale as to cause the ‘loss of Formosa from within’. This causal process meant that in Dulles’ eyes, ‘the battle for Formosa is now “on”’.53 Dulles believed that ‘additional losses beyond the Tachens would so gravely affect the morale of these troops that a climate might be established under which the Communists could obtain Formosa from within by subversion’. Aware that

50 Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 7 February 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.238-239.
51 Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 7 February 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, p.240.
53 Cable from Australian Embassy (Washington) to Australian High Commission (London), 11 February 1955, in National Archives of Australia, A1209, 1957/5035. This document is not marked with a folio number. In the electronic file, available at the National Archives of Australia website, these quotes are from pp.194-196.
America’s Commonwealth allies feared general war, Dulles ‘said he hoped that Australia understood that the U.S. was not being reckless and that we did not want war...we had been calm and careful...He expressed the hope that minor differences with allies not be exploited or blown up into major ones’.54

Eisenhower made a similar argument in a private letter to Winston Churchill – the offshore islands were important for reasons of Nationalist morale, not because their loss would instantly jeopardise the US defensive position in Asia. It was for this reason that the US felt the Nationalists ‘must have certain assurances with respect to the off-shore islands’. Eisenhower emphasised that the U.S. was pursuing a policy of restraint: ‘history’s inflexible yardstick will show that we have done everything in our power...to prevent the awful catastrophe of another major war’.55 Churchill’s reply expressed his concern about American assurances to the Nationalists. Maintaining the Commonwealth position, Churchill wrote that he ‘cannot see any decisive relationship between the offshore islands and an invasion of Formosa’, and argued that ‘nobody here considers [the offshore islands] a just cause of war’. While the UK was pleased to see the Tachen Islands evacuation occur without any escalation, they still felt ‘very anxious about what may happen at the Matsus and Quemoy’. Churchill recommended that the US work toward a complete evacuation of the offshore islands: this strategy would be closer to allied preferences, ‘command a firm majority of support over here [in the UK]’, and put ‘an end to a state of affairs where unforeseeable or unpreventable incidents and growing exasperation may bring about very grave consequences’.56

This seemingly coordinated attempt by Commonwealth nations to influence US policy annoyed Dulles, who felt that Chiang Kai-shek’s sacrifices were not adequately appreciated by other countries. Speaking with President Eisenhower about Chiang, Dulles remarked that ‘we cannot at this time squeeze any more out

of him’. Dulles rebutted the Commonwealth plan both in private and public. On 16 February, he gave a public speech where he referred to suggestions that the Chinese Nationalists should ‘surrender to the Chinese Communists the coastal positions which the Communists need to stage their announced attack on Formosa. It is doubtful that this would serve either the cause of peace or the cause of freedom’. But Dulles had shared this text with Secretary Eden ahead of the speech and had changed some of the language in order to ‘reassure the British that he did not intend to go beyond the commitments’ in President Eisenhower’s January message to Congress. Referring to the Commonwealth’s preference that the US influence the Chinese Nationalists to withdraw from all the offshore islands, Dulles complained that ‘there was apparently no realization among the Commonwealth Prime Ministers of the difficulty of doing this’.

Eisenhower understood the international perspective, but believed that ‘the surrender of the off-shore islands would result in the collapse of Chiang’s government’. In another letter to Churchill, Eisenhower argued that the current US policy, though less than optimal in many respects, was the best option available. Eisenhower said that the US ‘does not have decisive power in respect of the off-shore islands. We believe that Chiang would even choose to stand alone and die if we should now attempt to coerce him into the abandonment of those islands’. Eisenhower argued:

> All of the non-Communist nations of the Western Pacific—particularly Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and, of course, Formosa itself, are watching nervously to see what we do next. I fear that, if we appear strong and coercive only toward our friends, and should attempt to compel Chiang to make further retreats, the conclusion of these Asian peoples will be that they had better plan to make the best terms they can with the Communists.

Eisenhower earnestly explained how the US had sought to reduce the risk of conflict. He laid out, in five points, policy actions taken by the US to ‘make an

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express or tacit cease-fire likely’. He also referred to US alliance politics with President Rhee, arguing that ‘all we have done not only here, but in Korea with Rhee, amply demonstrates that we are not careless in letting others get us into a major war’. Eisenhower concluded the letter with a concise summary of the difficulties facing US policy. He said that the US is ‘doing everything possible to work this situation out in a way which, on the one hand, will avoid the risk of war, and, on the other hand, preserve the non-Communist position in the Western Pacific, a position which, by the way, is vital to Australia and New Zealand’.62

The alliance audience effect in the December 1954 – February 1955 period

Events in this period support the alliance audience effect framework. The first hypothesis expects that a state will monitor its ally’s behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability. The evidence presented above shows that the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were all concerned that America’s policy toward the ROC—because it raised the risk of an undesired war—made Washington a less reliable ally.

As expected by hypothesis 2, when these states perceived the US to be an unreliable ally they acted to mitigate this risk. The UK and New Zealand successfully convinced the US to refrain from publicly guaranteeing the security of Quemoy. Working through the “Operation Oracle” plan, these countries exercised a strong influence on US policy and, once the Tachens had been successfully evacuated, they encouraged Washington to coerce Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw from all the offshore islands. They did this both on a bilateral basis, but also through the Commonwealth Conference held in London.

Hypothesis 3 expects the US to be influenced by the prospect of alliance interdependence, and the evidence examined supports this hypothesis: US leaders knew that they had to simultaneously manage several different alliance relationships. The State Department’s Policy Planning staff had assessed that ‘a

lack of allied support would handicap our conduct of even a limited war and might seriously impair our capabilities if hostilities spread’, and recommended that ‘The US must adopt some other course of action which will keep the free world with us’. To this end, Dulles’ decision to not publicly announce America’s intent to defend Quemoy and Matsu was a reversal of his earlier position, and this decision was clearly influenced by allied lobbying. The US had to keep the free world on side. As Brands writes, the ‘State Department contended that the disadvantages of losing the offshore islands did not overbalance the turmoil that another war with the PRC would create in the American alliance system’.64

In the face of these pressures, Eisenhower and Dulles invested significant time and energy into preserving allied unity. They thought the withdrawal from the Tachens would be a sign of good faith to allied capitals, proving that the US was seeking to deescalate the situation. They regularly explained US-ROC developments to other allies such as the UK, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. On several occasions, Eisenhower wrote Churchill at some length, consistently emphasising that the US was doing its best to maintain the defensive line without unnecessarily raising security tensions. In response to allied concerns, the US modified its initial policy of providing a public guarantee of Quemoy and Matsu, and kept this as a private commitment that could be changed, at any time, without public embarrassment.

But as the crisis continued, Eisenhower and Dulles increasingly saw themselves as painted into a corner. They could not compel the Nationalists to withdraw, as they continued to believe that one of two things would happen: either their allies would lose confidence in American security reliability (and perhaps adopt more neutralist policies), or Nationalist morale would collapse and Formosa would fall to subversion (thus risking the defensive island chain). But nor could they commit to the defense of the offshore islands, as allies would view America’s

63 Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 7 February 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.238-239.
belligerence as posing entrapment risks, and this could strain or split existing alliance relationships. In this invidious position, US leaders essentially maintained their policy of an ambiguous defence commitment, hoping that Chinese Communist aggression would not force them to either defend, or abandon, the offshore islands.

February – April 1955

US allies continue to encourage a withdrawal from Quemoy and Matsu

A build-up of Communist military forces in February dashed these hopes. Dulles, on a visit to Asia, was concerned that this would create ‘a situation such that the Matsus and the Quemoy islands will be indefensible in the absence of massive US intervention, perhaps with atomic weapons, and Taiwan itself will be much more vulnerable’. Dulles and Eisenhower both thought that they could not ask President Chiang to refrain from launching a preventive attack on these Communist forces. They hoped for an alternate solution where the 'Nationalist government may finally conclude that their situation would be improved by withdrawing from the coastal islands', but they agreed that 'any approach to Chiang along this line would have to be so skilfully conducted as to make him ostensibly the originator of the idea'. While this was Eisenhower's preferred solution, he was not yet willing to force Chiang's hand – he instructed Dulles to inform Eden that 'we do not intend to blackmail Chiang to compel his evacuation of Quemoy and the Matsus as long as he deems their possession vital to the spirit and morale of the Formosan garrison and population'.

In late February, at a SEATO meeting in Bangkok, Dulles discussed the offshore island issue with Eden. The view of US defence planners was, as Stolper writes,

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that 'there was never any solid evidence of PRC preparation for an invasion of Quemoy and Matsu, let alone Taiwan, a fact that Washington recognized, but one to which it sometimes seemed not to give due weight'.68 This meeting with Eden was one of those moments. Dulles said that his assessment of the Chinese Communists had changed: they now had a serious intent to 'take Taiwan by force...we are in a battle for Taiwan'. The US had taken several steps to calm the situation, but 'Despite all these actions Chinese Communists still give every evidence intention take Taiwan by force'. For Dulles, 'Further retreat would have grave effect on Taiwan and in Asia...Further retreat could swing Asia...Further retreat or loss of Formosa would convince Japan communism wave of future. Consequent effect on Okinawa and other parts of Asia obvious'.69

Despite Dulles’ alarmist views, other allies supported the UK’s position. O. Edmund Clubb writes that 'the British Commonwealth countries...backed away from the thesis expounded by Dulles at the February SEATO meeting...that war in one sector of East Asia would automatically involve the entire front (that is, all of America's allies)'.70 Eden was unmoved: while he agreed that Formosa was of the utmost importance and must be defended, he 'reiterated his belief public opinion in the Commonwealth and elsewhere does not see necessity of stirring up row over these islands and would not support our fighting for them'.71 Eden believed that a 'further fall-back by abandonment of Quemoy and Matsu would be justified by increased support of resultant position by Commonwealth and Western European public opinion'. Dulles was unconvinced, feeling that Eden failed to 'appraise adequately dangers to non-Communist morale in Far East, notably in Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the Philippines'.72 Eden suggested that he would approach the Chinese Communists, through the British Embassy in Beijing, as to

whether they would—while maintaining their claims—renounce the use of force against Formosa.\textsuperscript{73}

America was in an unenviable position. Dulles felt that the US could not pressure Chiang to withdraw, as this would lead to the collapse of morale on Formosa and place it at serious risk of falling to Communist subversion. This could be the first domino to fall in Asia. The US could also not abandon Quemoy and Matsu if the Chinese Communists attacked, as this would make other non-Communist nations in Asia doubt American security reliability and raise the prospect of their bandwagoning with China. But nor could the US announce a willingness to defend the offshore islands, lest it aggravate opinion in allied countries fearful of a general war with China. The preferred solution was for Chiang to decide of his own accord—albeit with some American-sponsored suggestions—that a withdrawal from the offshore islands made best strategic sense. Eisenhower still put some hope in this solution and suggested to Dulles that once his delegation had visited Taipei, Robertson might remain behind ‘in an attempt to reorient Chiang’s thinking. He thought it was to the Nationalists’ own advantage to withdraw from the offshore islands, and consolidate their position on Taiwan’.\textsuperscript{74}

On his return, Dulles discussed Quemoy and Matsu with Eisenhower. While Dulles hoped that ‘if there was time, Chiang might reorient his policies so that less importance would [be] attach[ed] to these islands’, he ‘did not think that as things now stood we could sit by and watch the Nationalists forces there be crushed by the Communists’.\textsuperscript{75} Dulles thought that the defence of Quemoy and Matsu would require the use of nuclear weapons, and Eisenhower concurred. It was this conversation that led Dulles to mention, in a public speech just two days later, ‘that the administration considered atomic weapons “interchangeable with the

\textsuperscript{73} See footnote 2 to Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, 28 February 1955, in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II}, p.315.

\textsuperscript{74} Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, 28 February 1955, in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II}, p.315.

\textsuperscript{75} Memorandum of a Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 6 March 1955, in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II}, p.337.
conventional weapons” in the American arsenal’. According to Brands, after this nuclear threat ‘European on-lookers, especially the British, reacted strongly, feeling that the U.S. was treading far too close to war’.77

British diplomats approached their counterparts in Beijing and sought a renunciation of the use of force, but this effort was rebuffed by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai.78 Dulles grew more pessimistic about the situation, telling an NSC meeting that there was ‘at least an even chance that the United States would have to fight in this area before we were through...the question of a fight for Formosa appeared to Secretary Dulles as a question of time rather than a question of fact.’79 One day later, in a private discussion with President Eisenhower, Dulles compared the current situation to that of pre-war Europe. Though ‘it was difficult to know and to pick the correct time [to stand against aggression, but]...I was satisfied from the standpoint of the position in Formosa and the general attitude of the Thailand and Indochina State that we could not, without great danger, seem to retreat further’.80

But US allies were not particularly alarmed by the prospect of further retreat. Instead, they were concerned about America using nuclear weapons against mainland China and thus running the risk of a general war between the Communist and non-Communist blocs. Following discussions with a Canadian diplomat, a US official described this possibility as ‘very disturbing to our friends and allies in the free world’.81 Accordingly, America’s allies continued their efforts to offer alternate options that might reduce tensions with Communist China. The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, met with Dulles and asked whether Chiang might be induced to withdraw from the offshore islands if ‘a

81 Memorandum of a Conversation, 28 March 1955, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, 794a.5/3-2855, Box 3976.
group of nations joined with the United States in guaranteeing the defense of Formosa’. While Dulles expressed some interest in the proposal, he again returned to the familiar theme of fragile Nationalist morale: ‘constant retreat was likely to have a disastrous effect not only upon the morale of Formosa but upon public opinion of all Southeast Asia as well, citing the uneasiness created in the Philippines’. Menzies again noted that Australian public opinion delineated between conflict over the offshore islands and conflict for the defense of Nationalist China.\(^{82}\) In a memo to Dulles, the British Ambassador also emphasised the advantages of restraint, noting that if the West did not ‘exercise moderation in our statements and attitudes’ it might ‘frighten the Asians into China’s arms’.\(^ {83}\)

Dulles and Eisenhower were hinting at the use of nuclear weapons against the mainland, and unwilling to coerce Chiang into a withdrawal from the offshore islands. In response, US allies publicly distanced themselves from Washington’s policy. Speaking to the House of Commons on 8 March, ‘Eden for the first time openly advocated a Nationalist withdrawal from Quemoy and Matsu on the condition that the Chinese abstain from an assault against either these islands or Taiwan’.\(^ {84}\) As Eden confided to a US military official, ‘not one percent of British people’ would support the US if a conflict erupted over the offshore islands, and Eden felt he could not ‘do much to increase that percentage no matter how hard I tried’.\(^ {85}\) In early March Canada’s Secretary of External Affairs, Lester Pearson, warned Dulles that if the US used nuclear weapons against the Chinese mainland then the US ‘would be on their own as far as Canada was concerned’.\(^ {86}\) On 24 March, Pearson went further and publicly announced that Canadian forces would not fight for the offshore islands.\(^ {87}\) Australia privately accepted the inevitability


\(^{83}\) Memorandum Received From the British Ambassador (Makins), 16 March 1955, in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II*, p.375.

\(^{84}\) Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, p.208.

\(^{85}\) Letter from General Alfrted Gruenther to President Eisenhower, 3 April 1955, Mudd Library, Princeton University, John Foster Dulles Files, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, MC172, Box 4, Folder 3.

\(^{86}\) Cable from the Australian Embassy (Tokyo) to the Department of External Affairs, 12 March 1955, in NAA, A1209, 1957/5035, f.9.

of being pulled into a ‘great war’, if one were to break out, but insisted that Australian public opinion would ‘not support a war over the Offshore Islands’. Dulles had earlier expressed his fear of fighting China without the support of US allies, arguing that a ‘major war where world public opinion would be wholly against the United States...was the kind of war you lose’. America was now on the verge of such a conflict.

**Lack of allied support frustrates US leaders**

In March, another National Intelligence Estimate considered how America’s policy toward the ROC would affect other countries and allies. This document assessed that while ‘most non-Communist governments’ would support an American defense of Formosa, they would have an ‘unfavorable’ reaction to an American defense of the offshore islands. If, during a defense of the offshore islands, US forces attacked the Chinese mainland, ‘non-Communist reaction would be considerably more unfavorable, reflecting a fear of the immediacy of general war’. Noting that although there would be ‘increased strains between the US and its allies’, the estimate assessed that ‘existing US alliances would remain intact’. However, if the US used nuclear weapons against the Chinese Communists, then ‘the predominant world reaction would be one of shock’, and this reaction ‘would be particularly adverse if these weapons were used to defend the off-shore islands...The general reaction of non-Communist Asians would be emotional and would be extremely critical of the US. In the case of Japan, the Government would probably attempt to steer a more neutral course’. In late March the Japanese Prime Minister told a news columnist that ‘The Japanese people don’t want a war and particularly they don’t want a war started over those islands’.

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88 Garry Woodard, ‘Australian foreign policy on the offshore island crisis of 1954-5 and recognition of China’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 45:2, 1991, p.256. The claim that Australian public opinion would not support a defence of the offshore islands conflicts with opinion polling from that time – see Woodard, p.257. However, as this Chapter has shown, the Australian Government worked consistently to reduce the likelihood of such a conflict.


With his strong belief that a fall of the offshore islands would lead to a catastrophic loss of morale, which would inevitably lead to the fall of Formosa, Dulles had regularly claimed that the loss of the offshore islands would destroy the defensive line in Asia. But this intelligence assessment took a more nuanced view. If the Nationalists evacuated the offshore islands, ‘with or without US assistance or pressure’, it would cause

> a deterioration of morale on Taiwan and great disappointment in the ROK. In the Philippines such an evacuation would stimulate concern that the US was not prepared to commit its forces in forward areas. To a lesser extent this reaction would occur in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. However, the dominant reaction among other interested non-Communist states would probably be one of relief followed at least for some time by increased support for US policies with respect to the defense of Taiwan.  

Similar sentiments were discussed at a Department of State meeting in late March. One official argued that an escalation involving attacks against mainland China might cause US allies to believe American intent ‘to be the destruction of the Chinese Communists’ regime, rather than the repelling of an attack on the islands...Any such policy of ours would, therefore, cause our allies to back away, not only in the Far East but probably in Europe, Africa and all over the globe’.  

A number of intelligence assessments noted that US allies were more concerned about war than by a loss of the offshore islands. These assessments and analyses also regularly noted that many allies would indeed welcome the loss of Quemoy and Matsu to Communist control. But for now, Eisenhower and Dulles continued to view the situation in terms of falling dominoes. Eisenhower best demonstrates this in a letter to Winston Churchill, writing that ‘we are not interested in Quemoy and Matsu as such. But because of the conviction that the loss of Formosa would doom the Philippines and eventually the remainder of the region, we are determined that it shall not fall’. Here, Eisenhower’s own words suggest that he saw no delineation between the fall of the offshore islands and the fall of Formosa itself, followed by the other non-Communist countries in Asia. Eisenhower even wrote more explicitly about this chain of events in a private letter to a friend. ‘If

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you became convinced that the capture of these two places [Quemoy and Matsu] would inevitably result in the later loss of Formosa to the free world, what would you do? Beyond question the opinion in Southeast Asia is that the loss of Formosa would be catastrophic; the Philippines and Indonesia would rapidly be lost to us’. At this time, Eisenhower regarded the object of this dispute as not simply the offshore islands, but the fate of free Asia.

Overlooking the fact that the evacuation of the Tachen Island group—which could be considered as the first domino—had not resulted in the fall of Quemoy or Matsu, Dulles maintained his belief that the offshore islands must not be lost to Communist aggression. He complained that ‘our allies really had comparatively little knowledge of the intricacies of the situation which we face with respect to Quemoy and the Matsus...They fail to consider the tremendous morale effect that the loss of these islands might well have on all the people in that part of the world’. As the preceding analysis has shown, this was clearly not the case. Allies acknowledged Dulles’ concerns as valid, but didn’t regard them as worthy of a war. They felt that Nationalist morale would be better supported by making more secure the ROC’s position on Formosa, even if this involved a withdrawal from the offshore islands. American allies felt the offshore islands were expendable, and that the better course was to reinforce the second domino: Formosa itself.

New ideas about Nationalist morale prompt new policy thinking

However, Dulles’ concern about Nationalist morale was not a universal one within the US Government. In late March, Ambassador Rankin cabled the results of an informal survey to the State Department. This survey of US officials and military officers in Taipei revealed that ‘these officials do not think that morale in Taiwan has changed significantly over the past year...Subversion is well under control in Taiwan...Chinese-American cooperation continues to be satisfactory despite some recriminations over our attempts to get a cease-fire in the Taiwan

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Strait and our failure to commit ourselves on the defense of Matsu and Quemoy’. 97

As new information about Chinese morale opened up the possibility of a different approach, growing disparity between the goals of the US and its allies would soon influence American leaders toward a more restrained position. ‘As March drew to a close, the distance between the United States and the Commonwealth trio of Britain, Canada, and Australia, which had been active in consulting with Washington about how to end the crisis, was also greater than ever’. 98 In the face of these pressures, Dulles and Eisenhower realised that the lack of allied support necessitated a rethink of their policy. Eisenhower now sought to encourage President Chiang to withdraw Nationalist forces from Quemoy and Matsu. On 1 April Eisenhower, felt that the ‘immediate withdrawal of potential U.S. support for the Nationalists on Quemoy and Matsu would probably result in the collapse or subversion of their forces, with a correspondingly drastic impact throughout East and Southeast Asia. On the other hand...an all-out fight with the Chicoms’ to defend Quemoy and Matsu was ‘undesirable’ because, among three other reasons, ‘Little or no support from allies is forthcoming to support our position’. 99

The dilemma had been unchanged for several months: defend the offshore islands, with the risk that US allies would not support this policy, or abandon the islands, with the risk that it might damage regional beliefs about US security reliability. As one author, Robert Accinelli, eloquently explains, ‘So far, events had not forced a choice between these grim options; yet the horns of the dilemma were sharper than ever’. 100 Although Dulles believed that conflict was probably imminent, Brands writes that Eisenhower was ‘Less convinced than Dulles that a war was at hand...[and] refused to be rushed into anything’. But Eisenhower knew that further Communist attacks would force the US to make a final decision.

97 Memorandum From the Director of the Executive Secretariat (Scott) to the Secretary of State, 31 March 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, p.434.
98 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.218.
99 Memorandum From the Undersecretary of State (Hoover) to the Secretary of State, 1 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, p.440. The issue of allied support was the second of four reasons, cited by Eisenhower, against a defence of Quemoy and Matsu.
100 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.219.
He wrote Dulles that the US could not ‘remain inert awaiting the inevitable moment of decision between two unacceptable choices’. Resolving that one of these choices was in fact acceptable, Eisenhower finally grabbed the horn of the dilemma that aligned with the views of almost all US allies. He decided that the ‘desirable solution’ was to convince the Chinese Nationalists to ‘Voluntarily evacuate Quemoy and Matsu’ and prepare for a defense of Formosa, thus providing ‘a constant military and psychological threat to the Chicom regime’. In order to ‘aid to Chiang in reaching such a decision’ and bolster Nationalist morale, Eisenhower thought the US should station a Marine division on Formosa, improve air defence and US air force assets on Formosa, and ‘extend the U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty with the Nationalists to include other powers, such as Australia’. The record of this meeting notes that while ‘no decision was reached in this discussion, it was pointed out that time for action by the U.S. was becoming acute...It was entirely possible that the U.S. could be drawn into a fight to protect the offshore islands, whether it liked it or not’. For Eisenhower, the challenge was finding the person who could convince President Chiang to regard the offshore islands as ‘outposts, not citadels’.

Eisenhower formalised his instructions in a letter to Dulles on 5 April. Simply titled ‘Formosa’, this document is an explicit and detailed articulation of Eisenhower’s views. It prominently noted that were the US to defend the offshore islands, ‘our active participation would forfeit the good opinion of much of the Western world, with consequent damage to our interests in Europe and elsewhere’. This letter contains a subtle but significant shift of language. Whereas Eisenhower had previously argued that the fall of the offshore islands would inevitably lead to the fall of Formosa, he now took a more sceptical tone, noting that a ‘refusal to participate in the defense of the offshore areas might have equally disadvantageous results’ and that ‘further retreat in front of the Chinese

102 Memorandum From the Undersecretary of State (Hoover) to the Secretary of State, 1 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, p.440.
103 Memorandum From the Undersecretary of State (Hoover) to the Secretary of State, 1 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.440-441.
104 Memorandum of a Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, 4 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, p.444.
Communists could result, it is alleged, in the disintegration of all Asian opposition to Communism. Eisenhower described these ideas as possibilities, contrasted with his judgement that because the defense of the offshore islands would require the use of nuclear weapons, this would result in the US becoming ‘isolated in world opinion...[and] could affect very disadvantageously our treaties with Japan and in the SEATO region’.

Eisenhower decided that the preferable policy choice was to convince Chiang to withdraw from the islands. A defense of Quemoy and Matsu, even if it was ‘temporarily successful...would in no way remove the existence of the permanent threat...because our prestige would have become involved’. Eisenhower suspected that a ‘retreat from the Matsus and Quemoy—if occasioned by any influence of ours—might create consternation among our friends in Asia, particularly in Thailand, the Philippines, Laos and Cambodia’. But he explicitly noted that this in ‘no way refutes the clear conviction that militarily and politically we and the ChiNats would be much better off if our national prestige were not even remotely committed to the defense of these islands’. If Chiang could show that a decision to withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu was a ‘shrewd move to improve his strategic position, his prestige should be increased rather than diminished’.

Departing from the conviction that Nationalist morale would not survive the loss of the offshore islands, Eisenhower’s memo cast doubt on ‘the sincerity of Chiang’s contention that the retention or loss of the offshore islands would spell the difference between a strong and a destroyed Nationalist government’. Eisenhower suggested that if the islands were attacked, the Nationalist forces should inflict serious losses on the Communist attackers and then withdraw from

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105 Emphasis added. For Eisenhower’s previous arguments, see, for example, Letter From President Eisenhower to Lewis W. Douglas, 29 March 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.423-424, in which Eisenhower writes: ‘If you became convinced that the capture of these two places [Quemoy and Matsu] would inevitably result in the later loss of Formosa to the free world, what would you do?’


the offshore islands, thus removing a serious thorn in the US-ROC relationship. Eisenhower thought this action would ensure that the loss of the offshore islands would ‘occur only after the defending forces had exacted a fearful toll from the attackers, and Chiang’s prestige and standing in Southeast Asia would be increased rather than decreased’. ¹⁰⁸

Many of these phrases and sentences were directly lifted from Eisenhower’s letter and incorporated into a State Department draft policy statement on Formosa. ¹⁰⁹ This was later reviewed by the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, headed by Bowie. Bowie wrote that for Chiang, the offshore islands were ‘the most likely means for involving the U.S. in hostilities with the Chinese Communists which could expand to create his opportunity for invasion’. Because of this, ‘Chiang can hardly be persuaded...[to withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu] unless he is completely convinced that the U.S. has no intention of participating in their defense’. Bowie also argued that ‘in order not to impair its own prestige and the confidence of its allies...the U.S. would have to make publicly clear in advance its intentions regarding the coastal islands’. ¹¹⁰ Bowie thought Eisenhower’s new plan was a step in the right direction, but likely to fail if the US was not willing to coerce Chiang into a withdrawal.

Another National Intelligence Estimate, received by the President on 16 April, noted that ‘Chinese Nationalist morale remains fairly good despite recent events’. It assessed that while the loss of the islands would be a ‘serious blow to morale’ no matter how it happened, it would ‘not be so great as to cause the Nationalists to fold up. We believe that they would continue their resistance to Communist pressures, at least for a time’. This Estimate provided the most detailed consideration of how US allies would react to different American policies. The evacuation of the islands before a Communist attack:

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum From the President to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.448-450.
¹¹⁰ Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 9 April 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.473-474.
would produce some adverse effects among the governments under discussion... In the Philippines such an evacuation would stimulate concern that the US was not prepared to commit its forces in forward areas, and might cause the Government to request a clearer definition of the US commitment to defend Philippine security. There would be a lesser concern in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. ROK leaders would be greatly disappointed. However, the dominant reaction in Japan would be one of general relief. Moreover, none of the governments under discussion would be unduly concerned by an evacuation if the US reaffirmed its intent to defend Taiwan at all costs, and none of them would materially change their policies as a result of the evacuation.

If the islands fell to a Communist attack to which the US did not respond:

there would be severe criticism of the US in the ROK, and to a lesser degree in the Philippines. Most other governments under discussion, especially the Japanese, would be relieved that hostilities between the US and Communist China had not developed. However, the adverse effects on morale arising from loss of the islands, as described...above, would be more sharply evident...US prestige would suffer. Laos, South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, in which the US does not maintain forces or bases, would probably feel increased doubts as to whether the US would defend them in case of need. These countries would probably be disposed to increasing caution in their policies toward the Communists.

The most worrying scenario, however, concerned the regional impact if the US intervened and then withdrew under fire. In such circumstances:

US prestige throughout the area under discussion would be very seriously damaged. The adverse effects on morale and policies described in the preceding paragraph would be aggravated. There would be a tendency in most of the states under discussion to adopt a somewhat more neutralist position and to move less vigorously in situations that might arouse Communist counteraction. The ROK would not weaken its posture against Communism, but would become more fractious in its relations with the US.111

Shortly after the receipt of this advice, Dulles met with Eisenhower on 17 April and suggested a method of persuading the Chinese Nationalists to withdraw all of their forces from the offshore islands. If Taipei agreed to withdraw, then the US would conduct a maritime blockade for over 500 miles of the Chinese mainland’s coastline, preventing Chinese Communist forces from receiving weapons and logistical support via sea. It would also provide more anti-aircraft weapons to Formosa and increase the number of US troops stationed there.112 The prospect

111 NIE 100-4/1-55, Morale on Taiwan, 16 April 1955, Secret, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room. The majority of this document (but not these excerpts) is also in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol II, pp.479-489.
112 See Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.223.
of additional security guarantees from Commonwealth countries could also be used to tempt a Chinese Nationalist policy shift. Eisenhower approved this new strategy and dispatched Robertson and Radford—the two Americans closest to Chiang Kai-shek—to Taipei to discuss this new plan. At the conclusion of their meeting, Dulles and Eisenhower agreed that this new plan ‘would immeasurably serve to consolidate world opinion’ behind the United States.113 As Accinelli writes, if Chiang accepted this proposal ‘the islands [would] fall under Communist control and...the U.S. would appease its concerned allies and define a policy that was much more acceptable to American and world opinion’.114

De-escalation

Shortly afterwards, the US ‘found a means of escape not through the ill-conceived evacuation-blockade scheme but an unexpected offer from the Chinese Communists’.115 On 24 April 1955, at the Africa-Asia conference in Bandung, Indonesia, the Chou En-lai stated that he was willing to discuss security tensions with the United States. Concurrently, Robertson and Radford’s mission to Taipei did not succeed in convincing President Chiang to consider a withdrawal from the offshore islands. When he was informed that the US was withdrawing its private pledge that it would assist in the defence of Quemoy and Matsu, Chiang vowed to fight even without the support of US forces. Chiang remarked: ‘Soldiers must choose proper places to die. Chinese soldiers consider Quemoy–Matsu are proper places for them’.116

The initial US response to Chou En-lai’s statement was ‘discouragingly tepid’. Dulles thought it a ruse, and a senior Republican Senator described it as an ‘invitation to another Munich’.117 In contrast, US allies seized on Chou En-lai’s

114 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.224.
115 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.228.
117 As quoted in Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.229. The Republican was Senator William Knowland (sometimes described, given his unstinting support for the Republic of China, as the
offer. Australia’s Prime Minister cabled Dulles, encouraging him to follow it up with the idea of achieving a ‘settlement wider than off-shore islands and Taiwan’.

The United Kingdom moved to ‘sound out Chou on this subject’ was ‘anxious to do anything it could to help’. On 13 May Chou En-lai addressed a Chinese Standing Committee and stated that ‘The Chinese people are willing to strive for the liberation of Taiwan by peaceful means as far as this is possible’. Dulles and Eisenhower ‘realized that the Western allies and world opinion generally would expect a receptive reaction from Washington’, and so modified their position accordingly.

On 25 July, the US and PRC announced that they would meet in Geneva on 1 August, in order to discuss ‘the repatriation of civilians who desire to return to their respective countries and to facilitate further discussions and settlement of certain other practical matters now at issue between both sides’.

The alliance audience effect from February – April 1955

The influence of the alliance audience effect persisted throughout the crisis. As expected by hypothesis 1, US policy towards the ROC influenced how other allies judged American reliability. By February most US allies were already concerned about the possibilities of escalation across the Taiwan Strait, and Dulles’ (March) comments about nuclear weapons added fuel to this fire. US diplomats reported that Dulles’ remarks about nuclear weapons were ‘very disturbing to our friends and allies in the free world’.

As expected by hypothesis 2, these friends and allies did not sit still, but tried to mitigate the risks posed by American unreliability. Because the offshore islands

“Senator from Formosa”). See Khong, Analogies at War, for the importance of the Munich analogy.

121 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.229.
123 Memorandum of a Conversation, 28 March 1955, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, 794a.5/3-2855, Box 3976.
were the epicentre of tensions, these allies encouraged the US to pressure the Nationalist regime into withdrawing from these outposts. As an inducement toward this end, Australia even suggested that a group of countries might endorse a *quid pro quo* arrangement whereby they would join with the US in guaranteeing the security of the ROC on Formosa itself, provided that Taipei withdrew its forces from the offshore islands. When these efforts did not succeed, US allies took the final step of distancing themselves from US policy and the ROC – some publicly proclaimed that they would not assist in a defence of the offshore islands.

Hypothesis 3, which predicts that a state’s policy in one alliance will be influenced by the possibility this will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies, was supported by the evidence considered in this period: allied concerns were a significant influence on US policy. When Eisenhower decided to strongly encourage a Nationalist withdrawal from the islands, he justified his decision with reference to allied support.

**The Philippines and Korea**

So far, this chapter has focussed on the disposition of those allies who had the most direct influence on US decision-making: the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. But two other Asian allies—the Philippines and the ROK—were also closely monitoring US actions. In his memoirs, Eisenhower noted that US decision-makers ‘were receiving, almost daily, throughout diplomatic and private channels, questions from other Asiatic nations concerning the firmness of our intentions’. Though such a claim might suggest that Asian allies were desperate for the US to take a strong stand against Communist China, the preferences of most Asian allies aligned with the Operation Oracle countries: while they wanted to prevent the conquest of Formosa, they desired to avoid a general war with China. The Republic of Korea was the only exception to this trend, as a general conflict with China offered the prospect of reunifying the Korean Peninsula.

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Japan’s reaction to the First Taiwan Strait Crisis was less immediate, but was very influential in subsequent negotiations for the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty: these aspects are covered in Chapter 5.

**The Philippines**

Manila’s reaction to the First Taiwan Strait Crisis seems to have been affected by misunderstanding and excessive confidence in American military capabilities. Manila was quite alarmed about the prospect of retreat in the face of a Communist threat. Foreign Secretary Carlos Garcia, reacting to the PRC’s 10 January attack against the Tachen islands, ‘expressed alarm for [the] safety [of the] Philippines as [a] result [of the] Tachen incidents’. He briefed the press that Manila was “closely watching” Tachen development’, and that ‘entire free worlds [sic] faith in America will hinge on your ability to cope with [the] situation’. A senior foreign affairs adviser in the Philippines, Felino Neri, warned that ‘From psychological point of view, loss of islands around Formosa would have telling effect on other countries in Asia which have joined in common resistance of Red advance in their area’.

In this context, the President of the Philippines, Ramon Magsaysay, warmly welcomed Eisenhower’s policy as expressed in the Formosa Resolution. But reporting from the US Embassy shows that Magsaysay’s position was contingent on the ‘erroneous assumption [that the] US resolution constituted [a] firm commitment [to] defend Quemoy [and] Matsu’. Manila was spooked by the prospect of American retreat in the face of a Communist advance. The US Embassy believed ‘Neri honestly stating what he considers widespread conviction US must defend offshore islands maintain its prestige and power in

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126 Manila’s 1909 to Washington, 23 January 1955, Unclassified, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3915, 793.00/1-2355.
Far East’. The Philippines was more unnerved than other allies by the prospect of the US abandoning the offshore islands.\textsuperscript{127}

Despite Neri’s apprehension that a retreat from the offshores would severely damage US prestige in the Philippines, though there were some ‘Initial bad effects’ after the US-assisted withdrawal from the Tachens, there were no ‘serious reactions’. Asked to assess Manila’s likely reaction to five offshore islands scenarios, the US embassy thought that any seeming retreat would have negative consequences. If the Nationalists evacuated the offshore islands due to US pressure, then this would require careful public explanation. If it was depicted as a decision to ‘withdraw to military stronger position which [the] US [was] committed and fully capable [to] defend, adverse effect on morale could be kept under control’. But if this public explanation did not take hold, then although Manila’s ‘will to resist communism would remain strong’, this would be interpreted as a ‘convincing demonstration of US unwillingness or inability support friends with force [of] arms’. In response, Manila would ‘insist [on] material evidence in Philippines of American will to fight, in terms [of] more material, planes and all forms military equipment on ground’.\textsuperscript{128}

If the offshore islands fell due to American non-intervention, then ‘failing prompt vigorous US actions helping restore confidence our intention and capabilities, present negligible support for neutralist, appeasement policies would increase somewhat’. But the most alarmist forecast was reserved for the scenario in which the offshore islands fell despite limited US intervention: it ‘would be accepted here as...evidence that US not capable of furnishing support necessary against Communists in Far East. Philippine Government would probably remain

\textsuperscript{127} State's 11671 to Manila, 26 March 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3917, 793.00/4-255.

\textsuperscript{128} Manila's 2606 to Washington, 2 April 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3917, 793.00/4-255. For the cable which requests Manila's view of five listed scenarios, see State's 13966 (Circular 576, to various US Embassies in Asia), 30 March 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3916, 793.00/3-3055.
determined [to] resist [the] Communists, but in utter hopelessness, and would demand utmost from US in terms military support’.  

President Magsaysay, who had voiced his support of Eisenhower’s position on the mistaken belief that the US had pledged to defend Quemoy and Matsu, was criticised for not adequately understanding US policy. The “keep the Communists guessing” nature of this policy was unhelpful, and in early April Neri implored US diplomats to provide clearer advice on US policy toward the offshore islands. Neri encouraged these diplomats to ‘understand [the] Asian mind. To us a retreat on Quemoy and Matsu means a retreat in all of Asia’. Days later, a State Department memo noted that ‘Sentiment in the Philippines is very strongly against anything smacking of abandonment of Quemoy and Matsu. The islands are generally thought to be important to the defense of Taiwan. Loss of the islands...would cause serious concern...that the United States was unwilling, unable, or both, to fulfill its Pacific commitments’. Later in April, Neri complained that ‘many Filipinos fear U.S. determination is wavering, especially under pressure British, Canadian allies, and that failure defend Quemoy, Matsu would lead inevitably to withdrawal from Formosa and Philippines’. But the US Embassy believed that Neri’s position rested on an incorrect assumption. US diplomats thought that ‘most Filipinos...do not include serious considerations of world war possibilities, but rather take for granted that U.S. strength sufficiently great so that Formosan issue can be limited to local action’. Given this mistaken belief, it is unsurprising that Manila supported a firmer US stance in defence of the offshore islands. Other allies—with perhaps better understandings of the military situation—were more fearful of escalation.

Despite fears that an abandonment of the offshore islands would precipitate a collapse in America’s defensive line, when Chou En-lai’s comments at Bandung...
raised the possibility of an informal cease-fire, Neri was 'highly elated at [the] news' and phoned a diplomat at the US Embassy. This 'reaction [was] striking in view previous Philippine insistence U.S. should not retreat from Quemoy, Matsu; in conversation today he [Neri] showed more reasoned, less enthusiastic attitude re Chou initiative'.\textsuperscript{133} Aware that there was still some nervousness in the Philippines, US diplomats tried to arrange for Assistant Secretary Robertson to return from Taipei via Manila, so that he might reassure Filipino leaders of America's security commitment. But Robertson and Radford had already departed Taipei for Washington, and the crisis drew to a close shortly afterwards.\textsuperscript{134}

The limited evidence available suggests that the Philippines carefully monitored the US-ROC alliance during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, and these observations caused Manila to doubt American reliability. Based on exaggerated faith in US military power, and the belief that hostilities would be localised and not risk a general war, Filipino diplomats and leaders urged the US to defend Quemoy and Matsu. These dynamics supports hypotheses 1 and 2 of the alliance audience framework. As the above evidence has shown, the US did consider Manila’s reaction during its crisis deliberations. When, in late April, it became clear that the US would not intervene if the offshore islands were attacked again, the Embassy tried to organise a visit of Assistant Secretary Robertson. However, the crisis soon deescalated and further reassurance of Manila was not needed. Though Manila was not given the same attention as other allies, the available evidence still supports hypothesis 3 – America's actions were influenced, in part, by the possibility that its behaviour in the US-ROC alliance would affect Manila's beliefs about US reliability.

\textsuperscript{133} Manila’s 2799 to Washington, 25 April 1955, Official Use Only, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3917, 793.00/4-2555.

\textsuperscript{134} See Manila’s 2811 to Washington, 27 April 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3917, 793.00/4-2755.
Korea

Among US allies in this period, Korea was the real outlier. As described in Chapter 3, America had earlier encountered difficulties in trying to restrain the Republic of Korea and its President, Syngman Rhee. Given the ROK’s desire to restart the Korean War, it is unsurprising that Seoul was the regional capital most critical of Eisenhower’s determination to avoid war. According to an American diplomat in Seoul, South Korea’s Foreign Minister, Pyun Yong Tae, held the ‘basic premise that World War III is inevitable and believes sooner the better’. Pyun also worried that America’s willingness to risk general war might be tempered by ‘possible opposition of its allies’. Korean officials hoped that a Chinese Communist attack against Formosa would provide the opportunity for a general war against the PRC, and thus offer an opportunity for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. At a press conference, the Korean Ambassador to the ROC said he was ‘sure’ that in the event of an attack against Formosa, the US would ‘allow Korea to start its “long withheld military drive into North”’. Some alliance theorists might expect that Korea, by invoking reputational concerns about “prestige”, might have attempted to manipulate the US into a defence of the offshore islands. While this case study does suggest that South Korea viewed the Taiwan Strait Crisis as a test of American reliability, the US was clearly unwilling to be manipulated by South Korea’s pleas. In September 1954 Foreign Minister Pyun asked that his views be conveyed to Dulles, and remarked that ‘in this part of world Quemoy can be symbol, loss of which especially at particular juncture would have serious repercussions in Asia’. Unsurprisingly, when the Eisenhower administration accepted Chou En-lai’s offer of negotiations, this was denounced by the South Korean press, which claimed that

135 Seoul’s 869 to Washington, 4 February 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3939, 793.5/2-455.
136 Seoul’s 1078 to Washington, 30 March 1955, Official Use Only, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3916, 793.00/3-3055.
137 See Walt, ‘The credibility addiction’.
the ‘President’s judgement is in error’ and that he was ‘risking alienation of America’s only real friends in the Far East’.139

It does not appear that the possibility of Korea observing US-ROC interactions, and these observations influencing the US-ROK alliance, had much of an effect on American policy – while other allies were regularly mentioned by Dulles and Eisenhower, South Korea was not. Given the fractious nature of US-Korean relations in the mid-1950s, this is not particularly surprising. Washington knew that Korea’s preference was to restart the Korean War, but this could not be done without significant US support. South Korea’s dependence on US support meant that Washington could ignore Seoul’s complaints as being without consequence.

While unsurprising, this is a definite challenge to hypothesis 3, which expects that a state’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. This instance, and the example of Japan discussed in Chapter 3, suggests a simple caveat is needed for hypothesis 3 – when a state’s ally is highly dependent on the alliance for security, and does not have feasible alternatives to the alliance, the state does not need to worry much about the possibility of an alliance audience effect.

**Chapter conclusion**

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis is a critical case for the alliance audience effect framework’s hypotheses, and especially for its careful delineation between the concepts of loyalty and reliability in alliance politics. US allies constantly monitored America’s interactions with the Chinese Nationalists throughout the 1954-1955 period. Most thought that America’s commitment to the Chinese Nationalists posed significant risks of entrapment in a war with Communist China, and perhaps the Soviet Union. Desiring to avoid this outcome, American allies pursued a variety of diplomatic initiatives intended to reduce the likelihood

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139 Seoul’s 1186 to Washington, 30 April 1955, Official Use Only, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3917, 793.00/4-3055.
of conflict. By March 1955, when it appeared that these efforts had been in vain, some allies publicly announced that they would not participate in a conflict over the offshore islands.

Despite intelligence estimates assessing that the loss of the offshore islands would not have a catastrophic impact in South-East Asia, Dulles and Eisenhower both feared that the loss of the offshore islands would precipitate a collapse of the US defensive line. As Dulles admitted to the Australian Ambassador, this was not because the offshore islands themselves were themselves important, but rather because of the impact their loss would have on Chiang Kai-shek. For most of the crisis, both Eisenhower and Dulles feared that the loss of the islands to Chinese Communist attack would inevitably mean the loss of Formosa to subversion. They both feared this would have catastrophic consequences for other US allies in Asia.

But US allies, for their part, were very apprehensive about the possibility of provoking a general war with Communist China, and possibly the entire Communist bloc. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom observed American behaviour toward Nationalist China and concluded that it increased the likelihood of a general war. The UK, in particular, constantly probed Dulles and Eisenhower in order to better understand their commitments to Formosa and therefore better assess the risks posed by US policy. As hypothesis 1 expects, Washington’s conduct toward Formosa made the US a less reliable ally in the eyes of several states.

In an effort to improve Washington’s security reliability, US allies sought to influence American policy and reduce the risk of war. London and Wellington were the most active – Eden and Churchill communicated regularly with Dulles and Eisenhower, urging them to restrain Chiang Kai-shek, eschew a defensive commitment to the offshore islands, pursue diplomatic peace initiatives and encourage a Nationalist withdrawal from the offshore islands. New Zealand exercised influence by cooperating with the British and Americans on Operation

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140 For an excellent summary of these estimates, see Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, p.234.
Oracle. Australia even indicated its willingness to conclude a multilateral defence pact with Formosa if this would help convince Chiang Kai-shek to surrender the offshore islands. This idea was incorporated into Eisenhower’s April 1955 policy, though it was ultimately rejected by President Chiang. These examples all support hypothesis 2, which expects that states will attempt to mitigate any entrapment or abandonment risks caused by an ally’s unreliability.

The events of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis also provide strong support for hypothesis 3, which predicts that US policy will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. The offshore islands issue was a tremendous challenge for Washington: the two horns of the dilemma both involved seemingly inescapable alliance consequences. Dulles expressed this dilemma best early on in the crisis, just after the Chinese Communists had attacked the Tachen Islands. Dulles explained to an NSC meeting that ‘A powerful case can be made that unless we stop them [the Chinese Communists], a Chinese Nationalist retreat from the islands would have disastrous consequences in Korea, Japan, Formosa and the Philippines’. The second horn of the dilemma was that ‘to go to the defense of the offshore islands...would involve us in war with Communist China. Outside of Rhee and Chiang, the rest of the world would condemn us...The British fear atomic war and would not consider the reasons for our action to be justified’. Dulles assessed both horns of the dilemma in terms of how they would impact US alliances with other nations, but found no solace at this time. It was only in April 1955 that Eisenhower—not Dulles—realised that this was a false dilemma: because the loss of the islands would not inevitably lead to the loss of Formosa, an abandonment of Quemoy and Matsu would not be the loose thread which, if pulled, would unravel the US defensive line of alliances in Asia.

The preferences of US allies moderated American policy at several points throughout the crisis. The lack of allied support in September 1954 was influential in convincing the US to put the issue in front of the UNSC. Later, due to

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British urging, the US kept secret its pledge to defend Quemoy and Matsu. This enabled the US to later reverse its policy without a public loss of prestige. Eisenhower’s April 1955 decision to not defend Quemoy and Matsu, and his plan to encourage a Nationalist withdrawal from these islands, were strongly influenced by allied preferences. By removing the dilemma posed by the offshore islands and solidifying the Nationalist position on Formosa, Eisenhower hoped to mollify allied concerns about needless conflict with China and consolidate allied support for the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores.

Operation Oracle, in the assessment of one historian, was ‘a useful instrument to monitor and moderate U.S. policymaking’.142 New Zealand’s High Commissioner in London went further, believing that for the UK, ‘a major reason for their agreeing to go along with the Security Council operation was to place some kind of restraint on the United States Government itself’.143 New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United States, Leslie Munro, would later recall that Eden ‘always took the line that the Russians...would restrain the Chinese, and the British...would restrain the Americans’.144

Bi-lateral exchanges, such as that when the Australian Prime Minister expressed his willingness to assist in the defense of Formosa, were also influential. From August 1954 until the conclusion of the crisis in April 1955, US policy gradually moved closer to the more conciliatory positions the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Despite this gradual alignment of policy preferences, Eisenhower and Dulles frequently fretted about how US allies would perceive and react to American policy toward Formosa. The events provide strong support for hypothesis 3, as US policy was regularly influenced by the possibility that developments in the US-ROC alliance could damage the confidence of other US allies.

142 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.171.
144 Interview with Ambassador Leslie Munro, 10 September 1964, JFD OHP, p.23.
In hindsight, Dulles and Eisenhower made two significant mistakes in their handling of the crisis. Firstly, from August 1954 onwards they placed far too much emphasis on the importance of Nationalist “morale”. According to Accinelli, the British consul in Taipei observed that the Chinese Nationalists used discussions of collapsing morale as a “highly effective counter” to any objectionable American suggestion. As noted earlier in this chapter, Dulles and Eisenhower came to the view that the loss of the offshore islands would inevitably lead to the loss of Formosa to subversion or defection, but did not rigorously test this conclusion against the available intelligence or diplomatic reporting.

The second mistake was to assume that allies were judging America’s loyalty to Taiwan. Even though the offshore islands were not explicitly covered by the US-ROC alliance, Dulles constantly worried that an aggressive posture would alienate allied governments, but complained that a conciliatory approach toward the PRC would cause allies to lose faith in America’s alliance commitments. Throughout 1953–1955 intelligence assessments consistently noted that most US allies desired a more conciliatory approach, but Dulles’ comments often contradicted this advice. His Department and Ambassadors were telling him that American disloyalty to Taiwan would be welcomed by many allies, but Dulles saw his choices in moral terms: he feared that the US ‘would be charged with turning and running and making excuses’. Had Dulles realised that US allies were worried about America’s reliability—not its loyalty to Taiwan—he may have been more willing to de-escalate the crisis at an earlier time. In the end it was Eisenhower himself, not Dulles, who finally broke the stalemate, and decided that the US would not defend the offshore islands if the price of doing so was breaking faith with so many allies.

145 As quoted in Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, p.234.
Dramatis Personae – Chapter 5

John Allison  US Ambassador to Japan (until February 1957)
Arleigh Burke  Chief of Naval Operations
John Foster Dulles  Secretary of State (until April 1959)
Dwight Eisenhower  President of the United States of America
Harry Felt  Commander-in-Chief of Pacific Command
Aiichiro Fujiyama  Japanese Foreign Minister (July 1957 onwards)
Marshall Green  Regional Planning Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State
Ichiro Hatoyama  Prime Minister of Japan
   (December 1954 – December 1956)
Christian Herter  Secretary of State (April 1959 onwards)
Nobosuke Kishi  Prime Minister of Japan (February 1957 onwards)
Douglas MacArthur II  US Ambassador to Japan (February 1957 onwards)
Walter Robertson  Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
Mamoru Shigemitsu  Japanese Foreign Minister (until December 1956)
Map 2 – Northeast Asia
Chapter 5
Revision of the US-Japan alliance, 1955-1960

*I don’t care how solemn a treaty is or how solemn the occasion of its signing or who signed it—when a treaty which is in force becomes considered by one of the parties to that treaty as not only not its own interest, but inimical to its own self-interest, the treaty isn’t really worth very much. Because if you ever had to apply it and get cooperation from the other side, you wouldn’t get it.*

*Douglas MacArthur
US Ambassador to Japan*

The revision of the United States-Japan Security Treaty, which produced the new Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in 1960, is often described as being motivated by the demands of an increasingly resentful Japanese population, which desired a greater degree of “equality” with the United States. Authors such as John Swenson-Wright, Michael Schaller, Walter La Feber, Roger Buckley and George Packard argue that a variety of factors prompted the emergence of this sentiment in Japan. The conduct of American troops in Japan is identified by all authors as a contributing factor. Packard suggests that even if ‘each U.S. soldier had been a model of good behavior, there would still have been misunderstandings and friction...[but] a number of unfortunate incidents stirred deep resentment among the Japanese people’.*

Many historical accounts of the treaty revision—even if they acknowledge that Japan’s ‘first serious effort to alter the security treaty’ was in 1955—commence in 1957, when the infamous “Girard incident” occurred.* This event, in which an American soldier murdered a Japanese woman, did indeed generate significant anti-American sentiment in Japan and intensified the Japanese desire for a more “equal” relationship with America. Analysts of the US-Japan alliance have been generally content to explain the treaty revision with primary reference to this domestic politics lens.

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While unarguably important, this was not the only reason Japan desired a new treaty.

While this chapter does not contradict current accounts of the treaty revision process, it argues that they do not adequately recognise the influence of Japan’s entrapment fears, which were sparked by the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. These fears generated doubts about American reliability and were an important cause of Japan’s desire to revise the treaty. Because the 1951 Security Treaty granted the US the right to ‘dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about Japan’ without Japanese concurrence, Tokyo was extremely concerned about the possibility that Japan might become entrapped into a conflict in which its interests were divergent from those of the United States. Japan’s entrapment risks were particularly severe, because in the 1950s Tokyo did not have the ability to veto US action from military bases in Japan.

While other authors acknowledge that Japanese fears of entrapment were a component of popular demands for treaty revision, none have specifically linked this to the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Packard, in his thorough account of the security treaty revision crisis, argues that ‘the danger of Japan’s being dragged into a new war’, waning confidence in America’s military superiority, as well as the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958), were three significant factors. La Feber hints that domestic factors, such as nuclear fallout on a Japanese fishing vessel after a US weapons test, and the Girard case, were powerful influences on Japanese desire for “more equality”, but he also notes that the ‘Girard case only partly explained the growing tensions’. Schaller links the desire to revise the treaty with general fear of entrapment, but also falls back upon the idea of Japan desiring a more mutual alliance for reasons of national pride: Japan wanted to be treated on the same basis as the United Kingdom or Italy.

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4 Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan, 8 September 1951.
5 Packard, Protest in Tokyo, p.15. See also pp.60-63.
6 La Feber, The Clash, p.316. See also, more generally, pp.310-324.
7 Schaller, Altered States, pp.127-142. For the reference to the UK and Italy, see p.137.
There is no “smoking gun” evidence to conclusively and irrefutably prove that Tokyo's desire to revise the treaty was due to entrapment fears arising from the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, but there is a strong circumstantial case that this causal relationship existed. Three key data points suggest that was an important element and that previous accounts have not adequately recognised Japan’s reliability concerns. Firstly, Japan was extremely worried about entrapment risks during the Crisis, and the US Embassy reported extensively on these concerns. The US Ambassador to Tokyo warned that Japan might not permit US forces to use their bases in Japan in the event of a US-PRC conflict, even though the United States had the legal right to do so under the 1951 treaty. Japanese wariness over their potential role in such a conflict predates other events, such as the Girard incident, which are often cited as crystallising Japanese desires for a new treaty. Within months of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis receding, Japan launched its first efforts to revise the treaty and mitigate these entrapment risks.

Secondly, Japanese officials referred—sometimes directly and publicly, but more often privately and obliquely—to their entrapment concerns with respect to the offshore islands. Terms like "equality" and "mutuality" were regularly used in the alliance revision negotiations, and US officials identified these as representing Tokyo’s desire to exercise a veto over military action launched from bases in Japan. Though Japanese officials often couched their position in vague language, US negotiators thought that these terms represented concrete fears about Japan's involvement, against its will, in a US-PRC war.

Finally, if Japan did fear entrapment and sought to mitigate these risks through alliance revision, then this should be reflected in any new alliance agreement. The new alliance treaty, signed in 1960, effectively mitigated Japan's most severe entrapment risks. Once this was signed, Tokyo could veto US military action from bases on mainland Japan, with one secret exception: Tokyo pre-emptively gave its approval for America’s use of these bases if they were required to defend South Korea against a North Korean attack. The form of the new alliance agreement suggests that Tokyo's entrapment fears were stoked not by the possibility of being dragged into a war to defend Korea, but an unnecessary
conflict over the offshore islands. Thus, the primary outcome of the revised treaty was to restrict America’s ability to respond to contingencies around the Taiwan Strait without Japanese concurrence. That the treaty took this form further supports the argument that Japanese desires for treaty revision were not driven by abstract demands for greater “equality” or “mutuality”, nor solely by domestic political factors, but also by clear efforts to minimise entrapment risks in a Taiwan Strait conflict of questionable relevance to Japanese security.

Although many documents relevant to the treaty revision are published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, many more—including some still classified when the relevant FRUS volume was published—are accessible at the National Archives and Records Administration. This chapter draws on these documents, including some recently declassified in 2013. It appears that some of these documents, due to the absence of cross-references, have escaped the attention of other authors examining the US-Japan alliance. Despite the time that has passed, some of the documentary record remains classified. Over 150 documents relevant to the US-Japan treaty revision were requested under the Freedom of Information Act, but the majority of these have not yet been declassified.

This chapter contains three sections, which generally address the three aspects described above. The first section, covering the August 1954 – December 1956 period, describes Japan’s reaction to the escalating Taiwan Strait Crisis and Tokyo’s initial effort to revise the 1951 Security Treaty. The second covers the January 1957 – September 1958 period, and assesses Japan’s second, and more considered, push for a revision of the alliance. This prompted a period of internal deliberation within the United States, as the Defense and State Departments quarrelled over whether treaty revision was prudent. The third section, covering the events of October 1958 – January 1960, explores the content of the treaty negotiations and the signing of the new treaty in 1960.

These events meet the expectations of the alliance audience effect framework. This chapter shows that Tokyo closely observed America’s conduct during the
First Taiwan Strait Crisis, and concluded that America's posture posed significant entrapment risks for Japan, and this made Washington an unreliable ally (hypothesis 1). Tokyo moved to mitigate these risks by revising its alliance with the United States, and this new alliance agreement gave Tokyo the ability to veto the American use of bases in “mainland” Japan (hypothesis 2). The fact that a secret exception was made—to enable the US to use bases in Japan to defend Korea—shows that Tokyo's entrapment fears were specific to a conflict over Formosa. Though this alliance revision did not significantly affect other allies, the US did consider how they would react, and this supports hypothesis 3 of the alliance audience framework.

**August 1954 – December 1956**

By August 1954, Japan had begun to distance itself from America’s position in Asia. Finance Minister Hayato Ikeda told the US Ambassador to Japan, John Allison, that ‘many Japanese were beginning to feel that US had no real benevolence toward Japan’.

Adopting a realist lens, Allison assessed that ‘Japan does not consider itself an ally or partner of the United States but rather a nation which for the time being is forced to cooperate...[it intends] to wring out of this relationship every possible advantage at the minimum cost’.

For Japan, the restoration of trade links with Communist China was of immense importance, and US-sponsored trade restrictions with the Communist bloc were of significant concern. This was especially so because American allies in Europe were not subject to many of these restrictions. In August 1953, an Embassy officer wrote that with the ‘exception of the problems arising from the presence in Japan of United States Armed Forces....no other single issue affects Japanese-United States relations so adversely’. Japan resented the fact that its trade...

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options with Communist China were limited and that, compared to other allies, the US applied greater pressure on Tokyo to curtail trade.

Tokyo was also unsettled by America’s policies toward Communist and Nationalist China. In his memoirs, Allison wrote that the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mamoru Shigemitsu, would raise the issue of Formosa with him in ‘almost every monthly meeting’. Though the ‘Japanese Government agreed with the United States that the government and people on Formosa should not be allowed to be taken over by the government in Peking by force...from that point the Japanese people are not sure what should be done’. Japanese views toward the situation were complicated by their desire to boost trade links with the Chinese Communists. Shigemitsu ‘stressed the cultural, historical, religious and even economic ties to the mainland which were felt by the Japanese...eventually these ties would have to be recognised in some manner’. Allison would report these exchanges to the State Department in Washington, but ‘would get no reply’.11 It would take several years for the State Department to recognise the significance of such diplomatic reporting from the American Embassy in Tokyo. As Roger Buckley notes, US attitudes at this time were often dismissive of Tokyo’s views: ‘The belief that Japan was still an American vassal that could be granted the occasional concession, if and when the United States government judged the moment opportune, had yet to be corrected’.12

Japan reacts to offshore island risks, and starts a new phase in US-Japan relations

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis, covered in Chapter 4, put significant pressure on Tokyo. Japan did not desire a war with Communist China, as it would upset their economic aspirations and—due to the presence of US forces throughout the Japanese archipelago—unavoidably embroil them in a regional conflict. As historian Walter LaFeber puts it, ‘As Americans vigorously duelled with China to

protect Taiwan, the Japanese worked to increase trade with both China and Taiwan’.\textsuperscript{13}

In February 1955, before the First Taiwan Strait Crisis reached its peak, Ambassador Allison assessed that Japan ‘believes that the US maintains military bases in Japan not wholly or even primarily for the purpose of defending Japan, but for the safe-guarding of the US’s own strategic interests...As such, she considers that US bases, while providing protection for Japan, are also a great source of danger’. Allison believed that a revised security treaty would help ‘to place Japan fully on a par with major NATO powers’ and would help meet Japanese desires for ‘more independence and scope in world affairs’.\textsuperscript{14}

In March 1955, as the crisis escalated, there were firm indications that Japan feared entrapment into a war with mainland China. Ambassador Allison cabled the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, with the warning that Japan regarded Formosa and the Pescadores ‘as being in an entirely different category than Quemoy and Matsu, which they have always regarded as being part of China proper’.\textsuperscript{15} Allison assessed that ‘Despite their morbid national fear of involvement the Japanese would in general approve of the use of force by the US to defend' Formosa and the Pescadores. However, 'In majority of Japanese eyes the US, rather than Communist China, would be the principal “war monger” if it sought to deny by force capture of these islands by Government in control of continental China’.\textsuperscript{16}

Allison warned that these sentiments would have a practical impact on America’s ability to use bases in Japan for the defence of the offshore islands. He thought that ‘even if hostilities began under the most favorable psychological circumstances—if the US appeared to be wholly “in the right”, and the

\textsuperscript{13}LaFeber, The Clash, p.314.
\textsuperscript{14}Tokyo’s 954 to Washington, 11 February 1955, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 2574, 611.94/2-1155.
\textsuperscript{15}Other US allies, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, used very similar language when describing the offshore islands. See Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{16}Tokyo’s 2202 to Washington, 9 March 1955, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3939, 793.5/3-955.
Communists obviously guilty of aggression—we could expect little “positive” assistance from Japan’. The passive assistance that Japan might provide was also uncertain. Under favorable circumstances, Allison thought Japan would provide roughly the same level support as it did during the Korean War, but he warned that

_if it appeared that as a result of attempting to defend the offshore islands hostilities were spreading to attacks on major...targets on the China mainland and/or if nuclear weapons were used, a decisive swing in Japan’s public opinion against the US would be likely...The government could, therefore, be expected to take more positive steps to ensure Japanese non-involvement. These steps might be limited to a failure to act officially against left wing stimulated strikes at US bases or they could be carried to request not to use Japanese bases for the staging of attacks on the China mainland or even for assistance to the US forces involved in the offshore island hostilities. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that continued hostilities involving nuclear weapons would lead to a request for the withdrawal of US forces from Japan and a sharp swing of Japan into the ranks of the neutral nations. The present government, even more than its predecessor, is reluctant to become involved in what it would consider “American adventurism”._\(^\text{17}\)

The importance of Dulles’ nuclear threat was noted even outside of Japan, with Canadian diplomats reporting that the Japanese Ambassador in Ottawa suggested that that ‘the Dulles statement was viewed with considerable concern in Tokyo’.\(^\text{18}\)

Allison understood that his diplomatic cables would not be warmly received in Washington. Noting that while his ‘estimate of Japanese reactions may appear to be alarmist’, Allison reaffirmed his assessment that the ‘Japanese do not consider holding of offshore islands essential...and our involvement in their defense would alienate Japanese opinion and might well jeopardize our whole position in this country’.\(^\text{19}\) The Ambassador supported his analysis by noting that both the Japanese Prime Minister, Ichiro Hatoyama, as well as Foreign Minister

\(^{17}\)Tokyo’s 2202 to Washington, 9 March 1955, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3939, 793.5/3-955.

\(^{18}\)Australian High Commission (Ottawa) to the Department of External Affairs (Canberra), Secret, 21 March 1955, in NAA, A1209, 1957/5035, f.12. For more on Dulles’ nuclear threat to Communist China, see Chapter 4.

\(^{19}\)Tokyo’s 2202 to Washington, 9 March 1955, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3939, 793.5/3-955. It is possible that this important cable has escaped the attention of other authors – although it is extremely relevant to US-Japan relations and Japanese military issues, it is housed within the 793.5 (China National Defense Affairs) series. It does not appear to have been cross-referenced to the 611.94 (U.S.-Japan relations) or 794.5 (Japan National Defense Affairs) series.
Shigemitsu, had both privately voiced their concerns to a visiting American journalist: ‘war must not be permitted to develop over the offshore islands’. Allison assessed that if the offshore islands fell because the US decided against intervening, this outcome was ‘likely to be greeted with relief, even praised’, in Tokyo.20 While Dulles and others had assumed that such a disloyal act would lead to Japan doubting American reliability, Tokyo actively desired America’s disloyalty to Taipei. The delineation between the offshore islands and Formosa itself was made not only by politicians: in late January 1955, two of Japan's main newspapers took the line that the ‘invasion [of] Yikiangshan [Island was]...not [a] prelude to invasion Formosa’.21

Nor were these views were confined to the American Embassy in Tokyo. An April 1955 National Security Council (NSC) report noted that while Japan was reliant on the US for external security, Tokyo feared entrapment: US bases were thought to guarantee US support, but were also 'dangerously exposing Japan to nuclear attack in the event of war'.22 A draft of this NSC paper recommended that the US negotiate a new treaty that would maintain basing rights in Japan, but Dulles had little patience for this suggestion. Expressing his ‘profound disagreement’ with this proposal, he argued that a new treaty would involve ‘a grave loss of advantage to the United States’, as the Japanese ‘will certainly want to model such a treaty on the existing mutual defense treaties between the U.S. and South Korea and the U.S. and the Philippines. This would mean that the United States would have to forgo its right to maintain forces and bases in Japan, and the privilege of doing so would be dependent on the agreement of the Japanese Government’. Despite the suggestion for a new treaty arising from his own State Department, Dulles was ‘firmly opposed’ to this ‘unless pressure in

20 Tokyo’s 2508 to Washington, 4 April 1955, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3917, 793.00/4-455.
Japan for a new treaty became a great deal stronger than it was at the present time.\textsuperscript{23}

Dulles was right that Japan would seek to obtain conditions equivalent to those obtained by other US allies. Allison reported that ‘Japanese officials...are beginning to indicate their interest in adjusting base and other arrangements to assure completely parallel treatment with the NATO powers’.\textsuperscript{24} But Dulles was, at this stage, insistent that the US maintain its rights under the 1951 treaty. Allison later attributed Dulles’ obstinacy to ‘pride of authorship of the original security treaty’, but diplomatic reporting from Tokyo made clear that America’s “rights” would be quickly negated if US policy threatened to drag Japan into a conflict against its wishes.\textsuperscript{25} In July 1955 Allison wrote the Director of Northeast Asian Affairs in the State Department, arguing that it was

\begin{quote}
most unrealistic to assume that the Japanese will docilely agree to our retention of “idle bases” for a rainy day; on the contrary, the Japanese would increasingly insist that bases here must serve Japanese interests only, i.e. not U.S. purposes only indirectly concerned with the defense of the Japanese homeland...in general the trend is definitely in the direction of restricting, rather than broadening, U.S. rights and bases in Japan...any effort we make to fight this trend head on by insisting on our “rights” is not likely to be successful and can only result in further aggravating our relations with Japan to the detriment of our long-term base position here.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

On 25 July 1955, only three months after tensions subsided across the Taiwan Strait, Shigemitsu requested that negotiations begin on a new mutual defence treaty. Allison described Shigemitsu as believing ‘that Japan could not be considered as truly an independent and sovereign nation as long as security treaty in its present form remained’. Allison warned Dulles that in evaluating Shigemitsu’s proposal, he should ‘keep in mind fact that time is rapidly running out when we can continue to maintain our forces and bases here as at present...If

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{23} Memorandum of Discussion at the 244\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council, 7 April 1955, in \textit{FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII}, Document 26. Emphasis original.

\textsuperscript{24} Tokyo’s 13 to Washington, 6 July 1955, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2575, 611.94/7-655.

\textsuperscript{25} Interview with John M. Allison, 20 April 1969, JFD OHP, p.33.

\end{footnotesize}
present trends should increase over next two years...we might well find ourselves with only paper rights and no effective means of utilizing them’.  

Shigemitsu’s proposal made provision for the full, but phased, withdrawal of US troops from Japan, with the caveat that ‘until completion of withdrawal US forces will be utilized for mutual defense purposes only and that position of US forces will be similar to that given them by NATO countries’.  Although Allison’s record of this conversation does not note any explicit reference to Taiwan, he emphasised that the ‘days are numbered during which we can continue to have military rights in Japan on present basis – if we insist on them and on continuing to get our pound of flesh we run real risk of losing all – either by outright repudiation or by passive resistance to fulfilling obligation under present treaty’.  Though this first effort to revise the treaty would prove unsuccessful, the timing is significant: within three months of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis concluding, Tokyo attempted to obtain veto rights over the use of US forces in Japan. This effort long predates domestic factors—such as the Girard incident—which are cited as precipitating movement toward a revised alliance.

In assessing Shigemitsu’s proposal, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, made some sobering assessments. Robertson believed that a new treaty was ‘clearly undesirable’, as the 1951 Security Treaty gave the US very broad rights for the use of military bases in Japan. However, while the 1951 Security Treaty granted US forces ‘rights...wider than any we can possibly get’ under a new treaty, Robertson’s analysis notes that ‘to some extent these rights are illusory, as has been evidenced in the recent difficulties with the Japanese Government about...the United States right to bring nuclear weapons into Japan’. Allison’s assessment from Tokyo—that America’s entitlements

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27 Tokyo’s 201 to Washington, 25 July 1955, Top Secret, Eyes Only Secretary, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/7-2555.
28 Tokyo’s 201 to Washington, 25 July 1955, Top Secret, Eyes Only Secretary, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/7-2555.
29 Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, 28 July 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII, Document 37. In the FRUS “e-book”, the second half of this quote is omitted from the Document. It is visible in the Portable Document Format version of the FRUS volume.
under the 1951 treaty were fast becoming “paper rights”—was slowly gaining traction in Foggy Bottom.

In early August, an embassy official met with the head of the Japanese Foreign Office’s Treaty Bureau to discuss what a new treaty might involve. Shigemitsu’s concept of a new treaty—because it would be followed by the withdrawal of US forces from Japan—would dramatically reduce Japan’s entrapment risks. When a US official enquired as to what assistance Japan would provide if conflict broke out in Korea or over the Taiwan Strait, Japan’s response is illuminating. ‘Assuming resumption Korean hostilities...United States forces could utilize Japanese bases as before’, but ‘Assuming operations in Formosa...if United States action pursuant international agreement, UN or otherwise, then possibly...Japan could agree to United States use [of] bases’.30 Only a few months after tensions had subsided across the Taiwan Strait, Japanese officials were expressing their view that a new treaty was necessary and that America would not be permitted to use bases in Japan if doing so could drag Japan into a wider conflict against its will. Further, they were already making a clear distinction between Korea and Formosa: while an arrangement could be made for the security of the Republic of Korea, that was obviously greater reluctance when it came to the Republic of China.

Allison felt that this Japanese approach ‘reflects wide Japanese sentiment and perhaps indication beginning of new phase our relations’.31 In analysing the draft text of Shigemitsu’s new treaty, one State Department official noted that ‘Japan would thus not be committed to help the United States if we were attacked in the Formosa area, or in Korea, or in the Philippines’. Though Shigemitsu’s draft treaty contained a ‘Japanese promise to act to meet an armed attack against areas under our jurisdiction in the West Pacific’, it was assessed that the US was ‘better off with the present arrangements’. This Japanese promise was ‘worth less...than the unlimited right to dispose our forces in and about Japan’, but this

30 Tokyo’s 378 to Washington, 10 August 1955, Top Secret, Eyes Only Secretary, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/8-1055.
31 Tokyo’s 400 to Washington, 12 August 1955, Top Secret, Eyes Only Secretary, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/8-1255.
of course only applied ‘so long as we can effectively exercise that right. That right can effectively be exercised so long as there is real Japanese consent. If the antagonism to the presence of our forces, which is already considerable, should grow, the present arrangement will become of doubtful value’.  

Individual officials in the State Department could see the writing on the wall – the US could not sustain its military presence in Japan without popular support, and this support was quickly evaporating. In an August meeting, one official noted that ‘the Japanese had made it clear to Embassy officials that in event of a new outbreak of hostilities in Korea or fighting on Formosa the Japanese would not consider themselves bound to afford us the use of our bases’. The idea that Japan might react this way infuriated the legally-minded Dulles, who insisted that ‘the Japanese had no jurisdictional basis for questioning our use of the bases, regardless of what political interpretation they might choose to put on the agreement’. Dulles continued to insist that the US could claim and rely upon what others at the State Department now considered to be only “paper rights”.

In his August 1955 visit to Washington, Shigemitsu discussed the possible revision of the 1951 Security Treaty with Dulles. Describing the threat posed by Communist influence in Japan and how the unequal nature of the 1951 treaty helped their cause, Shigemitsu noted that the ‘situation in Japan differs from that in Formosa and the Philippines, since the Japanese people do not believe that they are being treated as equals under the present arrangements’. In making this comparison, Shigemitsu was implicitly noting that the Nationalist Chinese and Filipino peoples had rights, under their security treaties, not available to the Japanese. When Dulles noted that the US had a basing agreement with the Philippines, Shigemitsu ‘replied that Japan would like to be in the same position’. But Dulles was in no hurry, and insisted that it was ‘premature to talk of changing the present treaty at this time’ because Japan had not built up adequate defense forces. One Japanese meeting participant described Dulles as believing

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32 Mr Sebald to the Secretary, 23 August 1955, Top Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/8-2355.
it was ‘ridiculous for Japan even to consider the revising of the Security Treaty. He spoke over one hour in a very stern manner on this subject, and I thought to myself, what a hard-headed, difficult old man he was’.\textsuperscript{35}

Though there was no direct reference to Taiwan Strait tensions in this meeting, Shigemitsu’s approach suggests that his main concern was realising a mechanism through which Japan could mitigate the entrapment risks posed by the 1951 Security Treaty. Shigemitsu wanted what other allies had – the ability to veto US military action from bases on his nation’s soil. Undeterred by Dulles’ lack of enthusiasm, Shigemitsu returned again to the subject of a new treaty and ‘emphasized that Japan wanted to be an equal partner like other countries having mutual security treaties with the United States and said that Japan is determined to move ahead with its defense’. With this, Dulles demurred slightly and ‘thought appropriate language could be worked out in the joint communiqué to cover the ideas of both sides’.\textsuperscript{36} In this communiqué, it was agreed that when Japan could ‘assume primary responsibility for the defense of its homeland and be able to contribute to the preservation of international peace and security in the Western Pacific…it would be appropriate to replace the present Security Treaty with one of greater mutuality’.\textsuperscript{37}

**Tokyo’s entrapment concerns persist, as State considers possible regional effects**

Though Dulles had rejected Shigemitsu’s August 1955 efforts to revise the treaty, US intelligence assessments continued to cast doubt on America’s ability to exercise its “paper rights” for unrestricted base use in Japan. In October 1955 a National Intelligence Estimate assessed that ‘Japan will continue to rely on the US for strategic security but will seek an equal voice in arrangements for the defense of Japan and is unlikely over the long term to agree to the continuation in Japan of bases under exclusive US control’. Furthermore, it echoed Allison’s diplomatic assessment from earlier in 1955, and assessed that if Tokyo was faced

\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Ichiro Kono, 30 September 1964, JFD OHP, p.17.


with an outbreak of hostilities that risked escalation into a general war, 'Japan might attempt to assume a neutral position in an effort to avoid nuclear destruction'.

In the absence of movement toward a new treaty, Japanese fears of entrapment did not abate. A paper prepared in the US embassy assessed that

There is a real fear in Japan that her ties with America will involve Japan in America’s war – and that Japan will be destroyed in the process. The Japanese have made it clear that they are thinking of this in quite specific terms: if war came in the Far East the United States would use Japan as a base for atomic attack, and Japan would consequently undergo atomic bombing in retaliation. This feeling has subsided considerably since last spring, when the danger of war in the Formosa Straits seemed imminent...but among ordinary reasonably well-informed Japanese there appears to be little feeling that the deterrent power of American striking forces on her territory constitutes a source of security for Japan.

This cable suggests that Japan’s fears of entrapment were focused on the possibility of war in the Far East, and at this time there were only two hotspots that might prompt the escalation of local hostilities into a global nuclear war: the Korean Peninsula, and the Taiwan Strait. This document explicitly links Japan’s fears of entrapment to the possibility of a conflict over the offshore islands.

In September 1956, the US embassy in Tokyo warned that fresh thinking was needed on the US-Japan security relationship. In a lengthy cable, Ambassador Allison warned that Japan ‘is aligned with us superficially and temporarily, but there are strong currents—deriving partly from her feudally isolated past, partly from her fears of nuclear war in the future, partly from other causes—drawing her toward neutralism’. Arguing that the relationship needed ‘mutuality’, Allison drew attention to the fact that Japan was not given the attention it deserved. On issues such as nuclear tests or troop redeployments, ‘we seldom provide more than the casual courtesy of a few hours notice, and sometimes not that’.

Another cable bluntly warned that ‘In the event of limited of localized hostilities,
it is uncertain that Japan...would permit the United States to use Japanese soil as a staging area and base of operations’. Allison felt that ‘Fear of involvement might cause Japan to deny the use of its facilities to the United States. In its present temper, it would almost certainly be a reluctant ally whose lack of cooperation, already demonstrated in time of peace, would greatly reduce its effectiveness’.41

In the same month, these issues became more prominent in the public sphere, with debates in the Japanese Diet focussing on how the alliance was “one-sided,” “unilaterally favorable to the United States” and forced upon Japan due to its military weakness’. The Embassy in Tokyo warned the State Department that ‘Complacency is by no means warranted by the fact that the United States position in Japan is not in imminent danger...When the United States is no longer welcomed or required in Japanese eyes, the Japanese are fully capable of making the United States position here sufficiently uncomfortable irrespective of legal rights’. The Embassy noted that desire for a new treaty was not a passing fad, but was ‘indeed expressed confidentially much earlier than the recent public debates’.42

In November 1956, Embassy officers met with staff from Japan’s foreign office to discuss US-Japan relations. After complaining about US policy toward Communist China, which the Japanese officials characterised as one of ‘hostility’, discussion turned to Japan’s ‘vague but nevertheless deep-seated feeling that the US-Japan relationship is “unequal”’. On this issue of inequality, ‘the most concrete comments...[were] that it would help if there were greater “mutuality” and consultation in defense planning...the US more often than not makes her military decision[s] in this part of the world, and carries them out, unilaterally, without bothering to inform the Japanese until after the event...advance consultations on a basis of equality would improve the situation considerably’.43

41 Tokyo’s 221 to Washington, 7 September 1956, as quoted in Parsons to Robertson, 24 January 1957, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3969, 794.5/1-2457.
43 Tokyo’s S87 to Washington, 11 December 1956, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/12-1156.
As noted in this Chapter’s introduction, several authors have traced Japanese desires for treaty revision to ideas such as “mutuality” or “equality”, but reports such as this one suggest that such terms were coded ways of referring to Japan’s entrapment fears. When Japanese officials were pressed for greater detail on exactly what was meant by “equality” or “mutuality”, they referred to unilateral American action and the need for consultation in advance of military activity. These sentiments are those to be expected from a state apprehensive about entrapment due to their ally’s ability to chain-gang them into a conflict.

Throughout 1956, the State Department began to more strongly associate terms such as “equality” and “mutuality” with concerns about entrapment, and the Department’s warnings about base issues became more and more explicit. In December, Marshall Green, a senior official in the State Department’s Far East division, wrote that Japan considered US bases to be ‘a form of foreign control earmarking Japan for involvement in any major war which, moreover, is likely to be a war involving nuclear weapons’. Green warned that ‘Without adequate modification of policy, the U.S. can expect to retain its bases in Japan for 2 to 4 years, though at the possible cost of future close relations with Japan…Even during this period, U.S. capabilities to utilize its bases in Japan for military actions outside the Japanese area and for the deployment of nuclear weapons may be seriously restricted’. Green thought Japan ‘motivated by a vague desire for “independence”, which translated into specific terms suggests to them revision of the Security Treaty. Their thinking is also strongly conditioned by fear of involvement in nuclear war and hence sensitivity to our military presence’.44 Like American diplomats in Tokyo, Green interpreted Japan’s vague references to “independence”, “equality” and “mutuality” as veiled references to Tokyo’s specific concerns about entrapment in a regional or global war.

As American officials began to consider how the US-Japan alliance might be modified to address Japanese concerns, they were also aware that a revision of the 1951 Security Treaty would be of great concern to other regional allies, such

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44 Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/12-2156.
as Korea. At this stage, it was anticipated that a new treaty would involve the withdrawal of significant numbers of US forces from Japan, so Green cautioned that ‘For the Republic of Korea, any withdrawal of our forces in Japan would have decidedly adverse affects [sic]. It would remove the present logistic and support base for US forces in Korea and might imply prospective withdrawal or reduction of our troops in Korea. It would raise the spectre of disastrous delays in reinforcing the ROK’s position in the event of renewed hostilities’.\textsuperscript{45}

Green assessed that ‘for Taiwan...[a] sudden troop withdrawal from Japan would have some of the same results noted in the case of Korea...we must be careful regarding any decision to withdraw suddenly from any country’. Green’s comments demonstrate that the United States was approaching the US-Japan alliance not purely as a discrete bilateral arrangement, but rather as one part of an interdependent system. Green and others in State knew that developments on one alliance would be observed by other allies and could affect their beliefs about American reliability. Green cautioned that ‘A great deal might be read into such decisions about basic shifts in US policy...our actions must be neither convulsive nor without full consultation and consideration of world-wide consequences’.\textsuperscript{46}

The alliance audience effect from August 1954 – December 1956

Authors such as Swenson-Wright have argued that Shigemitsu's goal for the 1955 visit was primarily to strengthen his own political position in Tokyo - the US Ambassador also regarded this as the main motivation for Shigemitsu’s trip to Washington.\textsuperscript{47} While political ambition no doubt played a role, Shigemitsu's proposals were clearly consistent with national sentiment in Japan and the US

\textsuperscript{45} Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/12-2156.
\textsuperscript{46} Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/12-2156.
\textsuperscript{47} See John Swenson-Wright, Unequal Allies? United States Security and Alliance Policy Toward Japan, 1945-1960, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2005, p.208. See also the second footnote to Memorandum of a Conversation, 24 August 1955, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII, Document 42. Here, Allison assessed that while Shigemitsu’s trip was ‘primarily [an] internal political move’, it would also ‘of course be intended at same time to serve Japanese policy purposes, which he sincerely pursues except where his personal ambitions conflict’.
embassy’s reporting. These factors support the hypotheses of the alliance audience framework. The most startling revelation in this analysis is the confirmation of how differently the US and Japan viewed the issues of Korea and Formosa. While Shigemitsu was willing to provide an agreement to allow US forces to use bases in Japan for the defence of Korea, he was unwilling to allow this for the defence of Formosa or the offshore islands. Although a specific reason for this delineation was not provided at this time, the most likely explanation—given Tokyo’s fears during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis—is that it was due to concern that an American defence of Formosa (or the offshore islands) might drag Japan into an unwanted war with mainland China.48

As Schaller describes it, Shigemitsu made Japan’s ‘first serious effort to alter the security treaty’.49 Though it was ultimately unsuccessful, Shigemitsu’s attempt provides the first direct support for hypothesis 1, which expects that a state will monitor its ally’s behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability. Based on their observations of America’s conduct during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, Japanese officials were concerned that Washington’s seeming determination to stand firm alongside Nationalist China increased the likelihood of a global war between the Communist and non-Communist blocs. This, coupled with America’s legal right to use bases in Japan without Tokyo’s consent, posed the most significant of entrapment risks, which in turn made America an unreliable ally for Japan.

Hypothesis 2 expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk. Japan’s behavior between February 1955 and December 1956 supports this hypothesis. Within three months of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis subsiding, Shigemitsu made a serious attempt to revise the unequal 1951 treaty. Had this effort been successful, it would have sharply curtailed entrapment dilemmas and thus mitigated the risk of American unreliability. Japanese

48 It might be said that conflict on the Korean Peninsula would have posed the same risk, but Japan’s response to the outbreak of the Korean War (and evidence presented later in this chapter) demonstrates that Japan then considered the security of South Korea—but not Taiwan’s offshore islands—as vital to the security of Japan.
49 Schaller, Altered States, p.129.
officials expressed their desire for greater “equality” or “mutuality”, but US officials understood that these vague terms were oblique references to concrete concerns about Japanese sovereignty and security. Individual officers in the State Department now realised that Japanese concerns about entrapment were intensifying rather than abating, and that the 1951 Security Treaty should be revised to address Tokyo’s concerns. As expected by hypothesis 2, Japanese officials did not sit idly by and tolerate the risks posed by American unreliability: they moved to revise the treaty in a way that would reduce the risk of entrapment.

Finally, an examination of this period supports hypothesis 3, which expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. As certain US officials came to accept that a revision to the US-Japan treaty would be necessary, they considered how it might affect other regional allies of the United States. Marshall Green realised that developments within the US-Japan alliance could have significant effects on Seoul and Taipei, as America’s ability to fulfil these alliance commitments could be constrained by changes to the US-Japan alliance. Green’s suggested approach—that Washington’s ‘actions must be neither convulsive nor without full consultation and consideration of world-wide consequences’—supports hypothesis 3.50

January 1957 - September 1958

A new Prime Minister, and a new Ambassador, work toward a new treaty

At the start of 1957, Dulles was the primary obstacle to the negotiation of a new alliance with Japan. State Department officials began to bluntly warn him that the time for a new treaty had come. Robertson argued that ‘if we do not take the initiative in moving in this direction, we run the gravest risk of a deterioration of relations between Japan and the United States’. As he recommended a review of America’s security relationship with Japan, Robertson acknowledged that a new

50 Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3968, 794.5/12-2156.
treaty ‘would involve some concessions by us’, but he argued that these ‘would be well worthwhile if the result were to create a durable association’.\(^{51}\)

The January 1957 election of Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi in Japan was followed just one month later by the appointment of a new US Ambassador to Japan, Douglas MacArthur II. Kishi’s first formal meetings with MacArthur focussed on the need for security treaty revision, and in the American Ambassador Kishi found a strong supporter. In a paper presented to MacArthur, Kishi noted that the Japanese people were very critical of American foreign policy, as they believed it to be implacably aggressive toward the Communist bloc. This paper clearly identified Tokyo’s concerns and specified that these were ‘caused by following factors: (A) Japanese aversion to war as against global policy of US, particularly its military policy toward Japan. (B) Resentment against Japan’s subordinate position to US under Japan-US Security Treaty arrangements’.\(^{52}\)

Unlike more junior officials, Kishi’s main thrust did not focus on vague complaints about the need for greater “mutuality” or “equality”. Instead, he bluntly noted that ‘many Japanese people have come [to] believe that [the] foreign policy of US is ultimately a policy of war aiming at overthrow by force of Communist bloc, and that Japanese-American cooperation under existing formula amounts to subjugation [of] their country to US policies that may lead Japan to war’.\(^{53}\) Another paper given to MacArthur specified that the ‘point subject to severest criticism is that Security Treaty grants US right to use such forces [based in Japan] regardless of intention of Japan and in certain cases for purposes irrelevant to direct defense of Japan, thereby involving Japan in such hostilities as might occur somewhere else in Far East’.\(^{54}\) Kishi was casting his arguments in terms that provide clear support to hypotheses 1 and 2 – having

\(^{51}\) Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, 7 January 1957, in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII, Document 106.*

\(^{52}\) Tokyo’s 2256 to Washington, 10 April 1957, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/4-1057. Two other factors were also listed – territorial problems and trade restrictions.

\(^{53}\) Tokyo’s 2257 to Washington, 10 April 1957, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/4-1057.

\(^{54}\) Tokyo’s 2257 to Washington, 10 April 1957, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/4-1057.
observed American behaviour, and concluded that Washington’s policy was one
aimed at the violent defeat of Communism, Japan now desired to revise the 1951
Security Treaty to reduce the risk of entrapment. Divergent interests made the
US an unreliable ally for Tokyo.

In another meeting only a few days later, Kishi made specific policy proposals to
MacArthur. Arguing that it was ‘essential to dispel such apprehensions
entertained by Japanese people about United States military policy and their
dissatisfaction with that they consider to be subordinate position of Japan’, Kishi
suggested that the two Governments reaffirm the defensive nature of the US-
Japan alliance. As part of this affirmation, Kishi thought the US should emphasise
that it ‘has no intention whatsoever to utilize its armed forces stationed in Japan
and other Far Eastern areas unless overt aggression occurs in these areas’. Kishi
felt that such a statement would reassure the Japanese public and help in his goal
of consolidating support for the US-Japan alliance.55

But the real change would go beyond words: when Kishi listed his desired
changes to the treaty, the first aspect nominated was that the ‘disposition and
use of US forces under treaty will in principle be effected through mutual
agreement’.56 Kishi was placing the United States on notice: no longer would
Japan tolerate a situation whereby American military action, launched from
bases in Japan without Tokyo’s approval, could commit Japan to war. As Roger
Buckley has noted, Kishi’s paper represented ‘a more defiant approach towards
its relations with the United States. It reads at times as more of a declaration of
independence...than an aide memoire to one’s closest ally’.57 Interestingly, in a
1964 interview, Kishi described his own efforts at treaty revision as a
continuation of those efforts made earlier: ‘when Mr Shigemitsu met Dulles, he
proposed the Security Treaty be revised for a more equal footing between Japan
and the United States. But Mr Dulles at that time said it was too early....Then,

55 Tokyo’s 2305 to Washington, 13 April 1957, Top Secret, Limited Distribution, NARA, CDF,
1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/4-1357.
56 Tokyo’s 2305 to Washington, 13 April 1957, Top Secret, Limited Distribution, NARA, CDF,
1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2578, 611.94/4-1357.
57 Buckley, US-Japan Alliance Diplomacy 1945-1990, p.82.
when I went to Washington in 1957, I again told Mr. Dulles about the revision – on equal footing’.\footnote{Interview with Nobusuke Kishi, 2 October 1964, JFD OHP, p.11.} Thus, Kishi’s comment supports the idea that analysis of Japan’s treaty revision efforts should commence with Shigemitsu’s initial efforts to revise the treaty in 1955, and not with later events like the Girard incident.

MacArthur cabled the State Department with yet another blunt assessment: ‘We have reached the turning point in our relations with Japan...if we do not try by our basic stance...to direct the current into constructive channels, we will find our whole position here gradually eroding away in next several years’. While Kishi’s exact proposals were unsurprising, MacArthur was taken aback by ‘the sudden authority and completeness with which they have now emerged at the highest level of the Jap Govt. They call for the most searching analysis and considered response on our side’. In MacArthur’s view, the US needed to ‘put our relations with Japan as rapidly as possible on the same basis of equal partnership that we have with other allies’. If the US could not demonstrate a willingness to consider Kishi’s proposals, MacArthur feared that ‘we would see Japan drift progressively into neutralism’.\footnote{Telegram From the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, 17 April 1957, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII, Document 126.}

Dulles, whose reply was anything other than the ‘considered response’ requested by MacArthur, remained the stumbling block in the way of those arguing for revision of the treaty. The Secretary of State was concerned that Kishi would try to commence detailed treaty revision negotiations during his June 1957 visit to Washington. Believing that Japan was, at that moment, better prepared to discuss issues of security treaty revision than the United States, Dulles bluntly told MacArthur that he should simply meet with Kishi less frequently.\footnote{Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Japan, 18 April 1957, in FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol XXIII, Document 127.} About a month later Dulles expressed further concern ‘Japanese are expecting too much from Kishi visit. It obvious that revision security and territorial arrangements
now matters intense national interest Japan, while...U.S. not psychologically prepared for revisions'.

Ahead of Kishi’s visit, MacArthur wrote another lengthy missive to Dulles and Robertson. Commenting on the possibility of regional security pacts, MacArthur explicitly notes that Japan would not be willing to enter into any security relationship with Taiwan, because they feared entrapment into a conflict with Communist China. This stood in contrast to the possibility of a security arrangement with Korea, which seemed ‘out of the question’ not because of Japanese fears of entrapment, but ‘because of Korean suspicions’ of Japan. Evidence such as this further supports the contention that Japan’s entrapment concerns were focussed on Taiwan, not Korea.

When Kishi visited the US in June, he didn’t hesitate to press for a revision of the 1951 Security Treaty. In his meeting with President Dwight Eisenhower, Kishi emphasised that while he did not feel that ‘Japan was in a “subjugated” position under the Treaty’, there were ‘some matters which we would like to see reconsidered’. The very first aspect Kishi mentioned was that ‘the employment of your forces in Japan is subject to the unilateral determination of the United States; we would like to have this subject to consultation with the Japanese side’. Like Shigemitsu’s 1955 efforts, Kishi’s 1957 discussion of possible treaty revision focused on measures that would reduce Japan’s risk of entrapment in a conflict involving US forces based in Japan.

In a later meeting with Dulles, Kishi again noted that ‘Japan thought that it should have the right of consultation concerning the disposition of United States forces in Japan’. While Dulles ‘thought he could agree in principle...this would not apply in an emergency situation where there was not time for consultation’. Dulles chastised Kishi for Japan’s low level of defence spending and told him

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petulantly: ‘if it is the desire of the Japanese Government that we divorce ourselves from Japan, we will accommodate ourselves to that wish’. Kishi rebutted this suggestion, instead arguing that he sought a relationship of greater mutuality in order to preserve and strengthen the United States-Japan relationship. If this could not be achieved, the Socialist Party might gain power in Japan, and this would likely result in the abrogation of the alliance.\(^{64}\)

When Dulles and Kishi met the following day to agree on the wording of their communiqué, further differences emerged. Kishi wanted the communiqué to mention that an ‘intergovernmental committee’ would ‘study basic problems concerning the implementation of the Security Treaty and to consult, wherever practicable, regarding the disposition and employment of United States forces in Japan’. Dulles demurred, thinking that ‘the sentence would not be very good in that form’.\(^{65}\) Kishi provided Dulles with a detailed explanation of why he desired to revise the treaty so that it provided for consultation with Japan. Kishi ‘said that the most troublesome thing in Japan with the Security Treaty was the fear that Japan could be gotten into a state of war involuntarily or without its knowledge in the event that the United States took action somewhere without the Japanese Government having known about it.’ It must be noted that given Japan’s willingness to allow US forces access to bases for the defence of Korea—a subject discussed later in this chapter—then by process of elimination this leaves only one major flashpoint in Northeast Asia to which Japan’s concerns could apply: the Taiwan Strait. Dulles reassured Kishi that the US would ‘maintain very close relations’ with Japan if there was ‘any critical development in the Japan area’, and that the US ‘would not want in any way to act, unless it was imperative, in any way that was abrupt or lacking in the normal courtesy between friendly governments’.\(^{66}\) Kishi later obtained Dulles’ agreement to make this last statement publicly available.\(^{67}\)

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The joint communiqué noted that an ‘intergovernmental committee’ would ‘study problems arising in relation to the Security Treaty including consultation, whenever practicable, regarding the disposition and employment in Japan by the United States of its forces’. This would be known as the Japan-America Security Committee. The communiqué also hinted at the possibility of a new or revised treaty, with Eisenhower and Kishi affirming ‘their understanding that the Security Treaty of 1951 was designed to be transitional in character and not in that form to remain in perpetuity’. With this communiqué, Kishi's visit was 'little short of a diplomatic triumph'.

Though Dulles was the primary stumbling block in the State Department, certain elements of the US military were also concerned about the negative outcomes that could result from a revision of the alliance. Upon learning that Japan was seeking treaty revision, the military's Far Eastern Command warned that a Japanese veto of US freedoms in mainland Japan was ‘unacceptable’. If Tokyo declined to allow the use of bases in Japan for the defence of other Asian nations, this ‘would have an almost catastrophic effect on our defense position in the Pacific. It would be difficult to overestimate the danger implicit in announcing to the communists that Japanese bases would not be available for use against them if they attack Korea, Taiwan, or the Philippines, for example’.

The State and Defense Departments argue about America’s “rights” in Japan

By early 1958, MacArthur and others had finally succeeded in converting Dulles to their cause. According to Walter Robertson, Dulles now believed that ‘If we continue to base our presence solely on our treaty rights we may end up by being forced out’. Macarthur was instructed to consider these issues and make recommendations. Now that Dulles had finally shifted his position, MacArthur replied that it was a ‘matter of greatest urgency...as time passes without

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68 United States Government, Department of State Bulletin, 8 July 1957, p.52.
69 Packard, Protest in Tokyo, p.58.
70 Letter from Horsey to Parsons, 20 June 1957, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 3969, 794.5/6-2057.
necessary adjustment in security treaty to bring it into keeping with realities of present situation, risk may increase that Japan would come to believe its interests best served by termination of treaty without any replacement'.

MacArthur’s sentiments were being strongly endorsed by the State Department’s North Asia branch, which prepared a lengthy report on ‘The Need for a Redirection of United States Policy Toward Japan’. This report assessed that it was ‘impossible for Japan to support our policies toward Peiping and Taipei’, and that ‘Japan desires strongly to separate itself from the hostile aspects of United States policy toward China’. This report explicitly notes the differences of perception between Washington and Tokyo. Because of the Japanese belief that ‘Peiping has abandoned its aggressive phase’, the United States alliance system in Asia now seemed ‘offensive rather than defensive’. The report elaborates:

_Taken in conjunction with this implacable confrontation of the two power centers across the Formosan strait the system of alliances seems to many Japanese to invite the threat of war rather than to dispel it...Japan is no longer the sturdy link in our Pacific defense chain that it once was. As already demonstrated the China policy of the United States is to a large extent responsible for this development. If we do not change our China policy, and there are no indications that we will, it will be a continuing major irritant in our relations with Japan; there will be increasing disengagement of Japan’s alignment with the United States and growing neutralism in Japan, possibly with an orientation towards Communist China._

MacArthur drafted a new mutual security treaty and sent it to Dulles and Robertson on 18 February 1958. In his analysis, MacArthur noted that ‘the crux of the matter will probably be the definition of the treaty area’. While some US officials had argued that a truly mutual alliance should commit Japan to defend the continental US, MacArthur argued that this was not feasible given Japan’s restrictive constitution. In MacArthur’s view, it was _not_ essential for Japan to be committed to come to our aid except within a fairly limited area_. While the new treaty ‘would not be as advantageous to us’ as the 1951 arrangement, MacArthur repeated the emphasis of his cable, sent one week earlier: reluctance to negotiate

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73 Memo from Martin to Parsons, 22 January 1958, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, RG 59, Box 2579, 611.94/1-2258. In the report, against the second part of this quote there is a handwritten notation: ‘This is only one aspect. I think this is too strong’. It is not clear to whom the handwriting belongs, nor to which aspect of the paragraph they specifically object.
a new treaty would ‘run the risk that Japan will come to believe that its best interests are served by terminating the existing Treaty with no replacement’.\textsuperscript{74}

Robertson supported MacArthur’s analysis, vividly advising Dulles that ‘we are not in a position today to exercise fully those treaty rights which we theoretically hold. Even in a critical situation it is highly doubtful that we could utilize our forces in Japan—except perhaps for a one-shot air strike—without Japanese approval’.\textsuperscript{75} The position of US forces in Japan had become so precarious that Robertson—the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific—believed that Tokyo would actively prevent the United States from exercising its legal base rights in Japan. If American planes undertook a combat mission from bases in Japan without Tokyo’s approval, they would not be permitted to take off a second time. The Japanese could restrict the use of these bases by shutting off electricity supplies, or simply parking trucks on the runways.

Perhaps anticipating some of the objections that would be later raised by the Department of Defense, MacArthur wrote Robertson and further explained his views about a new treaty. Noting that there was not “‘alleged’ inequality’ in the 1951 treaty, but ‘actual inequality’, MacArthur couched his position with reference to America’s other alliance agreements:

\begin{quote}
Our bases in Japan must be in practice linked with our base structure elsewhere in Asia. This Japan recognizes, but it is unwilling to grant us \textit{in advance} the unilateral right to use them as we please in hostilities in which we may be engaged but in which Japan is not. The Japanese are no different in this respect from our other allies. They cannot and will not accept...a treaty arrangement which manifestly deprives them in advance of any say as to how their territory is to be used by another power.
\end{quote}

MacArthur also noted that the Japanese had observed Dulles’ public comment that US bases in the United Kingdom and Italy could be used only ‘with the consent and participation’ of the respective governments.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{75} Letter From Robertson to Secretary of State Dulles, 28 March 1958, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 2579, 611.94/3-2858.
\textsuperscript{76} Letter From the Ambassador to Japan (MacArthur) to Secretary of State Dulles, 18 April 1958, in \textit{FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII}, Document 11. In the original, the underlined text is italicised.
MacArthur’s next comment reveals the extent to which Japan’s desire for treaty revision was motivated by fears of entrapment. While some US officials would fret that a new treaty would damage America’s ability to provide security in the Far East, MacArthur argued that Japan’s desire for a new treaty was not unreasonable:

Japanese, as does every sovereign power, seeks to exercise control over the use of our bases here, particularly during an emergency, not necessarily because it desires to restrict such use rigidly, but because it wishes to assure that any U.S. actions from these bases involving major consequences for Japan will be taken in consultation and agreement with the Japanese Government and for objectives which the Japanese see as being in their national interest as well as ours.\(^77\)

In a separate letter, MacArthur warned Dulles and Robertson that ‘Japan will not grant to us “rights” which go far beyond those we have obtained from other sovereign allies, many of whom are considerably less important in this world than Japan’. MacArthur noted that Kishi’s political opposition, the Japanese Socialist Party, had ‘intensified parliamentary and popular pressures on the government by pinpointing the absence of treaty safeguards against independent U.S. actions from bases in Japan which might involve Japan in a war not of its choosing. In particular, the Japanese have been apprehensive about the situation in the Taiwan Straits’.\(^78\) Though the need to be seen as equal to other allies was no doubt important from a domestic political standpoint, Ambassador MacArthur identified a strategic incentive for treaty revision along these lines: the fear of entrapment into a conflict against Japan’s interests. Furthermore, he linked this fear to a specific locale: the Taiwan Strait.

Japan’s enthusiasm for a new treaty caused some concern within the Department of Defense. The political adviser to Admiral Harry Felt, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific, wrote Robertson, expressing his concern that within the Defense Department ‘there is considerable unjustified suspicion of Kishi’s basic motives’. But he also noted some legitimate security concerns: ‘any restriction against use of Japanese bases for “hot” defense of Korea, Formosa and other areas beyond

\(^{77}\) Letter From the Ambassador to Japan (MacArthur) to Secretary of State Dulles, 18 April 1958, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII*, Document 11. In the original, the underlined text is italicised
\(^{78}\) Memorandum from MacArthur to Dulles and Robertson, Secret, 8 March 1958, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3969, 794.5/3-858. Emphasis added.
Japanese territory would change our entire strategic defensive position in Asia...We might well lose a war in Asia before it would reach Japanese territory’. Trying to strike a middle ground between the interests of Defense and State, the political adviser concluded by noting that ‘We need to remind ourselves rather frequently that a treaty is not worth much more than the actual mutuality to which the agreement only gives expression’.  

But Defense continued to object to the prospect of a new treaty. In a telegram to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Admiral Felt wrote that the US could accept the idea of consultation with Japan, but that ‘U.S. cannot accept any Japanese veto over U.S. operations which U.S. considers essential to its security commitments’. For Admiral Felt, the US mustn’t agree to any new treaty which required ‘Japanese consent to the use of U.S. Forces or bases in Japan to support operations elsewhere in the Far East which...are consonant with the security interests of Japan (as determined by the U.S.’. This is a remarkable position: in Felt’s view, it was America’s responsibility decide Japan’s security interests.

MacArthur continued to argue that such arrangements were no longer possible, and that attempts to maintain America’s privileges in Japan would have calamitous consequences. MacArthur assessed that if the US tried ‘to exercise the so-called “right” to use our military forces in Japan...without first seeking Japanese consent...not only would our whole security relationship with Japan collapse but Japanese Govt would undoubtedly take effective steps to inhibit any further use of our bases in Japan. Whether we like it or not, this is the reality of Japanese-US relations today’. When MacArthur met with Dulles and Robertson in September, he told them that if the US ‘did not act quickly the situation would deteriorate. We would be faced with a formal request to refrain from

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80 Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 19 August 1958, in FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII, Document 22.
introducing nucleaurs and to refrain from operating out of our bases prior to Japanese approval’.82

As Michael Schaller notes, this State-Defense debate ‘resembled the civilian-military conflict that preceded the 1951 treaty’.83 At a joint State-Defense meeting, Defense officials outlined their concern that a new treaty would weaken regional defense arrangements. Though they acknowledged that a new treaty would merely place Japan on an equal footing to allies such as the United Kingdom, they felt that on the issue of base access ‘if we were to ask Japan we would be refused, while we would not be refused if we were to ask England’. Admiral Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations, specifically noted that the ‘idea of consultation...would stymie us in the Taiwan Straits’. MacArthur's reply was that the US ‘could not treat Japan differently from our other allies. If we did so, we would go out of business’, as the Japanese could simply 'close off the Japanese labor force and the utilities used by our bases'. MacArthur then went on to draw a critical distinction – while he felt that if there was ‘an attack on Taiwan, we would, no doubt, get the consent of the Japanese to use our bases there, but not if the attack were only against the off-shore islands’.84 In this meeting, MacArthur went further than in his previous assessments. Earlier, MacArthur had linked Japan’s entrapment concerns to the Taiwan Strait, but in this meeting he drew a careful distinction, and assessed that Tokyo’s fears centered on a conflict prompted by the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. According to MacArthur, Tokyo believed Formosa itself was worth fighting for, but the same could not be said for the offshore islands.

This distinction seemed to anger Burke, who ‘thought that we had better pull out of Japan if we could not count on her’. MacArthur again argued that the Japanese made a distinction between the offshore islands and other territories. ‘MacArthur said we could count on Japan for Korea, Taiwan and the Pescadores, but not for the offshore islands. However, this was academic’, as if the US did not negotiate a new treaty, and if Japan went neutral as a result, then ‘our military

83 Schaller, Altered States, p.138.
men could scratch South Asia. These other Asians would run foot races to Peiping’.\textsuperscript{85} Despite MacArthur’s advocacy, the JCS prepared another report which concluded that ‘there must be no obligation, implied or explicit, to grant Japan a veto power over the employment of U.S. forces’.\textsuperscript{86} Although it was Defense who were most vociferous in their comments, the importance of Japan to other security alliances in the Far East was not lost on the State Department. In an August 1958 cable to MacArthur, Dulles noted that ‘Moving ahead in security area in Japan will of course require very careful consideration including evaluation effects any action taken on other allies particularly in FE [Far East]. This aspect of problem presently under consideration here’.\textsuperscript{87}

Japan’s new Foreign Minister, Aiichiro Fujiyama, visited Washington in September 1958 to further discuss the possibility of alliance revision. In talks with Dulles, Fujiyama clarified Japan’s position: ‘when Japan was used as an operational base, it was desired that the Japanese Government be consulted, but when it was used for logistics or supplies the present basis was satisfactory’. Dulles, by this point convinced that a new treaty was necessary, agreed that discussions could commence in Tokyo, with MacArthur representing the United States.\textsuperscript{88}

The following day, Walter Robertson wrote Dulles with another draft treaty. Using a US-UK agreement as a template, Robertson suggested that the issue of consultation be covered in a statement that ‘The deployment of United States forces and their equipment into bases in Japan and the operational use of these bases in an emergency would be a matter for joint consultation by the Japanese

\textsuperscript{85} Memorandum of Conversation, 9 September 1958, in \textit{FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII, Document 24.}
\textsuperscript{87} Washington’s 206 to Tokyo, 31 July 1958, Secret, Limited Distribution, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 2579, 611.94/7-3158.
\textsuperscript{88} Memorandum of Conversation, 11 September 1958, in \textit{FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII, Document 26.} Packard argues that ‘it was no coincidence that Foreign Minister Fujiyama appeared in Washington with a new demand for treaty revision at the very time that the shelling of Quemoy and Matsu was in full progress’ (see Packard, \textit{Protest in Tokyo}, p.63). Packard’s argument is not inconsistent with the analysis present in this chapter, but as argued earlier, cable traffic and Shigemitsu’s 1955 mission to Washington suggest that Japan’s initial fears of entrapment were sparked by the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis seems to have refreshed these fears.
Government and the United States Government in light of the circumstances prevailing at the time’. On 29 September, Dulles authorised MacArthur to commence treaty negotiations with Tokyo, instructing him to pay close attention to the issue of consultation. Dulles noted that ‘Defense desires you raise with Kishi personally the importance we attach to the use of the facilities in Japan in the event of Communist aggression directed against another free Asian nation wherein Japan’s safety is threatened’. Dulles’ instructions demonstrate his awareness that although the US-Japan alliance required revision, changes could impact nearby US allies such as the Republics of Korea and China.

The alliance audience effect from January 1957 – September 1958

Kishi’s frank discussions with MacArthur, Dulles and Eisenhower in 1957 clearly show that Japan’s primary complaint with the 1951 Security Treaty was that the “rights” it afforded the US posed perilous entrapment risks for Japan. Ordinary Japanese people, as well as the political elite, feared that they would be dragged into a global conflict because of America’s hostile policy toward Communist China, and the presence of US forces in Japan. The State Department’s North Asia branch assessed that ‘Japan desires strongly to separate itself from the hostile aspects of United States policy toward China’. The most hostile aspect of America’s China policy in the 1950s was the US-ROC alliance and America’s threats to Communist China in the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises. When these aspects were discussed within the American Government, Ambassador MacArthur specifically noted Japan’s entrapment concerns centered on the offshore islands. MacArthur argued that if there was ‘an attack on Taiwan, we would, no doubt, get the consent of the Japanese to use our bases there, but not if the attack were only against the off-shore islands’. This evidence strongly supports hypothesis 1, which expects that a state will monitor its ally’s

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89 Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to Secretary of State Dulles, 12 September 1958, in FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII, Document 27. This formula was directly based upon a communiqué issued by President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill in 1952.


91 Memo from Martin to Parsons, 22 January 1958, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 2579, 611.94/1-2258.

behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability. Seen from Tokyo, America’s aggressive policies towards Communist China—manifested most clearly through the US-ROC alliance and US brinksmanship over the offshore islands—presented significant risks of entrapment and thus made America a less reliable ally.

Hypothesis 2 expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk, and the evidence analysed in this section strongly supports this hypothesis. Despite Dulles rebuffing Japan’s first attempt (in 1955) to negotiate a new treaty, Japanese policymakers were not dissuaded. Kishi’s discussions with MacArthur raised the profile of the issue, as the American Ambassador repeatedly explained Tokyo’s position to the State Department. When Kishi visited the US in 1957, he was able to secure an American acknowledgement that the 1951 treaty ‘was designed to be transitional in character and not in that form to remain in perpetuity’. Japan’s efforts for a new treaty, though not yet successful, support hypothesis 2.

Finally, the third hypothesis of the alliance audience framework expects the possibility of alliance interdependence to affect American policy calculations: it expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. This was clearly on the mind of many Defense officials, who were concerned that if Japan could veto American military action launched from bases in Japan, then this would undermine US alliances with Korea, Nationalist China, and the Philippines. Dulles knew that modification of the US-Japan alliance would have important regional effects, and wrote that ‘Moving ahead in security area in Japan will of course require very careful consideration including evaluation effects any action taken on other allies particularly in FE [Far East]’.94

93 United States Government, Department of State Bulletin, 8 July 1957, p.52.
October 1958 - January 1960

The treaty negotiations

As discussions commenced in Tokyo, the treaty area was a critical point of negotiation. It was agreed that the treaty area of the new alliance would not include the Ryukyu or Bonin Islands (known as the “Article III islands”), and that Japan would not be required to defend these areas if they came under attack. This arrangement meant that while the US was not obliged to consult with Japan about how it used forces and bases on Okinawa, or about whether nuclear weapons were stationed there, neither was Japan obligated to support an American defence of these islands. The exclusion of the Article III islands from the treaty area created an important geographic loophole to the idea of a Japanese veto over American military action. It meant that if American military action was launched from Okinawa, and if this resulted in Okinawa being attacked, then Japan would be able to avoid being dragged into its defence (and, presumably, into a wider conflict).

As MacArthur viewed it, the exclusion of Okinawa and other Ryukyu islands was of ‘very substantial advantage to us... (Incidentally the ChiNats and ROK will also be much happier if Ryukyus are not included). In short, the exclusion of the Ryukyu Islands from the treaty area maintained America’s ability to launch military action from Okinawa without Tokyo’s approval. This allowed the US to reassure the ROC and ROK that a new US-Japan alliance would not impede

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95 This name is derived from Article III of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which gave the United States administrative rights over the Ryukyus and Bonins. The Ryukyu Islands group is comprised of the Osumi, Tokara, Amami, Okinawa and Sakishima Islands. See Swenson-Wright, Unequal Allies, p.111.
America’s ability to uphold its other defence commitments. For Japan, it allowed the quarantining of entrapment risks on to the island of Okinawa.99

When the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis began in August 1958, further evidence emerged to support the proposition that Japan’s entrapment fears focussed on the offshore islands. At the sixth meeting of the Japan-America Security Committee, Fujiyama had privately affirmed Japan’s interest in Korean security, saying that Korea was a ‘vital strategic position with respect [to] Japanese security’. In contrast, and although Japan viewed the current tensions in the Taiwan Strait with ‘great concern’, Fujiyama said that Japan trusted that the ‘US which bears great responsibility for maintaining peace in area will act in best interests of free nations’.100 In a September meeting with foreign correspondents in Tokyo, Fujiyama publicly connected Japan’s desire for treaty revision with the situation over Quemoy and Matsu, noting that Tokyo desired ‘that adjustments include provision for consultation between US and Japan in event US desires use bases here in connection with hostilities elsewhere, such as [the] current situation on [the] offshore islands’.101 Japanese leaders continued to refer—often obliquely, but sometimes specifically—to the entrapment risks posed by Quemoy and Matsu. Schaller notes this accurately reflected Japanese public opinion, which feared that the US would attempt to revise the treaty ‘to obligate Japan to intervene in the Taiwan Strait’.102 Internal correspondence within the State Department also noted that ‘a skilful US disengagement from the offshores would probably diminish Japanese fears of the dangers resulting from a military alignment with the US’.103

99 Another issue, which was subject to political debate in Tokyo, was that if the new alliance covered the Article III islands, then this could effectively create a “NEATO” (Northeast Asia Treaty Organisation). This fear was due to the fact that Article III islands were mentioned in the US-ROC and US-ROK treaties. This would mean that Japan runs the risk of becoming entangled in hostilities involving the GRC or ROK if the Ryukyus and Bonins..., were included in the treaty area’. This quote is from Tokyo’s 583 to Washington, 25 November 1958, Confidential, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3969, 794.5/11-2558. See also Tokyo’s 815 to Washington, 26 January 1959, Official Use Only, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/1-2659.


101 Tokyo’s 507 to Washington, 2 September 1958, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 2579, 611.94/9-258.

102 Schaller, Altered States, p.139.

103 Memorandum from Lacey to Cumming, 29 October 1958, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3957, 794.00/10-2958.
The conduct of the treaty negotiations further supports the argument that Japan's entrapment fears were primarily motivated by America's commitments to Taiwan. In September 1951, an agreement known as the "Acheson-Yoshida notes" had committed Japan to 'permit and facilitate the support in and about Japan' of 'members of the United Nations...engaged in any United Nations action in the Far East'.\(^{104}\) In practice, these notes committed Japan—logistically, at least—to supporting the American effort in the Korean War. But in 1958, the Japanese Foreign Office wanted to know if these notes would apply to any future UN action in the Far East. Tokyo's preferred interpretation was that these notes applied only to the Korean conflict. MacArthur assessed that Japanese officials 'appeared troubled not by obligation to support UN forces in event of resumption of Korean hostilities but by what they thought might be our notion of advance Japanese commitment to give support automatically to any and all future UN actions in Far East'.\(^{105}\) It seems that Tokyo was trying to create further room to manoeuvre, by asserting that it would not be compelled to support a UN-endorsed defence of the offshore islands (if this ever came about).

This effort, as well as MacArthur's earlier assessment that Japan would allow the operational use of bases for a defence of Korea or Formosa—but not the offshore islands—provide further evidence as to the exact nature of Japan's entrapment concerns. Firstly, Tokyo was willing to contribute, through the operational use of bases on Japanese soil, to the defence of South Korea. Japan considered that preventing Communist domination of the Korean Peninsula—sometimes referred to as a "dagger pointing at the heart of Japan"—was a key national interest. Likewise, the preservation of Taiwan as an anti-Communist bastion was considered to be important to Japanese security. What was not important, however, was the fate of Taiwan's offshore islands. In November 1958, Fujiyama made this clear to MacArthur. In a discussion of the treaty area, which Fujiyama described as the 'most critical point of the treaty revision', he noted that the Japanese Government could not support the inclusion of the Ryukyu or Bonin Islands in the treaty. He listed several reasons as to why this was a political

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104 Acheson-Yoshida Notes, 8 September 1951.
impossibility, and one of these was the fact that if these islands were included in the treaty, and ‘if US and Nationalist China became engaged in hostilities with Communist China over Quemoy and Matsu the US would probably be obliged to use Okinawa as a base to attack Communist forces. This might lead to an attack on Okinawa by Communist China which, by the terms of the new treaty, would bring Japan into the conflict’. Because America’s free use of bases in Okinawa was essential to fulfilling its security obligations to other allies in Asia, had the treaty included the Article III islands it would have practically, if not legally, brought ‘Japan into [a] multilateral security treaty with Republic of China, ROK and the Philippines’.106

As they considered the regional implications of a new treaty, US intelligence analysts assessed that Japan’s willingness to allow US forces to conduct combat operations from bases in Japan would depend on Tokyo’s interests in any given scenario. A December 1958 National Intelligence Assessment stated that Japan would ‘consent to the use of US bases in Japan for the launching of air attacks, nuclear or otherwise, against targets on the mainland of Asia only if Japanese leaders were convinced that Japan itself was directly threatened’. If South Korea was attacked, ‘it is likely that the Japanese Government would be convinced that Japan itself was directly threatened and would agree to non-nuclear attacks on targets in Korea’. If the US was involved in the defense of Korea, Taiwan or Southeast Asia, analysts believed that Japan ‘would consent to the use of US bases for staging, supply, and maintenance support...[but] would probably place limitations on such use of the bases, the extent of which would depend upon...the importance of the threatened area to Japan’s security...and the possibility of a retaliatory attack on Japan itself’.107

A secret arrangement for the defence of Korea confirms that Japan’s entrapment concerns were specific to the Taiwan Strait

In May 1959 the Acheson-Yoshida notes were discussed again, but this time Japan seemed to be placing further limits on the support it would provide US forces in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Japan’s view was that because the Acheson-Yoshida notes accompanied the 1951 Security Treaty, they would need to be reaffirmed, or new notes exchanged, when a new security treaty was signed. MacArthur thought this should be done through another exchange of diplomatic notes, and Fujiyama agreed. However, Fujiyama also told MacArthur that Japan’s interpretation of the 1951 agreement was that Japan would provide logistical support, but that bases in Japan would not be available for combat operations without prior consultation.108 This was the first time in the treaty negotiations that Japan had signalled that such a restriction would apply to operations in the defence of Korea. In attempting to get US concurrence of this interpretation, Japan was trying to exercise full authority over US bases in Japan (with the exception of those on the Article III Islands).

Japan’s position on the Acheson-Yoshida notes alarmed the State and Defense departments. A joint cable to MacArthur noted that it was ‘highly desirable to preserve notes particular with respect renewal Korean hostilities’. Washington’s position was forceful: ‘We are thus not prepared [to] accept or acknowledge in any way unilateral GOJ [Government of Japan] interpretation’.109 In his reply, MacArthur wrote that ‘both Kishi and Fujiyama have made it forcefully and unequivocally clear that if hostilities were to break out in Korea whether or not security treaty and related agreements are revised, their interpretation of their commitment under Acheson-Yoshida notes would be as set forth [earlier]...Their interpretation has nothing to do with entry into force of new security treaty since they have made clear that it applies to situation now’.110 MacArthur was

110 Telegram From the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, 10 June 1959, in FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII, Document 72.
patiently pushing back against Dulles’ conception of “paper rights”, which was again clashing with the new reality in Japan.

Ambassador MacArthur believed that the US had little choice but to accept Japan’s position. He wrote that if the US refused to accept this interpretation of the Acheson-Yoshida notes and ‘reserved [our] right to launch direct combat operations from Japanese bases without consultation’, then ‘we would shortly be told that our position flatly contradicted spirit of new era of equal partnership…and that we could either agree to consult or get out’. For MacArthur, acceptance of Japan’s interpretation would actually only be an acknowledgement of the status quo. MacArthur argued that if hostilities broke out in Korea, and if the US response ‘deliberately committed Japan to an act of belligerency without even consultation, we would be out of business here within a matter of hours’.

The possibility that bases in Japan could be made unavailable for the defence of Korea was of grave concern to Defense. The JCS argued that this

would result in further reduction in military effectiveness of US forces in Japan, which has already been drastically reduced by those provisions of new Security Treaty, which require consultation prior to launching of combat operations…Joint Chiefs of Staff strongly recommend that every effort be made to obtain private assurances from GOJ which would provide that, in event hostilities recur in Far East, Japanese would facilitate and support any United Nations action in same manner and under same condition as obtained during last period of hostilities….if above-mentioned assurances cannot be obtained, Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that decrease of military effectiveness of US forces in Japan would require serious consideration of their withdrawal.\textsuperscript{112}

This threat—coming so late in the treaty negotiations—was upsetting even to State officials in Washington, who cabled MacArthur that they were ‘embarrassed to transmit to you the message from Defense’. The Acting Secretary of State cabled MacArthur ‘I personally am averse to treaties saying one thing and private assurances saying another. Of course it would be helpful if

\textsuperscript{111} Telegram From the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, 10 June 1959, in \textit{FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol XVIII}, Document 72.

\textsuperscript{112} Washington’s 11885 to Tokyo, 19 June 1959, Secret, Limited Distribution, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/6-1959.
the Japanese would agree to put action in Korea in a different category than action in the Far East in general'.

MacArthur replied, arguing that the JCS had misunderstood his point. Regardless of the legal status of the Yoshida-Acheson notes, Japan had already decided that they would not allow US forces to launch attacks from bases in Japan without prior consultation. He savaged the JCS proposal ‘that we go to the Japanese and say that we expect them to facilitate and support, without any consultation, any military combat actions the UN may take at any future time...any such proposal will...be categorically rejected by Kishi’. MacArthur had convinced the State Department to abandon the “paper rights” of the 1951 Security Treaty, but some in the Defense Department were determined to preserve as much freedom of action as possible.

Dulles—perhaps still nursing his grudge about the pace of Japan’s rearmament and its unwillingness to play a great role in Far Eastern defence—had some sympathy for the Defense Department’s perspective. He cabled MacArthur, stating that the JCS were

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\text{convinced that our security position in Northeast Asia would be jeopardized if UN is not able to respond to renewal of Communist aggression in Korea by any military actions deemed appropriate and necessary without first consulting with Government of Japan. Requirement to consult first...would, in military judgement, seriously risk our ability to contain Communist attack in Korea and could, in fact, lead to loss not only of Korean peninsula but also place Japan in precarious situation...[you are to] take up Acheson-Yoshida matter with Kishi personally and stress to him in strongest possible terms vital security considerations involved including Japan’s own security.}
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Dulles also noted that the US was ‘prepared to seek exception to consultation requirement only for Korea’. It is possible that Dulles adopted this approach because he suspected that Japan would refuse any such agreement if it applied to Taiwan or the offshore islands. By mid-1959, perhaps Dulles had realised that

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113 Washington’s 12337 to Tokyo, Secret, No Distribution, 20 June 1959, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/6-2059.
115 Washington’s 14727 to Tokyo, 24 June 1959, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/6-2459.
116 Washington’s 14727 to Tokyo, 24 June 1959, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/6-2459.
Japan’s entrapment concerns applied predominantly to the situation in the Taiwan area, and not on the Korean Peninsula. His instructions to MacArthur were clear: the US needed an assurance from Tokyo that if the Korean war restarted, Japan ‘will continue to facilitate and support, without need for prior consultation, UN action in Korea’. But a similar demand was not made for Formosa and the offshore islands. MacArthur conveyed Dulles’ position to Kishi and Fujiyama, arguing that if America were unable to respond instantly to an act of aggression because of the need to consult with Tokyo, then this could result in the ‘loss of the entire Korea peninsula, thus placing Japan in a most precarious position’. However, he also ‘stressed that USG [United States Government] is entirely willing to subject other military combat operations of US armed forces initiated from Japanese bases to consultation under the agreed formula’.

Kishi replied that although the US ‘“proposal” raised very serious problems, he and Fujiyama would do their utmost to try to find solution with which both the US and GOJ could live’.

While the Kishi Government shared America’s concern about South Korean security, they believed it was ‘not feasible to have explicit public exception to application of new consultation formula’. Instead, Kishi and Fujiyama suggested that immediately after the treaty was signed, both nations could publicly exchange notes on the issue of support during a Korean contingency, with the Japanese note stating that the ‘Government of Japan will, in the prior consultation, favorably consider consenting to the use of facilities and areas in Japan for military combat operations...in case of a resumption of the attack against the United Nations forces in Korea’.

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117 Washington’s 18314 to Tokyo, 30 June 1959, Confidential, Limited Distribution, Personal for Ambassador, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/6-2659.
118 Tokyo’s 43 to Washington, 6 July 1959, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/7-659.
119 Tokyo’s 95 to Washington, 10 July 1959, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3970, 794.5/7-1059.
However, a secret agreement would go far beyond this public commitment for favorable consideration. It was agreed that at the first meeting of a new US-Japan Security Consultative Committee (SCC), the US and Japan would consult about America's ability to respond instantly, from Japanese bases, to any Communist attack against South Korea. Such a contingency would comply with America's obligations ‘by virtue of consultation that had already technically taken place under agreed formula’. MacArthur’s advice to Washington was that he did ‘not believe we are going to be able to get anything better than something along lines he proposes...Kishi believes...to remain in power, [he] must insist that principle of consultation should apply across the board’.

The exact wording of the secret agreement, which would become known as the ‘Korea Minute’, was negotiated in detail. Eventually, it was agreed that at the first meeting of the SCC (which would be held on the day that the new treaty was signed), MacArthur would discuss the importance of South Korea's security and request ‘the views of the Japanese Government regarding the operational use of bases in Japan in the event of an exceptional emergency’. Fujiyama would reply that ‘in the event of an emergency resulting from an attack against the United Nations forces in Korea, facilities and areas in Japan may be used for such military combat operations as need be undertaken immediately’. With this sly arrangement, America’s ability to defend Korea from bases in Japan was affirmed and the integrity of the public consultation formula maintained.

The arrangement codified in the secret Korea Minute is further evidence that Japan’s entrapment concerns were specific to the situation in the Taiwan Strait. If Tokyo had feared entrapment in possible conflicts on both the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, then it is very unlikely it would have agreed to the conditions of the secret Korea Minute. That Japan was willing to make this vital exception for Korea supports the argument—evidenced by Japanese support for the Korean War effort, covered in Chapter 2—that Tokyo believed it

had a significant interest in South Korea's security. However, the same could not be said for the ROC's offshore islands. Rattled by America's willingness to threaten the use of nuclear weapons over the offshore islands in 1955, Tokyo slowly but steadily worked to minimise its involvement in future Taiwan Strait emergencies.

Other authors have emphasised the importance of domestic politics in prompting demands for a new treaty, but this analysis suggests that another factor has, to date, not been adequately appreciated. The evidence presented here is circumstantial, but significant and compelling. The end result of Japan's efforts to rewrite the security treaty—a revised alliance which effectively mitigated mainland Japan's entrapment risks in Taiwan Strait contingencies—is not adequately explained only by the domestic politics lens. Japan's entrapment concerns neatly explain not only why a new treaty was necessary, but also why it took the form that it did.

The alliance audience effect from October 1958 – January 1960

The negotiations for a new security treaty support the hypotheses of the alliance audience framework. A new treaty was necessary due to Japan's entrapment concerns, which persisted from 1955 until they were mitigated in the new 1960 treaty. A new formula on consultation ensured that Japan had the right to veto American military action launched from bases in mainland Japan. But the fact that Japan was willing to allow a secret exception—for military action to defend Korea—supports the contention that Tokyo was especially concerned about the risks of entrapment into a conflict across the Taiwan Strait. If Tokyo was concerned about entrapment more broadly, then it would have been unlikely to agree to the secret Korea Minute. The evidence presented suggests that Japan's entrapment fears prompted efforts to negotiate a revision of the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty, and this is a strong data point of support for hypotheses 1 (which expects that a state will monitor its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability) and 2 (which
expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk).

Hypothesis 3 expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. Thus, in this case, hypothesis 3 would anticipate that America’s behaviour in negotiations for a new US-Japan alliance would be influenced by the possibility of these negotiations affecting other allies such as Nationalist China and South Korea. But the early exclusion of Okinawa from the treaty area reduced this likelihood. Excluding Okinawa meant that the US would maintain full use of its bases there: no Japanese approval was necessary for the US to launch military missions—perhaps for the defence of Formosa or the offshore islands—from Okinawa. Accordingly, Ambassador MacArthur noted that the exclusion of Okinawa from the treaty area would be of ‘very substantial advantage’ to the United States, and that ‘the ChiNats and ROK will also be much happier if Ryukyus are not included’ in the treaty area.\(^{123}\) This comment suggests that MacArthur expected South Korea and Nationalist China to be monitoring the progress and outcome of US-Japan alliance negotiations, and that an arrangement which preserved America’s military autonomy in Okinawa—unconstrained by a Japanese veto—would be useful in reassuring these allies of America’s security reliability. Though this evidence provides only limited support for hypothesis 3, Chapter 6 shows that when Okinawa did finally revert to Japanese administration, these changes were of immense interest to the ROC and ROK.

**Chapter conclusion**

When Prime Minister Kishi visited Washington in January 1960, he signed a treaty that dramatically reduced the risk of Japan’s entrapment into a war over the offshore islands. It is correct that Japan had made significant concessions to the United States: the US maintained full rights in Article III Islands like Okinawa,

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and could use other Japanese bases to respond immediately to North Korean aggression on the Peninsula. But the content of the final agreement supports the argument that Japanese perceptions of American reliability were primarily influenced by America’s behaviour toward the Republic of China, and that Tokyo’s fears of entrapment were focussed on the offshore islands.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 expect that American conduct toward the ROC would be observed by Japan and, in turn, these observations would influence Japan’s alliance behaviour. The evidence considered in this chapter supports these hypotheses. While many secondary accounts of the alliance revisions commence in 1957, an examination of relevant archival evidence has revealed that Japan’s goals were remarkably consistent across the 1955-1960 period. Very shortly after the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, in which Tokyo’s fears of entrapment were first ignited, Japan commenced efforts to revise the alliance in a way that would reduce the risk of entrapment. From 1955 onwards, Japanese approaches to America focussed on obtaining some method for “consultation” which would allow Japan to veto military operations of which it did not approve. The eventual fruit of Japan’s efforts was an alliance that dramatically reduced the risk of Japan being entrapped into a war with Communist China. If Sino-American tensions did escalate, perhaps over the ROC’s offshore islands, then Tokyo could veto US military missions from Japan’s main islands. Though the US could still respond from bases in the Ryukyu Island chain, this meant that any Communist retaliation would very likely be limited to Okinawa. Although Japan had not completely eliminated all of its entrapment risks, it had essentially quarantined them on to Okinawa: a small territory far away from the main Japanese islands.

As hypothesis 3 expects, American officials thought that the revision of the US-Japan alliance would be observed by other allies—especially the ROC and ROK—and this belief influenced their negotiations with Japan. In December 1956, Marshall Green wrote that if a new treaty required the US to withdraw from Japan, then Korea would believe this decision to ‘have decidedly adverse affects [sic]. It would remove the present logistic and support base for US forces in Korea and...would raise the spectre of disastrous delays in reinforcing the ROK’s
position in the event of renewed hostilities'.\textsuperscript{124} Green noted that the same logic
applied to Nationalist China, and cautioned that ‘A great deal might be read into
such decisions about basic shifts in US policy [in the US-Japan alliance]...our
actions must be neither convulsive nor without full consultation and
consideration of world-wide consequences’.\textsuperscript{125} Dulles was aware of this
interdependence, and cautioned in August 1958 that ‘Moving ahead in security
area in Japan will of course require very careful consideration including
evaluation effects any action taken on other allies particularly in FE [Far East].
This aspect of problem presently under consideration here’.\textsuperscript{126}

These warnings were issued before the treaty negotiations began in earnest.
However, once Japan indicated its willingness to exclude the Ryukyu Islands
from the treaty area, this problem took on lesser importance. Because the
United States could maintain its freedom of action for bases on Okinawa, and
because Japan was willing to allow the use of other bases for logistics support,
the new US-Japan treaty did not jeopardise America’s capability to defend the
ROC or ROK. One result of the new alliance, however, was to place far greater
importance on Okinawa: to maintain Washington’s security commitments to the
ROC and ROK, it was now absolutely essential that American use of Okinawa was
not impeded. As the next chapter shows, Okinawa’s eventual reversion to
Japanese administration was another important instance of the alliance audience
effect at work.

\textsuperscript{124} Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3968,
794.5/12-2156.
\textsuperscript{125} Memo from Parsons to Sebald, 21 December 1956, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1955-1959, Box 3968,
794.5/12-2156.
\textsuperscript{126} Washington’s 206 to Tokyo, 31 July 1958, Secret, Limited Distribution, NARA, CDF, 1955-
1959, Box 2579, 611.94/7-3158.
**Dramatis Personae – Chapter 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiichi Aichi</td>
<td>Foreign Minister of Japan (from December 1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bundy</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific (until May 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Ching-kuo</td>
<td>Republic of China Defense Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Kai-shek</td>
<td>President of the Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chow Shu-kai</td>
<td>Republic of China’s Ambassador to the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Green</td>
<td>Ambassador to Indonesia (until May 1969), Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific (from May 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon Johnson</td>
<td>President of the United States of America (until January 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Kissinger</td>
<td>National Security Adviser to President Nixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter McConaughy</td>
<td>American Ambassador to the Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeo Miki</td>
<td>Foreign Minister of Japan (until December 1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Nixon</td>
<td>President of the United States of America (from January 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Chung-hee</td>
<td>President of the Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Rogers</td>
<td>Secretary of State (from January 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Rusk</td>
<td>Secretary of State (until January 1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisaku Sato</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takezo Shimoda</td>
<td>Japanese Ambassador to the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kei Wakaizumi</td>
<td>Informal adviser to, and unofficial envoy of, Japanese Prime Minister Sato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei Tao-Ming</td>
<td>Foreign Minister of the Republic of China</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 6

Negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa, 1967-1969

The task of the American negotiators, therefore, was to assure the continued effectiveness of American military capabilities. It would not be desirable to signal to a friend or foe an impairment of American power to cope with or deter threats against those to whom America had given a commitment. Credibility was at stake.¹

Armin Meyer
US Ambassador to Japan

The negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administration were, in many respects, similar to those for the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960. The persistence of the US-Japan alliance depended on America’s willingness to grant Japan a vital concession, and Japan’s willingness to assume a more active role in supporting America’s security strategy in Asia. Reversion was completed in 1972, but the critical negotiations for this arrangement occurred between 1967 and 1969. This chapter does not examine this negotiation process in minute detail, but rather assesses the regional reactions to the possibility of a change in Okinawa’s status.² As described in Chapter 5, the 1960 revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty granted the US full rights to use bases in Okinawa without prior consultation - the US could conduct whatever operations it liked, for any purpose, without first seeking Tokyo’s permission.

Accordingly, the 1960 treaty revision did not impair the defence value that US forces on Okinawa provided to other US allies such as Korea and Taiwan. As a result, these allies did not object to the revision of the treaty. However, because the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administration could restrict America’s ability to use bases on the island, it had the potential to significantly impede America’s ability to defend Korea and Taiwan.

¹ Meyer, Assignment: Tokyo, p.33.
As the alliance audience effect framework expects, Korea and Taiwan closely observed the US-Japan negotiations between 1967 and 1969 (hypothesis 1). When they felt their interests were not receiving sufficient consideration, and that this was suggestive of US unreliability, they didn’t hesitate to lobby both the US and Japanese governments and remind them of the vital role that Okinawa played in Asian security (hypothesis 2). In turn, this alliance interdependence had a significant impact on US policy (hypothesis 3): it influenced the US-Japan negotiation process, determined the US’ basic bargaining posture, and prompted Washington to reach out to Seoul and Taipei with a ‘hand-holding operation’ to reassure them that the reversion of Okinawa would not damage America’s reliability as an ally.³

This chapter contains four sections. The first, covering the January – November 1967 period, describes the initial tensions over Okinawa within the US-Japan relationship. These were observed by the Republic of China (ROC) and, to a lesser degree, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and these countries expressed concern that their security interests could be jeopardised by reversion. The second section, examining the December 1967 – December 1968 period, describes efforts by the Japanese Government to prepare domestic political sentiment for a reversion deal that permitted the US to maintain the utility of its Okinawan bases. It was also a period of uncertainty for Japan, as sudden changes in US policy generated fears of both abandonment and entrapment. At this time, America’s unwillingness to respond forcefully to several North Korean provocations caused Seoul to doubt US reliability, and so observing the Okinawa issue was comparatively less important for South Korea. The third section covers the January – August 1969 period, in which preliminary reversion negotiations took place. Concerned that the ROK’s security had already been damaged Washington’s unreliability, Seoul was extremely worried that Okinawan reversion could further weaken their strategic situation. Accordingly, the ROK government attempted to mitigate the risk of a reversion deal that would restrict US rights on Okinawa. The fourth section, covering the August –

November 1969 period, examines how the final agreement—encapsulated in a joint communiqué and a speech from the Japanese Prime Minister—took into account America’s other alliance commitments. Because they knew that Seoul and Taipei would be watching, America made significant efforts to reassure the ROK and ROC.

There are several excellent histories of the reversion negotiations, but they focus almost exclusively on the issues as they affected US-Japan relations.4 This chapter does not present a full history of the negotiations, but instead looks closely at those aspects that generated concern in other US alliances. It draws heavily on primary sources from the National Archives and Record Administration. Although many documents from the late 1960s remain classified, some—dealing mainly with the issue of nuclear weapons—have been declassified in recent years.5

January – November 1967

The Okinawa issue grows claws, and concerns other US allies

Ural Alexis Johnson became the US Ambassador to Japan in late 1966. As he began his tenure, he believed that ‘Okinawa was the single biggest job’.6 The Japanese Prime Minister, Eisaku Sato, was scheduled to visit Washington in November 1967 for talks with US President Lyndon Johnson, and this summit ‘imposed a welcome pressure on negotiations’ regarding Okinawa.7 Japanese agitation for the return of administrative rights over the Ryukyu Islands—the Okinawa and Bonin Island chains—had intensified shortly after the 1960

5 Over 200 additional documents were requested under the Freedom of Information Act, but at the time of writing these have not yet been declassified.
revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty. Once Japan had gained the right to prior consultation for bases in “homeland” Japan, the next logical step was for this right to be obtained for the Ryukyus as well. In the 1960s, American administration and control of Okinawa was the last vestige of the 1951 Security Treaty. Okinawa connected two discrete elements of US foreign policy—the US-Japan relationship and the escalation of the war in Vietnam—in a way that demanded political action in Tokyo. Bases on Okinawa were regularly used to launch air attacks against North Vietnam, despite the Japanese public’s opposition. In this way, according to Edwin Reischauer (US Ambassador to Japan from 1961 – 1966), from late 1963 the Vietnam war ‘cast a dark shadow over all Japanese-American relations’.

With many Japanese dissatisfied about continued American control of Okinawa, US officials knew that pressure for the return of administrative rights would increase in the lead-up to 1970, when the ten-year term of the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty would expire. This was expected to be an important opportunity for those in Japan opposed to the treaty and the US-Japan relationship more broadly. According to the US Embassy in Tokyo, 1970 ‘assumed the proportions of a mythic calendar beast’ and only effective action on Okinawa would deprive it of its ‘claws’. In 1967, the State and Defense departments agreed that the Okinawa issue required resolution, but only once security tensions in Asia subsided. Morton Halperin, an official in the Defense Department, has described how a task force was established in 1966 with the ‘explicit premise’ that ‘reversion would not occur until the “sky was blue,” that is, until there were no clouds in the sky, no threats to peace and security in Asia’. In practice, this meant that the US wanted Okinawa’s reversion to occur after the end of the Vietnam War.

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8 This “homeland” nomenclature is often used to refer to all of the Japanese islands except those covered by Article III of the 1951 Security Treaty – i.e. all islands except for the Ryukyu and Bonin Island chains.
9 Reischauer, My Life Between Japan and America, p.257.
10 Tokyo’s Airgram 2109 to Washington, 8 October 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 12-1 JAPAN, Box 2245.
But these desires could not trump political reality in Japan. The mythically beastly nature of 1970, with the possibility that popular sentiment in Japan might complicate a renewal of the alliance treaty, meant that demands for Okinawa’s reversion could not be easily dismissed. Like the situation almost a decade earlier, some State officials insisted that ‘the ultimate risk was setting off a series of events in Japan which would jeopardize the very existence of the security treaty’. But in 1967, the task force secretly concluded that if US bases on Okinawa were subjected to the same “prior consultation” principle as bases on homeland Japan, then the reversion of Okinawa—even if it involved ‘giving up the right to store nuclear weapons’ on the island—‘would not adversely affect our [American] security interests’, America had decided that it could afford a generous arrangement with Japan, but this position was kept carefully concealed in order to maximise Washington’s bargaining power with Tokyo.

However, the Republic of China was not so sanguine about the implications of a possible reversion to Japanese sovereignty. Taipei closely observed the America-Japan relationship for movement on the Okinawa issue. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Taipei had voiced concern to US Embassy officials that the status of Okinawa should not be determined solely by the United States and Japan, but rather by those allied powers that participated in the Potsdam and Cairo declarations. The ROC was so closely observing the US-Japan relationship that in March 1967, Taipei even complained to the United States about seemingly minor events: Prime Minister Sato had referred to the future reversion of Okinawa, there was an agreement between the US and Japan for Okinawan vessels to fly the Japanese flag, and American approval for Okinawan residents to be given Japanese passports. Finally, Japanese authorities began

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13 Halperin, ‘American Decision Making on Okinawa’, pp.54-55. See also Clapp, Managing an Alliance, Chapter 2.
communicating directly with Taipei about an Okinawan vessel, where such issues had previously been managed by the US Embassy in Taipei.\textsuperscript{15}

For the Government of the Republic of China (GRC), these minor issues created concern that US policy on Okinawa was shifting. ROC officials told the US Embassy in Taipei that because the status of the Ryukyus had been agreed at the San Francisco peace conference, any change in the island’s status required the agreement of the Peace Treaty's signatories.\textsuperscript{16} Taipei again raised its concerns, at a more senior level, on 15 May 1967. The ROC Foreign Minister, Wei Tao-Ming, told a visiting US official that ‘any US withdrawal accompanied by reversion to Japan would cause strategic and military problems’. Despite the US official promising that ‘we firmly intend to maintain US rights in Okinawa so long as East Asian security required it’, the ROC wasn’t reassured. Interestingly, the US official felt that the GRC’s ‘major motivation’ on this matter was ‘a desire to exercise some diplomatic leverage...They feel they have in this matter one of the very few opportunities to take the initiative in their relations with the US, and also with Japan’.\textsuperscript{17} Though the ROC’s historical ties to the Ryukyu Islands could explain their interest in Okinawa’s future status, subsequent events suggest that another reason for the GRC’s approach—the reason directly offered by Foreign Minister Wei—was that the ROC became worried about America security reliability.

With US officials seemingly unmoved by the GRC’s concerns, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Vice Minister called on the US Ambassador in Taipei, Walter McConaughy, to ‘remind us of previous [1953] US commitment to keep GRC informed of steps toward future disposition [of Okinawa] and to protest recent failures to consult’.\textsuperscript{18} Although the Vice Minister mentioned the ROC’s


\textsuperscript{16}Taipei's Airgram 639 to Washington, 24 March 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2456.

\textsuperscript{17}Taipei's Airgram 786 to Washington, 24 May 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2456.

\textsuperscript{18}Taipei's 3977 to Washington, 28 June 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2456.
‘historical relationship’ with Okinawa, he did not suggest that Taipei had any claim of ownership. Rather, he emphasized that ‘The Ryukyu Islands are closely related to the security of the East Asia and Pacific region’. Despite GRC officials explicitly noting their security concerns, US Embassy officers believed these ‘periodic GRC expressions of opinion’ on Okinawa ‘constitute chiefly an effort to maintain remnants of GRC status as full partner of US’. Nevertheless, Ambassador McConaughy recommended that if the US had indeed pledged to keep Taipei informed, then it should do so. McConaughy cautioned that the Republic of China’s President, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, displayed ‘sensitivity to any sign of US inattention to GRC… and in fact… orders for present demarche came from [the] Generalissimo himself’.

The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, instructed the US Embassy in Taipei to reply to the verbal demarche in writing. This response noted the ROC’s interest in ‘the security of East Asia and the Pacific region’ and explained that because of this, the US Government would ‘keep the [ROC’s Foreign] Ministry informed of developments regarding the status of the islands’. Noting that the issue of Okinawa might assume greater prominence in November, when Japanese Prime Minister Sato was scheduled to hold a summit with President Johnson, Secretary Rusk instructed the US Embassy in Taipei to brief the GRC ‘on developments concerning the future status of the Ryukyus at such time’.

While some State Department officials initially thought the GRC’s efforts a desperate attempt to cling to great power status, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) argued that though ‘face… plays a part’, realpolitik was of greater relevance. In a September 1967 assessment, an INR analyst wrote that the ROC’s ‘primary concern appears to be the possibility of a weakening of Taiwan’s security if the Ryukyus are returned to Japan and the US military bases there are

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dismantled...[GRC actions] probably indicate a desire at least to delay as long as possible any transfer of authority from the US to Japan’.21

The Johnson-Sato communiqué

In the lead-up to Prime Minister Sato’s visit to Washington in November 1967, the US Government decided that pressures for the reversion of Okinawa might be sated if administration of the Bonin Islands—which had far less military significance—could be handed over to Japan.22 Japanese officials were anxious for the return of all of the Ryukyus, not just the Bonins, but the US Government was unwilling to rush this process for fear of damaging its military capabilities in the Asia-Pacific. Ambassador Johnson told the Japanese Foreign Minister, Takeo Miki, that bases on Okinawa were a key ‘deterrent to aggression’, and that if US ‘freedom of action on Okinawa was reduced, this deterrent would be also’.23

In US-Japan discussions throughout 1967, US officials emphasised the importance of Okinawa’s regional defence role: Okinawa was relevant to America’s treaty alliances with Taiwan and Korea, and also to the ongoing war in Vietnam. As Schaller notes, ‘Bases on Okinawa were especially important to the air war in Vietnam...nearly three-fourths of the 400,000 tons of supplies required each month by American troops in Vietnam passed through’ Okinawa.24 So while US officials were willing to discuss the reversion of Okinawa, they had to balance this against preserving America’s ability to defend its allies and prosecute the Vietnam War. In August, Ambassador Johnson encouraged US officials to emphasize the

significance in regional sense of various Okinawa defense functions per se, on degradation overall graduated deterrent and war-fighting position if these functions could not be carried out from Okinawa, on importance of flexibility and availability full range of options in event needed, and in consequence on

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21 Intelligence Note 729, 12 September 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2456.
22 Clapp, Managing an Alliance, p.30.
24 Schaller, Altered States, p.196.
Like John Foster Dulles in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, US officials assumed that they needed to defend Vietnam in order to preserve credibility in the eyes of allies like Japan. But even pro-US leaders in Japan thought that the Vietnam War was a mistake. One US official argued that ‘if forced to choose “between a long war and cutting our losses [in Vietnam], the Japanese would go for the latter”’.26

In September 1967, Foreign Minister Miki visited Washington in preparation for Sato’s November visit. In a meeting with Secretary Rusk, Miki promised that he ‘did not under-estimate the important role of Okinawa in maintaining security in the Far East’. Rusk said that his Department was considering the Okinawa issue, but before any recommendation could be made the US Government would ‘wish to explore fully the significance of the base if the United States is to carry its responsibilities for the security of Japan and Korea’. Rusk explained that the United States was

*thinking seriously of the effect on third countries of any decision on Okinawa whilst Communist China continues its present attitude. For example, how would it affect the Republic of Korea, the Republic of China and the Philippines? Would such a step appear to be a drawing away of the U.S. presence and a reduction of United States commitments. He said the issue should be judged comprehensively and both nations should make a judgement as to what would be wise to do under the present circumstances.*27

Although Miki expressed his understanding of this regional role and his desire for US base access to continue unimpeled, from the US perspective Japan did not adequately appreciate the regional importance of Okinawa. In July 1967, during a meeting between Miki and Ambassador Johnson, Miki’s queries focussed on what the ‘minimum U.S. requirements’ were for Okinawa. Ambassador Johnson parried these questions by replying that this was not at issue, but rather that ‘it was necessary for GOJ [the Government of Japan] to decide what its interests were. GOJ generally knew what we were doing and could do out of Okinawa

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26 George Ball, as quoted in Schaller, *Altered States*, p.191.
under present circumstances and could itself see limitations that would be placed on U.S. if present security treaty...[was] applied to Okinawa’. Johnson voiced American concern about the consequences if Tokyo was placed in a position whereby, because it had not vetoed US combat operations from Okinawa, it had to accept political responsibility for such operations.28

This situation had eerie parallels with that of the late 1950s – Japanese officials were keen to amend their security relationship with the United States to better align with both their strategic and domestic political interests, but US officials were concerned about America’s ability to fulfil its commitments to other allies such as Korea and Taiwan. While Japan was still reluctant to publicly acknowledge the regional role of US bases in Japan, the United States was unwilling to return administration of Okinawa if doing so impaired Washington’s ability to defend Seoul or Taipei.

As Miki returned to Japan, reports of his talks with Rusk brought ‘attention to security considerations bound up with Okinawa reversion and must have been disappointing to any Japanese who were genuinely optimistic about early reversion’. However, conservative Japanese politicians saw America’s firm stance on reversion as an opportunity to ‘heighten Japanese awareness of security considerations. GOJ spokesmen...[explained] that security of Far East is as important to U.S. as “national sentiment” is to Japan’. The effect of the Rusk-Miki talks was to strongly downplay the prospects for reversion in the short-term. The US Embassy assessed that ‘In effect, Government spokesmen...are now telling people that U.S. position is tough because of U.S. security responsibilities in area and that reversion is something for future’. The US Embassy correctly predicted that the GOJ would try to increase the Japanese public’s ‘appreciation U.S. role in defense of area’ and also ‘hope for and expect U.S. willingness to cooperate in creating impression of modest but satisfactory progress toward reversion’.29 Japanese press accounts of the Rusk-Miki talks were very accurate,

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with the US Embassy noting that according to the Yomiuri newspaper, Rusk told Miki that the US doubted ‘Japan could support politically and psychologically the role of US bases in a reverted Okinawa in assuring the security of the ROK and GRC’.30

After Miki’s visit, the GOJ began to talk more frankly and publicly about Okinawa’s role in regional defence. The Director-General of the Japanese Defense Agency noted that it would be ‘subject for concern’ if Okinawa’s reversion ‘were to mean that the ability of US bases there to defend Japan and Far East was to be diminished’.31 By November, the State Department had noted ‘encouraging recognition by the GOJ of its regional responsibilities and recognition of the relationship between Ryukyus settlement and its own and broader regional security...GOJ public efforts to place Ryukyu issue on realistic security basis have been in right direction’. As US and Japanese officials worked out the details of the joint communiqué that would be issued at the conclusion of the Johnson-Sato summit, it was clear that while the US was willing to return the Bonin Islands in short order, Okinawa itself was a longer-term project.32

As the November 1967 Johnson-Sato summit approached, the GRC began to agitate over the possibility that their security interests might be harmed by a US-Japan deal. In September, when Prime Minister Sato visited Taipei, President Chiang Kai-Shek discussed the ROC’s interest in Okinawa, ‘underscoring [the] security importance of Okinawa and advising Japan to be patient in dealing with reversion issue’.33 In response, Sato emphasised Tokyo’s ‘appreciation of the security importance of U.S. bases’ on Okinawa.34 Before the Johnson-Sato

33Washington’s 66921 to Taipei and Tokyo, 9 November 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, XR POL 7 JAPAN, Box 2244. See also Taipei’s Airgram 258 to Washington, 6 October 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 15-1 JAPAN, Box 2246.
34Memo from Shoesmith to Bundy, 7 November 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, Lot Files, ROC, Container 4. See also Tokyo’s Airgram 364 to Washington, 9 December 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 7 CHINAT, Box 1983. Former Prime Minister Kishi made a visit to Taiwan in December 1967, and while commenting on this visit an ROC official indicated
summit, the ROC Ambassador to the United States, Chow Shu-kai, told the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, William Bundy, that he was under instructions to ‘reaffirm GRC concern for this problem and to convey hope that GOJ would not press too far and that present status of Okinawa would not be affected’. Bundy reassured Chow that the summit might produce ‘some new verbal formula relating to question of Okinawa but that this would not involve any change in status. He added that we would keep GRC informed of developments’. Bundy was true to his word, and when it was agreed that the Johnson-Sato communiqué would transfer administrative responsibility for the Bonin Islands from the US to Japan he telephoned Chow, before the issuance of the communiqué, to inform him that ‘agreement had been reached for return of Bonins and to give Chow the gist of communiqué statements on Okinawa’. Bundy also arranged for another State official to brief the GRC embassy once the communiqué was issued.

The Johnson-Sato communiqué, which was released on 15 November 1967, affirmed that the Bonin Islands would revert to Japanese control, and that negotiations would arrange for ‘the early restoration of these islands without detriment to the security of the area’. This wording is important: although the United States made a concession, it did so only with careful consideration to its regional security responsibilities. On Okinawa, the communiqué anticipated an agreement for reversion ‘within a few years’, but Sato also publicly ‘recognized that the United States military bases on these islands continue to play a vital role in assuring the security of Japan and other free nations in the Far East’.

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35 Washington’s 66921 to Taipei and Tokyo, 9 November 1967, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, XR POL 7 JAPAN, Box 2244.
36 State’s 71419 to Taipei, 18 November 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, XR POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2457. It seems that without knowing that Bundy’s call had occurred and that a briefing was scheduled, the US Embassy in Taipei recommended that ‘Department give GRC briefing on recent Sato talks in Washington including discussion on Okinawa and Bonins’. See Taipei’s 1410 to Washington, 17 November 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, XR POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2457.
37 Johnson-Sato Communiqué, 15 November 1967.
The reaction to the communiqué in Japan was not particularly positive – the idea that the reversion of Okinawa was contingent upon preserving its usefulness to the American military ranked domestic opinion. The return of the Bonins was welcomed, but the Japanese press worried about Tokyo’s ‘recognition role of Okinawa bases in Far East security’ and feared that ‘broader commitments might lie behind [the] public document’.38 One newspaper, Sohyo, stated that Sato ‘sacrificed Okinawa for the “so-called security of the Far East”’.39 Despite the GOJ’s initial efforts to educate the Japanese population on America’s security requirements for Okinawa, the regional security role of Okinawa remained something of a sore spot for the Japanese public.

The alliance audience effect from January – December 1967

Hypothesis 1 of the alliance audience framework expects that a state will monitor its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability. The events described above support this hypothesis: the ROC carefully observed developments within the US-Japan alliance and was concerned that this deal could jeopardise America’s use of bases on Okinawa, and thus reduce its capability to defend the ROC in a conflict with Communist China.

To mitigate this risk of unreliability, Taipei initiated discussions with the United States on Okinawa’s importance. Though some State Department officials initially perceived these overtures as efforts to maintain China’s international status, it soon became clearer that security concerns were paramount. Taipei’s efforts to glean more information from US officials, and its encouragement that the US not neglect its security interests in Okinawa, are clear evidence in support of hypothesis 2, which expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk. Beyond interactions with US officials, the ROC also moved to raise its concerns directly with the Japanese Government.

38 Tokyo’s 3414 to Washington, 7 November 1967, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 7 JAPAN, Box 2244.
Finally, hypothesis 3 expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. This was a clear influence on US behavior in this period: American officials repeatedly emphasised—both privately, to the Japanese, and in public, for the benefit of other observers—that any deal for the reversion of Okinawa would have to preserve the island’s regional security role. The US made clear that it could not hand administration back to Tokyo if doing so would jeopardise America’s ability to meet its defence commitments to the ROC and ROK.

Absent from the examined archival material was any evidence that the ROK observed, or was influenced by, developments in the US-Japan relationship throughout 1967. However, the ROK’s concerns increased, and became more apparent, throughout 1968 and 1969.

**December 1967 – December 1968**

**Tokyo moves to inculcate “defense-mindedness” in Japan**

Following the Johnson-Sato summit, the Japanese leadership knew that progress on Okinawa would require the retention of a substantial American military capability on the island, as well as some form of generous understanding concerning what operations these forces could undertake. These outcomes would be opposed by most of the Japanese public. On Sato’s return to Japan, the opposition Democratic Socialist Party questioned the Prime Minister on his intentions for Okinawa, insisting that he should commit to a “homeland level” reversion (whereby the prior consultation clause of the 1960 treaty would also apply to Okinawa). By refusing to give such guarantees, the US Embassy thought Sato ‘threw into clear relief the idea that Japanese decisions on post-reversion bases in Okinawa should be made on basis of national interest, not of ideological preconceptions’. In his remarks, Sato suggested that two options were feasible – an early reversion with US bases ‘accorded freedom of use’ for conventional
operations and the storage of nuclear weapons, or a postponed reversion at the "homeland level".40

The possibility that Okinawa hosted US nuclear weapons was a contentious issue, given Japan's three non-nuclear principles: that it would not manufacture nuclear weapons, possess them, or permit their entry into Japanese territory. Although the US maintained a policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons in any area or on any vessel, nuclear capable bombers and missiles were known to be stationed on Okinawa. One US concern with reversion was that if Japan's three non-nuclear principles were applied to Okinawa, general and graduated nuclear deterrence in Asia might be weakened. Japanese leaders were aware that US bases on Okinawa served a role in nuclear deterrence, and hoped that the advent of Polaris—a submarine-launched nuclear missile—would obviate the need to store nuclear weapons on Okinawa, but US military officers insisted that these missiles could not fully replace the nuclear weapons stored on Okinawa. Admiral Ulysses Sharp, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific (CINCPAC), told Sato in May 1967 that 'Okinawa remained very important even though Polaris has entered the picture, because Polaris represents the ultimate offensive while it is necessary to have a dual purpose capability in the Western Pacific to react to lower level situations and to provide for a graduated [nuclear] response'. While the Japanese public may not have appreciated or condoned the regional defence role of bases on Okinawa, Sato emphasised that he 'realized the importance of Okinawa as an “unsinkable battleship”'.41

American fears weren't the only concerns that Tokyo had to allay. In this period, the Japanese government continued its efforts to reassure the Republic of China that Taipei's interests would not be damaged by negotiations over Okinawa. In late 1967 the ROC's Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo, who was also President

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Chiang Kai-shek’s son, visited Japan, and was given ‘more specific reassurances on the Sato Government’s intentions vis-à-vis...Okinawan reversion’.42

Sato faced a daunting mission: knowing that the US would not allow for Okinawa’s reversion unless it maintained some freedom of use—and knowing that the ROC and ROK were closely observing negotiations—Sato had to convince the Japanese public that it was in their national interest for Okinawa to maintain its regional security role after reversion. After the Johnson-Sato summit, the Prime Minister ‘initiated a year of debate on “defense-mindedness” in Japan’, and ‘indicated that the Japanese people would have to consider the possibility...of a special status for the Okinawan bases allowing the continued presence of nuclear weapons’.43 The US Embassy reported these efforts approvingly, noting that they ‘clearly conveyed impression of Sato intention to lead public opinion to point where it would accept US bases in Okinawa with present freedoms’.44 Secretary Rusk believed that Sato understood what was required in the years ahead. In a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, Rusk wrote that ‘Sato understands...that, before reversion is possible, he must first assure Japan’s willingness...to permit us continued use of the Ryukyuan bases with our present rights largely unimpaired’.45

But Sato’s efforts on this front had to be managed very delicately. Convincing the Japanese public was not to be an easy or rapid process, and it was made more difficult by events in the region. In January 1968, a North Korean commando attack on South Korea’s Presidential Palace (known as the Blue House) was followed several days later by the capture of the USS Pueblo, a US Navy intelligence vessel. Japan’s response to these two events was extremely tepid, and US officials attributed this sentiment to a fear of entrapment. The State Department’s country director for Japan, Richard (Dick) Sneider, wrote that the

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43 Clapp, Managing an Alliance, p.31.
45 Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense, 5 January 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2457.
Japanese feared these events ‘could lead to broader hostilities...and greater risk of Japanese involvement in such hostilities...The emphasis, therefore, is on...endorsing U.S. restraint and efforts to negotiate’. Further, some Japanese politicians complained about the use of bases in Okinawa for B-52 raids against targets in the Vietnam War. According to Sneider, this left the ‘impression...that at the very time the U.S. was called upon to increase its efforts in Korea and Vietnam, Japanese pressures and grievances are only directed at us and not at the communists’. While Japan had provided some private support to Seoul after the Blue House raid, its public response left the impression ‘that Japan, despite its large and acknowledged stake in Korea, has its head in the sand, fearful of military involvement’.47

These sentiments were shared by Ambassador Johnson, who lamented Tokyo’s ‘unwillingness...to take anything approaching a forthright public stance on events in Korea’, but explained that this reticence was due to the fact that ‘Sato’s political position has been somewhat destabilized as result his efforts to develop a “defense consciousness” among the Japanese...he has not felt able to take a more forthright position on Korea’. While Japan provided some support to Korea in private, its unwillingness to do so publicly—and Tokyo’s apparent lack of gratitude for America’s security presence in Asia—inflamed Secretary Rusk. In a forthright cable (caveated as ‘literally eyes only for the Ambassador’), Rusk castigated Japan for ‘whining about Okinawa while we are losing several hundred killed each month [in Vietnam] on behalf of our common security in the Pacific’. Rusk wrote that ‘Surely the time has come for us to begin to resist attempts by the Japanese to erode our base in Okinawa on the grounds of Japanese “sensibilities”’.49 This resentment applied to the situations in both

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46 Memo from Sneider to Bundy, 12 February 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, Lot Files, Japan, Box 4. See also Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, Chapter 3.
Vietnam and Korea: some American officials felt that Japan didn’t appreciate the fact that the US and ROK were ‘defending Japan at the 38th parallel’.  

The United States strongly resented Japan’s lack of support for South Korea in these incidents, and President Johnson wrote to Prime Minister Sato in January 1968, encouraging him to ‘consider approaching the Soviet Union...[and] the North Koreans...to impress on them the seriousness of the situation’. In Tokyo, Ambassador Johnson approved of this stronger approach toward Japan. He wrote to Sneider: ‘the stakes for us in Vietnam and Korea are so high and so urgent that we should no longer hold back our punches with the GOJ’. Johnson thought the risks of this approach were manageable, because Japan’s security dependence on the US was a source of leverage: ‘we are not forcing Japan into the arms of anyone else because they well know that they have no one else to whom to turn’. But this logic— that Japan would stick with the United States because there were no other prospective allies—overlooked the possibility that Japan might seek to escape the embrace of the United States even in the absence of another willing lover. Just as Sato was expending valuable political capital to improve Japan’s “defense mindedness”, events began to cast doubt on American reliability and Japan would simultaneously fear both abandonment and entrapment.

In May 1968 Kei Wakaizumi, a Japanese academic who served as an unofficial envoy of Prime Minister Sato, described Japanese fears of abandonment to Sneider and Bundy. The apparent success of the Vietcong’s Tet offensive in the Vietnam War alarmed some in Japan, but this was compounded by a Presidential speech on 31 March 1968. In this speech, President Johnson announced that he would not run for re-election and also signalled his intent to open negotiations with Communist North Vietnam. Wakaizumi said this speech became ‘commonly known as the “Johnson shock”’. Wakaizumi said that many Japanese believed the

US was ‘withdrawing from Asia’, was ‘no longer trustworthy’, and could ‘no longer be considered a dependable ally...some are recommending that Japan keep its distance from the U.S. and make the necessary accommodation with Communist China’. Though these beliefs were ‘oversimplified and not yet commonly held’, Wakaizumi thought they ‘could lead to a crisis in 1970 involving in the first instance the Security Treaty and Okinawa, but more fundamentally, the total U.S.-Japanese relationship’.53

Japan was observing as the US quickly redefined its strategic interests in Indochina, and feared that a similar process could occur with America’s China policies. In February 1968 US reliability had been doubted because after the Blue House raid and the capture of the USS Pueblo, Tokyo feared entrapment in a new Korean conflict. Now, US reliability was also questioned because its overall Asia policy seemed to be in a dangerous period of flux, and this posed risks of abandonment. Ambassador Johnson, in an interview the following year, recalled that President Johnson’s speech was ‘universally interpreted by the Japanese press as being a prelude to a complete withdrawal and a reversal of policy on Vietnam. I spent some five hours alone with the Prime Minister...trying to convince him this wasn’t the case’.54 By June 1968, the US Embassy in Tokyo was reporting that events in Vietnam had ‘thrown doubt on US firmness and invincibility’. While Japan valued the role of the US in providing security for Taiwan and South Korea, only ‘the sophisticated recognize that U.S. bases in Japan are important to this system, [and] more generally these bases are regarded as a nuisance which must be tolerated’. One effect of Japan’s diminished confidence was that the ‘Possibility of GOJ accepting reversion of Okinawa with substantially greater freedom of use than enjoyed by bases in Japan proper has receded considerably’.55

54 Interview with Ural Alexis Johnson, 14 June 1969, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), Foreign Affairs Oral History Project (FAOHP).
As Japan was questioning American staying power in Asia, it was also fearful that Communist China’s possession of nuclear weapons—combined with the presence of US forces in Japan—posed a serious risk to Japanese security.\textsuperscript{56} In February 1966, Communist China had warned Japan that if, in the course of the Vietnam War, the United States bombed China, then Japan could be targeted for retaliation.\textsuperscript{57} The possibility that China might attempt nuclear coercion of Japan—but with Korea, not Vietnam, as the precipitating cause—was discussed at a meeting between Bundy, Ambassador Johnson and the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Shimoda in June 1968.\textsuperscript{58}

These circumstances created an unusual situation, in which Tokyo simultaneously feared both entrapment and abandonment. There was fear that the “Johnson Shock” signalled a willingness to dramatically scale back American commitments in Asia, and this precipitated fears of abandonment. However, the presence of US forces in Okinawa, and the possible use of bases in Japan for conflicts in Asia, continued to worry Japanese decision-makers. These events resulted in seemingly contradictory signals, which created a situation where Japan complained about the presence of the American military and the possible entrapment risks it created, but also feared a wholesale change of America’s Asia policy, and the risks of abandonment this could create. Given the unpredictable nature of American foreign policy at this time, it is not particularly surprising that Japan could simultaneously fear both entrapment and abandonment.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} The PRC first tested a nuclear weapon in October 1964.
\textsuperscript{57} See Schaller, \textit{Altered States}, p.194. It is not perfectly clear from Schaller’s writing whether this threat was intended to have the implication of nuclear coercion.
\textsuperscript{59} This odd situation—where Japan simultaneously feared both abandonment and entrapment—is implicitly noted in Schaller, \textit{Altered States}, p.207. Here, in two consecutive paragraphs, Schaller notes that Japan feared both an American accommodation with the PRC and entrapment into a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. While this scenario might seem illogical, it makes sense when Japan’s unique circumstances are considered. Because of its role in hosting US forces, at various points Japan has had strong preferences for an “ideal” level of US involvement in Asia. Any US position stronger than this “ideal” position created Japanese fears of entrapment, but any weaker position created Japanese fears of abandonment. See, for example, Intelligence Note 595, 14 August 1969, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL JAPAN-KOR S, Box 2248, which explains how Japan would welcome a partial withdrawal of US forces from the Korean Peninsula, but only under certain conditions. “The Japanese recognize that the US is likely to reduce US forces in Korea. The Japanese public will welcome such reductions, since it generally believes that the risk of war, and its dangers for Japan, will thereby be reduced...[but] A precipitate withdrawal...would
These mixed sentiments vexed Secretary Rusk, who admonished Ambassador Shimoda by defending America’s presence in Asia, noting that ‘400 or 500 Americans are dying weekly in Viet-Nam to prove our commitment to our Asian allies. In these circumstances it is difficult for Americans to understand Japanese reactions’ to the seemingly minor problems posed by the presence of American forces in Japan. But Rusk also suggested that America’s role in Asia was changing: ‘no longer will the American people accept the role of unilateral policemen and the key question for them is who else will share these responsibilities’. Japan’s Deputy Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs insisted that he understood America’s position, but noted that ‘Regrettably many Japanese are out of touch with reality and this cannot be disregarded by the Japanese Government’.60

During the second half of 1968 the Sato Government continued its campaign to educate the Japanese people on “defense-mindedness”, as America kept reminding Japan of Okinawa’s regional role. Sato appeared to get the message that while the US was not intending to retreat from Asia, it needed the support of allies to maintain a credible defence presence in the region. In July, Sato publicly described the idea of a “homeland-level” reversion of Okinawa as ‘unrealistic’, because it didn’t address ‘the basic problem of the defense of free Asia as [a] whole’.61 In August, Sato affirmed that he had no intention of modifying the Security Treaty’s clauses on security in the Far East, since ‘Asian stability [is] related to Japan’s peace and stability’.62 Also in August, in the communiqué of a ministerial meeting between Japan and the Republic of Korea, Japan recognised ‘that the security and prosperity of Korea greatly affect the security and prosperity of Japan’. As one Korean official pointed out, this was the ‘first time

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60 Memorandum of Conversation, 6 June 1968, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL JAPAN-US, Box 2249.
GOJ has expressed in writing such connection between Korea and Japan’.\(^6^3\) In private, Ambassador Johnson put it a little more directly, reminding Foreign Minister Miki that ‘without the support of bases in Japan and Okinawa the United States could not maintain security in Korea’.\(^6^4\) Johnson continued to remind Tokyo about Okinawa’s regional importance. Speaking of a defensive chain of American bases in Asia, he warned that ‘if one link is pulled out the chain is weakened and loses a portion of its total capability’.\(^6^5\)

Sato’s defence education campaign, with its argument that Japan’s security depended on the security of free Asia, wasn’t an immediate success domestically. A September report from the US Embassy noted that

> Perhaps because the Japanese Government has always emphasized the direct defense of Japan as the object of the [1960] Treaty, the Japanese public continues to regard this aspect as the only possible benefit to Japan. Contributions to Far East regional security are generally seen as of interest only to the United States. Base utilization for these purposes tends to be begrudged as a dangerous Japanese concession to the United States...Those willing to accept the concept of bases in Japan (and Okinawa) as in Japan’s interest because they are needed for the defense of the Republic of Korea or other neighbouring areas...are a minority overall. Nor do these backers of a regional role for our bases care to espouse this publicly for fear of popular reaction.\(^6^6\)

In addition to publicly affirming Japan’s regional security role, Sato suggested the prior consultation provision of the 1960 Security Treaty might not necessarily apply to Okinawa.\(^6^7\) The US Embassy assessed that in a November press conference, Sato ‘went further than he has gone before in telling Japanese people that GOJ must be prepared to extend something more than “homeland level” base rights in Okinawa if early reversion is to be a real possibility’.\(^6^8\) In an interview

\(^6^3\) Seoul’s 9594 to Washington, 4 September 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, XR POL JAPAN-KOR S, Box 2248.

\(^6^4\) Memorandum of Conversation, 20 August 1968, Secret, NARA, Lot Files, Japan, Box 4.


\(^6^6\) Tokyo’s Airgram 1965 to Washington, 10 September 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 1 JAPAN, Box 2250.


with an American journalist, Sato connected the issue of bases in Japan to America’s broader defense posture in Asia, saying:

> the question cannot be settled unless we give thought to what should be done about the security of Japan, including Okinawa, and the Far East… the form of bases in the homeland is determined in conjunction with the bases in Okinawa, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, and the form of bases in Okinawa alone cannot be decided separately.⁶⁹

By late 1968, Japan’s Government had a plan for 1969. Kiichi Aichi, who would soon become Japan’s Foreign Minister, discussed this timeline with the US Embassy. Early in 1969, Tokyo intended to sound out the incoming administration of President Richard Nixon for how the Okinawa negotiations could be handled. A mid-year decision on allowing the automatic extension of the 1960 Security Treaty would be seen as a measure of support for the US-Japan relationship ahead of a Prime Ministerial visit to the US in the second half of the year. A summit meeting between Sato and the newly inaugurated President Richard Nixon would involve a public ‘agreement on the manner and timing of Okinawa reversion’, and would be followed by the dissolution of the Diet and fresh elections in Japan. This could ‘defuse…an Okinawan time bomb that increasingly threatens…the Japan-U.S. relationship’.⁷⁰

**Allied reactions to US-Japan developments in 1968**

While allied activity in 1968 was limited compared to 1967 and 1969, this is easily explained by the substantive agreements reached in these bracketing years: the Bonin Islands agreement in 1967 and the Nixon-Sato communiqué in 1969. Limited activity within the US-Japan relationship—perhaps attributable to the Johnson Shock and the fact that it was the final year of his administration—meant that there were less substantial developments to which allies reacted.⁷¹

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⁷⁰ Tokyo’s Airgram 2109 to Washington, 8 October 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 12-1 JAPAN, Box 2245.

⁷¹ One US official suggested that 1968 was less eventful for the US-Japan relationship because Secretary Rusk had ‘put off the Japanese with the argument...that the present United States administration cannot commit a successor President’. See Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 8 July 1968, Top Secret – Sensitive, NARA, RG 319, History of the Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (HCARI), Box 1. Albert Seligmann, a former State official who then worked in
That said, the ROC did observe and react to some events in the US-Japan relationship. In February 1968, ROC Foreign Minister Wei publicly affirmed his interest in Okinawa developments and said that ‘the GRC is following U.S.-Japanese talks on the Ryukyus closely’. The US Embassy thought that this statement might have been prompted by ‘a need to reaffirm its position in view of the new U.S.-Japanese consultative machinery provided in the Johnson-Sato communiqué being set up to associate Japan more closely with the Ryukyus’.72

These concerns were not expressed only in private diplomatic representations, but also in the public sphere. In June 1968, a newspaper associated with the GRC noted that the US defence posture in Europe had been impaired by France’s withdrawal from NATO, and compared this with Japan’s posture in Asia. ‘In Asia...the bases [on Okinawa] which are vital to the joint security in the Far East are here again obliged to plan for a possible removal. We feel it indeed strange, that is, why Japan and France do not take into account the joint security in their respective areas‘. While some US diplomats had earlier suggested that the ROC’s concern over Okinawa was part of its attempt to maintain its status as one of the wartime ”Big Five” powers, material such as this suggests that the ROC’s security concerns were a more important factor. The editorial describes Okinawa as having ‘incomparable importance to the collective security of free nations in this area...China is afraid that, if the Ryukyus should come to belong to Japan, the bases of our ally might be menaced, and that the joint security of all nations concerned might be endangered’.73 The Director of China’s War College put it most colourfully: ‘the Ryukyus would become a “dagger pointed at Taiwan”’.74

The US, for its part, continued to keep the GRC informed of Okinawa developments. In October 1968, when it was agreed that representatives from

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72 Taipei’s Airgram 472 to Washington, 7 February 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2457.
73 As quoted in Shinkichi Eto, ‘Attitude of Peking and Taiwan Governments on Okinawa Issue’, Enclosure 9 to Tokyo’s Airgram 119 (still classified). The Enclosure is at NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2458.
Okinawa could participate in the Japanese Diet, the US informed the GRC before a public announcement was made. On 8 October, the State Department cabled the US Embassy in Taipei, noting that ‘In view [of] GRC sensitivity to changes in situation surrounding Okinawa’ it was ‘preferable that we inform the GRC in advance of this major step being taken in cooperation with GOJ’. While the GRC was appreciative of the US effort to keep them informed, they also expressed ‘concern’ at the decision, and asked if this ‘move “implied any effect on determination of future status” of islands’.

However, the ROC’s efforts were low-key and did not reflect widespread alarm or panic at the thought of Okinawan reversion: instead, they suggest that Taipei was keeping a watchful eye on developments. At first glance, and when contrasted with the ROC, the lack of ROK activity during this time period might seem puzzling. However, 1968 was an incredibly eventful year for the US-ROK alliance, and ROK decision-makers did not need to look beyond their own interactions with the United States in order to make assessments about US reliability. As Victor Cha notes, ‘Washington’s ambivalent response to the three North Korean provocations in 1968 and 1969 seriously undermined South Korean confidence in American defense commitments’. Following a January 1968 North Korean commando raid on the South Korean President’s residence, ‘Washington responded with decided restraint’, and the American Ambassador warned ‘that any South Korean attempts at retribution would meet with strong U.S. opposition’. When North Korean forces seized the USS Pueblo only two days later, ‘the U.S. response was again passive. Washington declined all requests from Park for retaliatory air strikes against Pyongyang’. As Cha notes, the US was so concerned that the ROK might seek to initiate hostilities that the Deputy Secretary of Defense was dispatched to Seoul to warn Park that ‘if such a step

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75 State’s 251745 to Taipei, 8 October 1968, Confidential, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2457.
77 The three provocations were the guerilla attack on the Prime Minister’s "Blue House", the capture of the USS Pueblo and the shoot-down of an unarmed American EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft in April 1969.
78 Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, p.63.
were taken without consultation with the United States that the whole relationships [sic] between our countries would have to be reevaluated’. With such clear signals present within the US-ROK relationship, ROK officials did not need to observe external relationships in order to form judgements about US reliability. However, as negotiations over Okinawa progressed and became publicly prominent in 1969—and tensions on the Peninsula abated somewhat—the ROK would take greater notice and play a more active role in lobbying both the US and Japan over Okinawa.

Interestingly, the archival research conducted for this chapter did not reveal any evidence that Japan was concerned by America’s tepid reaction to these provocations on the Korean Peninsula. America’s apparent “disloyalty” to Korea did not worry Japan, because this disloyalty actually aligned with Tokyo’s interests. Sneider assessed that in Japan, there was a fear that provocations on the Peninsula ‘could lead to broader hostilities...and greater risk of Japanese involvement...The emphasis, therefore, is...on endorsing U.S. restraint and efforts to negotiate return of the Pueblo and its crew in Korea’. Had the US supported Seoul in a stronger fashion, this might have increased the risk of war on the Peninsula and the involvement of Communist China. As in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, when the US Government assessed that Japan would welcome an American abandonment of the offshore islands, Japan was again primarily concerned about its own interests and not America’s “loyalty” to another ally. This observation further justifies the need to delineate between “loyalty” and “reliability” in alliance politics.

**The alliance audience effect from December 1967 – December 1968**

Although the events of 1968 were not as influential as those of 1967 or 1969, there is still ample evidence to suggest that the alliance audience effect was at work. Though US-Japan negotiations took a lower profile, as Sato endeavoured

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79 Deputy Secretary of Defense, Cyrus Vance, as quoted in Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, p.63.
80 Memo from Sneider to Bundy, 12 February 1968, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, Lot Files, Japan, Box 4.
to build “defense-mindedness” in Japan, the ROC continued to display sensitivity to developments around Okinawa. Seemingly minor issues prompted the GRC to remind US officials of their interest. Concerned that Okinawan reversion might jeopardise the ROC’s security, Taipei reminded the US—both privately and publicly—that it was watching the US-Japan alliance closely. These developments support hypothesis 1, which expects that a state will monitor its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability.

The fact that the ROC continued to register its concern with the United States also supports hypothesis 2, which expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will attempt to mitigate this risk. While this might seem like a low standard of proof, it must be remembered that there wasn’t significant and overt progress toward Okinawa revision in 1968. In such an environment—and with Sato publicly striving to inculcate “defense-mindedness” in the Japanese people—it was enough for Taipei to maintain its position of carefully monitoring developments while occasionally reminding the US of its interest.

Hypothesis 3 expects that America's actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. While there were no significant US actions in this period, US officials were pleased to see Sato’s real and sustained attempts to educate the Japanese public about the regional security role of Okinawa and improve “defense-mindedness”. They knew that when the real negotiations for Okinawa began in 1969, that Tokyo would need to be capable of convincing the Japanese people that Okinawa’s regional security role was in their national interest. In turn, this would be important for reassuring other allies like the ROC and ROK.

**January – August 1969**

**ROK and ROC concern about Okinawa prompts the US to hold their hands**

On 1 January 1969, Sato held a New Year’s Day press conference on foreign policy. While Sato ‘considered the feelings of the Okinawa people to be the most
important component of reversion equation...[he] urged sufficient consideration be given to role of bases in protecting people of Okinawa as well as Japan and East Asia. This emphasis on the regional role of Okinawa was a major theme for the Japanese government throughout 1969. When Ambassador Shimoda publicly suggested that Okinawa might not revert at something less than "homeland-level" terms, the Japanese opposition was critical. But the US Embassy in Tokyo thought Shimoda's move was a 'calculated risk to begin process of measuring what "extra freedoms" for US bases on Okinawa Japanese public opinion will accept'.

In late January, Japan moved to establish a timetable for the Okinawa negotiations. Shimoda met with Bundy on 24 January, outlining Sato's desire to visit the United States in November in order to resolve the Okinawa issue. Shimoda also noted that 'there should be "special treatment" regarding US use of Okinawa bases in view of situations in Korea and Viet-Nam and uncertain communist intentions'. Several days later, in a speech to the Diet, Sato said he would consider public opinion but also 'take into consideration role which US bases on Okinawa play in guaranteeing security of not only Japan, but of the Far East as well'.

As momentum toward negotiations accelerated, the ROK's concerns intensified. Beginning in late 1968, and intensifying in the first half of 1969, press articles and US Embassy reporting suggested that Seoul was intent on creating a Pacific-Asian Treaty Organisation (PATO) – a multilateral alliance that could contribute toward security in Asia as the US withdrew from Vietnam. The proposed members for such an alliance included those Asian countries contributing troops to the Vietnam War – the four core members would be South Korea, Nationalist

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82 Tokyo's 126 to Washington, 8 January 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2458.
China, South Vietnam and Thailand.\textsuperscript{86} While the ROK’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the primary instigator of the concept, the ROC appeared to be interested. The ROK’s Prime Minister told the US Embassy in Seoul that the PATO idea ‘had been discussed by [South Korean] President Park with General Chiang on a highly secret basis’, and that Chiang was ‘interested in learning more about Korean proposal’. The ROK Prime Minister ‘went on to say that he thought US administration following Vietnam settlement would be looking for ways to reduce its presence in Asia...Best solution, he thought, would be for new security organization’.\textsuperscript{87}

Concurrent with this heightened interest in PATO, diplomatic reporting emphasised Seoul’s ‘sudden and keen interest in Okinawa reversion problem...commentators have described Okinawa as key to Korean security and have expressed great concern over its probable return to Japanese’. South Korean observers began to consider America’s presence in Okinawa as a signal of its future intent for Asia, and they feared that a ‘US pullback from Okinawa could signal beginning of US withdrawal from Asia’.\textsuperscript{88} When the Deputy Secretary of State sought guidance on Seoul’s PATO thinking, an official from the State Department’s Korea section advised that ‘what the ROKG—and probably also the GRC—have in the back of their minds is some type of reassurance of US military support and a long term reinsurance of our present security commitments’.\textsuperscript{89}

The archival evidence available does not irrefutably link the PATO concept to Korean and Chinese Nationalist concerns about the loss of American bases on Okinawa, but it does suggest that PATO may have been an effort by the ROK and ROC to sabotage the reversion negotiations. One report from the Central Intelligence Agency suggested that the ROK—and perhaps the ROC—were trying to prevent the restriction of American rights on Okinawa. In late February, a

\textsuperscript{86} See Seoul’s 599 to Washington, 6 February 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, DEF 4 PATO, Box 1610.
\textsuperscript{88} Seoul’s 1111 to Washington, 7 March 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459.
\textsuperscript{89} Memo from Bardach to Brown, 14 January 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, Lot Files, Korea, Box 2.
secret meeting was held between Chiang Ching-Kuo and Korean President Park. Here, Park ‘proposed that...a collective effort be made immediately...to call for a halt to the withdrawal of US military forces from Okinawa’. The ROK was to seek out the views of other countries in Asia, with the hope that they might support the effort.\(^{90}\) The US Embassy in Taipei reported that ‘Koreans expressed strong opposition to “any” reversion of Okinawa to Japan in present circumstances, since Okinawa was of importance to the security of ROK and GRC’. Chiang Ching-Kuo, the ROC Defense Minister, ‘voiced strong feeling that USG [United States Government] should not transfer administrative control to Japan’.\(^{91}\)

The State Department worried that if any public movement toward PATO became associated with Okinawan bases, then this could imperil the US-Japan negotiations. Secretary of State Rusk believed:

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\text{that any GRC-ROK efforts to realize security alliance with SVN [South Vietnam] and Thailand would undoubtedly become public knowledge in the near future. Linking of role of US bases in Okinawa to this nascent security alliance would gravely complicate current USG efforts to achieve agreement with GOJ on maximum flexible use of Okinawan bases...If USG allows impression to be created that USG seeking “flexibility” in future use of Okinawan bases...at behest of and in order to assist PATO members, reaction on part of Japanese people would be definitely negative, and the possibility of obtaining this flexibility thereby reduced.}\(^{92}\)
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The available material doesn’t conclusively prove the CIA’s theory that there was an intent to sabotage reversion negotiations by linking them to a prospective PATO, but Rusk obviously worried about this possibility. The US Ambassador in Seoul, William Porter, also saw a possible connection, and speculated about a possibly secondary motive in Seoul’s PATO efforts. In his view, President Park called for the US ‘to put pressure on Japan to recognize necessity for regional collective defense’ despite the ROK’s ‘reservations about desirability of Japanese membership’ in the prospective PATO. Porter thought that Korean concerns about Okinawa probably prompted Park’s statement: ‘Since they are unable to bring much pressure to bear on GOJ, ROKs [are] attempting [to] influence GOJ

\(^{90}\) Intelligence Information Cable, 4 March 1969, Secret, NARA, RG 319, HCARI, Box 3.
\(^{92}\) Washington’s 39611 to Taipei, Seoul, Saigon and Bangkok, 14 March 1969, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, DEF 4 PATO, Box 1610. Originally sent as Tokyo’s 1668 to Washington, also in DEF 4 PATO, Box 1610.
indirectly through U.S. while at the same time attempting to persuade us of necessity of keeping free use of Okinawa bases'. Cables such as these suggest that due to concerns about American reliability—which were influenced by the possible loss of rights on Okinawa—Seoul was exploring methods of pressuring Japan to allow a regional defence role for Okinawa, and also investigating the possibility of a new collective alliance in Asia.

The ROK’s efforts to mitigate US unreliability were not limited to PATO and indirect attempts to pressure Japan. In a press interview on 15 March 1969, the ROK Prime Minister emphasised South Korea’s willingness to host US forces, and ‘said his country welcomed more US troops and bases should US be forced to withdraw facilities from Okinawa’. In a late March meeting with Bundy, the Korean Ambassador to the US also suggested that the forces on Okinawa could be relocated to South Korea. Bundy declined this offer, explaining that the US intended to come to a satisfactory agreement with Tokyo, but ‘the ROK should be assured that we have no intention of giving up our base rights in Okinawa’.

The United States, aware of the concern felt by the ROK and ROC, moved to manage these alliances simultaneously with progress toward Okinawa reversion. The possibility that ROK or ROC efforts towards a PATO could adversely affect US-Japan Okinawa negotiations needed urgent attention. In a cable titled ‘Okinawa: What to tell ROKG and GRC’, the US Embassy in Tokyo noted that it was in America’s interest to discourage attempts by our Asian allies to pre-determine means by which US support for Asian security is expressed. This important observation has particular relevance to attitudes toward Okinawa reversion...Seoul and Taipei...appear to think that U.S. is in adversarial bargaining situation...with effectiveness of our bases at stake. Both seem anxious to “help” us by asserting their own claims to a share of interest in the special base rights.

To allay allied concerns, the US Embassy in Tokyo suggested that the ROKG and GRC be briefed on the US-Japan negotiations, with emphasis on the fact that US ‘security commitments to ROK and ROC...[are] not in jeopardy in Okinawa reversion negotiations’, and that both ‘USG and GOJ will be cooperating to arrange reversion in manner that will take due account of Asian security role of Ryukyu bases’. A shot across the bow was suggested: the allies should be warned that ‘Anything which calls attention unnecessarily to aspects of problem that are controversial in Japan...is likely to render cooperative USG-GOJ approach to problem more difficult’.97

The State Department agreed, and cabled Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo, suggesting that ‘ROKG concern that US might scant their interests in Okinawa issue could be reduced by early initiation of hand-holding operation’. The Department advised the Embassy in Seoul to reassure the ROKG that ‘USG is of course fully aware of high importance of US bases in Okinawa and Japan to security of Korea...This is difficult issue but we believe satisfactory solution will be reached...we expect to soon enter more serious discussions...As situation develops we will provide ROKG with more information’.98 When these points were presented to Korea’s Vice Foreign Minister, he ‘expressed appreciation for information on subject but as might be expected, attempted characterize present and future exchanges as “consultations”’. This was a common tactic of the ROKG which—by publicly describing discussions with US diplomats as ‘consultations’—sought to create the impression that Okinawa reversion could occur only with Korea’s consent. The US Embassy officer reminded the Vice Foreign Minister ‘of political problems faced by GOJ and cautioned that while U.S. appreciates security concerns of allies, implication U.S. consulting would create problem for GOJ. He seemed [to] appreciate [the] point’.99

These exchanges highlight the intricate interdependencies between these alliances – Korea was watching the US-Japan relationship and worried that progress toward the reversion of Okinawa was affecting America’s security reliability. Even as the US moved to reassure the ROKG, it had to do so knowing that Seoul would attempt to characterise these discussions as “consultations”. This, in turn, would be observed by Japan and would affect Japanese beliefs about the reasons for American conduct. Thus, the actors in one alliance interaction were simultaneously the audience of another. This example neatly illustrates the complex interdependencies expected and explained by the alliance audience effect framework.

America’s efforts to reassure the ROK did not have an immediate effect. On 1 April, the Korean Prime Minister met with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Winthrop Brown, and was told that the US ‘fully understood the Koreans’ concern about Okinawa’. Brown explained that it was not a matter of fighting for base rights, but ensuring that basing arrangements were feasible over the longer term.\(^\text{100}\) U. Alexis Johnson, newly promoted to the position of Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, offered more explicit reassurance to a visiting Korean politician, saying ‘There was no real question of our bases in Okinawa being withdrawn, but only of a readjustment in the conditions under which we might occupy them’.\(^\text{101}\) Despite these efforts, in early March the Korean Foreign Minister publicly stated that the reversion of Okinawa ‘should be handled in a way which will not reduce Okinawa’s strategic value’ and ‘said that the ROKG will continue efforts to keep Okinawa’s strategic value intact’. Korean politicians ‘expressed concern that Japan [was] seeking prior consultation rights on US use of bases after reversion’.\(^\text{102}\) The ROK Prime Minister suggested that ‘if United States

\(^{100}\) Memorandum of Conversation, 1 April 1969, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL KOR S-US, Box 2282.
\(^{101}\) Memorandum of a Conversation, 4 April 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 7 KOR S, Box 2277.
encounters problems in Ryukyus, American bases will be welcome in Korea’. The ROKG sent an aide memoire, ‘expressing ROKG concern over reversion of Okinawa’, to the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. An aide memoire was also presented to the US Embassy in Seoul, requesting that they ‘consult fully with ROKG in settling question of Ryukyus’. Believing that their previous communications had been sufficient, and wary of creating the impression that they had an obligation to ‘consult’, the US decided to not formally reply.

Interestingly, it seems that at this time the ROK was more concerned that the ROC. When Marshall Green, then US Ambassador to Indonesia, visited Korea and Taiwan in April, it seems that the role of Okinawa was discussed only with Korean leaders, not the Nationalist Chinese. Contemporary press reporting also noted this discrepancy: a Washington Post article about the reversion negotiations said that ‘South Korea is watching nervously’ and reported President Park’s claim that the future status of Okinawa ‘should not be resolved “by an agreement between Japan and the United States alone”’. Compared to the ROK, the ROC was described as ‘less insistent’. The heightened concern of the ROK is perhaps best explained by their more precarious defence position at this time: developments in the US-Japan negotiations over Okinawa were happening against the backdrop of events in 1968, when US timidity after the Blue House raid and USS Pueblo seizure had disappointed the ROK. This alliance dynamic had already demonstrated to Seoul that America’s strategic preferences affected its reliability as South Korea’s ally, and the possibility that US power might be

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impeded by the reversion of Okinawa was thus further fuel for fears over American reliability. Secondly, as described earlier in this chapter, Japan had made efforts to reassure the ROC, through Sato’s visit to Taipei and Chiang Ching-kuo’s visit to Japan. Though the ROC was still concerned about Okinawan reversion, it is unsurprising that it was not as concerned as the ROK.

**America prepares for further negotiations with Japan**

Against this backdrop of allied agitation, internal differences within the United States Government were resolved. Henry Kissinger, President Nixon’s National Security Adviser, wrote that America’s position on Okinawa was decided at an NSC meeting on 30 April 1969: the Joint Chiefs of Staff ‘agreed that if we could not obtain Japanese agreement to unrestricted use of the bases for combat operations throughout Asia we could settle for unrestricted rights for the defense of Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam’. Beyond this, if Japan would commit to allowing the reintroduction of nuclear weapons in times of regional crisis, then President Nixon would ‘take into account Japanese sensitivities on the nuclear issue’ and agree that after reversion, no nuclear weapons would be stationed on Okinawa.

In Tokyo, Japanese officials were continuing to emphasise their understanding that the reversion of Okinawa would have to make provision for some special understanding of its regional defence role. In late April, Foreign Minister Aichi explained to the US Embassy that while the GOJ had often considered the prior consultation arrangement merely as a mechanism to veto American action, it was now moving to emphasise the possibility of approving American action under the prior consultation formula. Efforts to raise public awareness also continued: the Director of the American Bureau in Japan’s Foreign Ministry

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109 During this period, an alignment of interests between the ROC and Japan was also of concern to Communist China. See Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961-1974: From "Red Menace" to "Tacit Ally"*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005, pp.176-178.


111 See Tokyo’s 3156 to Washington, 23 April 1969, Secret, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459
briefed the press that Washington could not endorse ‘a settlement which would tie its hands in carrying out security requirements...Japan should think more of effect on ROK and GRC of weakening of base structure’. Slowly but surely, the Japanese Government was becoming more explicit in confirming and explaining how the preservation of Okinawa's regional role would be an essential component of any reversion agreement. Japanese negotiators knew that America would agree to reversion only if it did not damage America's ability to defend its other Asian allies, and the Japanese Government was trying to educate its public on this point.

For their part, American diplomats were thinking ahead to the Nixon-Sato summit that would occur in late 1969, and becoming increasingly confident that a satisfactory deal could be struck. Richard Finn, the State Department’s new Country Director for Japan, thought that for the conventional (non-nuclear) use of bases in Okinawa,

\[\text{we can work out some kind of understanding...This could reinforce a strong statement in the Nixon-Sato communiqué to the effect that both governments attach special importance to security in the area of Northeast Asia. Such a statement would prepare public opinion in Japan and give the right signal to other interested EA [East Asian] nations.}\]

The US Embassy in Tokyo shared this confidence. Embassy officers noted that press articles

\[\text{reflect a clear effort by GOJ briefers to get across point that GOJ recognizes the importance of the role played by US bases...in defense of Far East: thus, while view of GOJ as a sovereign state must be reflected in prior consultation process, that process will be operated flexibly and Japan will be willing to say “yes” to use of bases for combat operations in areas “around Japan”}\].

The Embassy noted that one article mentioned Foreign Minister Aichi's desire to avoid using the 'homeland level' term, as 'those words have unfortunately come to mean that prior consultation can function only as “a brake” on US operations' Another cable, sent two days later, assessed that the purpose
Aichi’s rhetorical shift was to ‘persuade US leaders of sincerity of GOJ view that both yes and no answer possible in prior consultation system’.\textsuperscript{115}

Aichi, in a mid-year trip to the United States, met with President Nixon. Rather than focussing on the terminology of “homeland level” reversion, Aichi stated that the ‘GOJ wished to put to rest any question on defense matters by the flexible application of the Security Treaty’. This concept of ‘flexible application’ became a subtle signal that Japan was ready to assume greater regional defence responsibilities. ‘Aichi said that the effective presence of the United States was essential in the broadest terms to the security of the area as a whole, and Japan felt that it was essential to create an environment which would make possible effective cooperation to that purpose’\textsuperscript{116}

In Aichi’s meeting with U. Alexis Johnson, the communiqué for the upcoming Nixon-Sato summit was discussed. Johnson was explicit in noting that ‘US capabilities with respect to Korea and other areas in the Far East must be manifest in whatever language is developed’.\textsuperscript{117} Comments such as this strongly suggest that Johnson believed the contents of the Nixon-Sato communiqué would be closely scrutinised by other US allies, as they looked for any sign that the reversion of Okinawa could damage America’s ability to uphold its defence commitments. Once Aichi returned to Tokyo, Ambassador Johnson continued to emphasise the importance of Okinawa for Washington’s other alliances. In July, he told Aichi that the final reversion agreement would have to ‘signal to both friend and foe that USG military capability remains basically unimpaired’.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{116}Memorandum of Conversation, 2 June 1969, Secret, No Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 7 JAPAN, Box 2244.
\textsuperscript{117}Memorandum of Conversation, 5 June 1969, Secret, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459.
\textsuperscript{118}Tokyo’s 5907 to Washington, 18 July 1969, Secret, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, RG 319, HCARI, Box 19.
ROC and ROK reactions

Despite having been cautioned by the US that public discussion of Okinawa could actually work against Korean interests, the ROKG continued their efforts to increase pressure on both Japan and the United States. At a Tokyo meeting of the Asia-Pacific Council (ASPAC), the Foreign Ministers of the ROK and ROC gave ‘pre-conference press interviews...in which both expressed their government’s interest in reversion issue...while their governments had no objection to reversion itself, settlement should not adversely affect the military value of the Okinawa bases’. 119 This occurred despite the American Ambassador to the ROK urging the Foreign Minister to ‘deal with this subject in very low key and to avoid public polemics. I said we understand perfectly ROK feeling on this subject and...our interests in this matter are very similar’. 120

On the sidelines of this regional summit, Korean Foreign Minister Choi also met with Aichi. When Choi complained that the aide memoire sent to the Japanese Embassy in April had not generated a reply, Aichi said that in a statement to the Diet he would ‘acknowledge Japanese awareness of Okinawa’s role as backup for ROK and ChiNat security, and Aichi proposed that ROKG consider such statement as substitute for reply’. The American Ambassador continued to encourage Choi to keep Korean representations on Okinawa 'low key'. 121 Aware of ROC and ROK interest in Okinawan reversion, Tokyo sought to affirm their understanding of the island’s importance to Korean and Nationalist Chinese security. In early July, the US Embassy in Tokyo reported that since Aichi’s visit to Washington, ‘Sato and other Government spokesmen have stated that an emergency on Taiwan or on the Korean Peninsula could very well affect security of Japan’s interest and

121 Seoul’s 3343 to Washington, 23 June 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL JAPAN-SAUD, Box 2248. This document probably should have been categorised as POL JAPAN – KOR S.
conceivably, therefore, result in affirmative GOJ response to a U.S. request to use its bases in Japan for military action in these cases.\footnote{\ref{122}}

But statements such as this seemed to have little effect on Korea's concerns about the reversion of Okinawa. On 31 July 1969 Foreign Minister Choi gave Secretary Rusk two memos, including one which, among other subjects, detailed Korea's concerns about Okinawa. Describing the memos as 'noteworthy for their unrestrained tone', the US Embassy in Seoul reported that

\begin{quote}
ROKG is watching with concern the development of negotiations between US and Japan on Okinawa. Okinawa question should be dealt with in broader context of peace and security of free Asian nations and not merely in bilateral context. United States should retain unrestricted use of military base on Okinawa and should there be major changes in the status of Okinawa, the US should consult in advance with ROK.\footnote{\ref{123}}
\end{quote}

In contrast to the intensification of Korea's concerns, the Republic of China seemed quite confident in America's reliability. In an exchange with Japan's Foreign Minister Aichi, ROC Foreign Minister Wei believed 'there was no need for concern, because GRC would be pleased to have nukes moved to Taiwan if Japan did not want them in Okinawa. Aichi said GRC Fon Min seemed to have absolute faith that U.S. would not abandon Taiwan'.\footnote{\ref{124}} While this contrast might seem to pose a difficult challenge to the alliance audience framework, the discrepancy can be explained by both the different circumstances facing the ROC and ROK, and also Japan's efforts to reassure Taipei. Even without the issues posed by the reversion of Okinawa, the ROKG had been unimpressed by the US response to three important events in 1968-1969: the Blue House raid, the capture of the USS Pueblo, and the North Korean shoot-down of an American EC-121 intelligence aircraft. These events had all demonstrated that America had only a very limited appetite for actions that could increase the chance of conflict on the Korean Peninsula. In this context, as Victor Cha writes, the reversion of Okinawa was

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\footnote{\ref{122}}\Tokyo's 5478 to Washington, 3 July 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459.
\item\footnote{\ref{123}}Seoul's 4174 to Washington, 2 August 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, ORG 7 S, Box 118. The US Embassy in Seoul believed that these two memos had probably not been cleared with the ROK Prime Minister. The two memos are in Seoul’s Airgram 271 to Washington, 7 August 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, ORG 7 S, Box 118.
\item\footnote{\ref{124}}Tokyo's 6352 to Washington, 3 August 1969, Secret, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, ORG 7 S, Box 118.
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unnerving to Seoul as it might ultimately make U.S. defense of Korea contingent on Japanese approval'.

On the Japan-ROC front, and as noted earlier, in September 1967 Sato had visited Taiwan and assured Chiang Kai-shek that Tokyo appreciated the defensive role that Okinawa played, and this assurance was repeated when Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo visited Tokyo later in 1967. Given that Japanese leaders had reassured the ROC on several occasions that Okinawa’s defensive role would not be impeded, it is unsurprising that at this time the ROC was more relaxed about the possible impact of Okinawa’s reversion. In 1967, US intelligence reporting noted that Sato’s visit to Taiwan, which prompted the PRC to denounce Sato for “conspiring with the US imperialists’ two China plot”...underlined the existence of a special relationship’ between the two countries. Though the ROC, unlike the ROK, had expressed some concerns about reversion in 1968, these were low-key and vastly different—in both tone and quality—from the more frantic efforts of the ROK in January-August 1969.

The alliance audience effect from January – August 1969

These eight months were an incredibly eventful period for the alliances examined. Though Japan continued to publicly and privately emphasise that it recognised the regional security role of Okinawa and would ensure that this was not jeopardised by reversion, the ROK was alarmed—and the ROC cautious—about progress toward reversion. Hypothesis 1 expects that a state will monitor its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and these observations will affect perceptions of reliability. The events of this period support this hypothesis: Seoul and Taipei were both concerned that the reversion of Okinawa would jeopardise American use of bases there and thus damage its capability to fulfil its alliance commitments.

125 Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, p.74.
As expected by hypothesis 2—which predicts that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk—the ROK worked hard to ensure that its security wouldn’t be damaged by the reversion of Okinawa. Seoul’s efforts toward a Pacific version of NATO probably served two purposes. The first was an effort to solidify American policy in the wake of a force reductions in Vietnam. The second—hinted at in intelligence and diplomatic reporting, but not conclusively proven by the available documents—was that by publicly linking PATO to concerns over Okinawa, this might inflame public opinion in Japan and thus sabotage the reversion negotiations. Beyond Seoul’s lobbying of Washington and Tokyo and movement towards PATO, the offer of Cheju as a substitute for Okinawa was also an effort to secure greater US commitment to South Korean security. The ROC’s inactivity in this time period is best explained by the assurances Japan had offered in 1967 – having been assured by Sato and other Japanese leaders that the reversion of Okinawa would not harm Taipei’s security, Chiang Kai-shek did not emulate the ROK’s extensive lobbying efforts. The ROC’s lack of activity at this time is also supportive of hypothesis two, because it can be attributed to lesser concerns about US reliability.

Hypothesis 3 expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. America’s treatment of the ROC and ROK in this period supports this hypothesis. Aware that allied capitals were growing more concerned as the Nixon-Sato summit approached, the US advised them to keep their diplomatic representations low-key, so that they would not hinder the bilateral reversion negotiations. To reassure Seoul and Taipei, the State Department launched a “hand-holding operation” to promise that the US would keep their security interests in mind. These efforts worked for the ROC, as Taipei maintained a degree of confidence in US reliability. However, given the events of 1968 and early 1969, it is unsurprising that Washington was unable to adequately reassure Seoul. Though the US was determined to maintain the capability to defend South Korea from invasion, Seoul was still disappointed and disconcerted by Washington’s unwillingness to respond more forcefully to low-level North Korean aggression.
**August – November 1969**

**Negotiations culminate in the November 1969 Nixon-Sato Summit**

In 1969, US-Japan negotiations focussed on the details of the joint communiqué that would be issued at the conclusion of the Nixon-Sato summit in November. Only some of the archival records pertaining to the negotiation of the communiqué have been released, so parts of this narrative are thus incomplete or fragmentary. However, sufficient records have been released to allow a testing of the alliance audience effect framework’s hypotheses.

A roving Japanese Ambassador, Hiroto Tanaka, called on Undersecretary of State Johnson in August 1969 and the role of bases on Okinawa was discussed. Johnson emphasised that the 'US [was] concerned to...be able to deal with our military obligations in Far East. Problems of availability of nuclear weapons and free use of Japanese and Okinawan bases are of great concern to the US. If US troops are to be kept in Korea, for example, US must be able to support and protect them'.\(^{128}\) In a meeting between Tanaka and the new Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, Marshall Green, ‘Green stressed the U.S. determination to carry out its commitments and to avoid any impairment of our ability to use our bases and our military power to carry out these commitments...It is important that U.S. be able to assure its friends...Green said that both Korea and the Republic of China have shown concern over Okinawa reversion’.\(^{129}\)

US officials continued to press Japan on the regional defence role of bases on Okinawa, but it was soon established that this would not be a major sticking point in the communiqué. The first draft of Sato’s unilateral statement—which would eventually take the form of a speech to the National Press Club—met almost all of America’s needs. While it was agreed that Okinawa would revert to

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\(^{129}\) Washington’s 138353 to Tokyo, 16 August 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL JAPAN-US, Box 2249.
Japanese administration on a ‘homeland level’, with the prior consultation clause applying to bases on Okinawa, America’s regional defence needs would be met by Japan affirming the importance of ROC and ROK security to Japan's own situation. This draft of Sato’s speech affirmed that it would be in Japan’s ‘national interest to determine our response to prior consultation in light of the need to maintain the security of the Far East, including Japan...In particular, if an armed attack against the Republic of Korea were to occur, the security of Japan would be seriously affected’. This draft included a pledge that if Korea was attacked, and if US forces requested permission to use bases in Japan for a defence of Korea, then Tokyo would ‘decide promptly its position on the basis of the foregoing recognition’. Slightly softer language was used for Taiwan – an attack against Taiwan would be ‘dangerous to the peace and security of the Far East, including Japan’. Rather than a pledge to ‘decide promptly’, Japan would ‘keep a close watch on the situation and deal with it as our national interest requires’.130

Over the following months, this language evolved (see Table 3) into the speech that Sato delivered to the National Press Club on 21 November 1969. The most important addition was the commitment that in the event of an attack against Korea, Japan would decide its position not just ‘promptly’, but would rather decide ‘positively and promptly’.131 On Taiwan, the Japanese position became more explicit, but it was still a lesser commitment than that given to Korea. In his press club speech, Sato noted that if the US-ROC alliance was ever ‘invoked against an armed attack from the outside, it would be a threat to the peace and security of the Far East, including Japan...we would deal with the situation on the basis of the foregoing recognition, in connection with the fulfilment by the United States of its defense obligations’. The reference to America’s ‘defense

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130 Tokyo’s 6935 to Washington, 23 August 1969, Secret, Exclusive Distribution, NARA, SNF, 1967–1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2459. See also Meyer, Assignment: Tokyo, p.36. Though the difference in this language could possibly be attributed to the ROK’s lobbying efforts, the more likely explanation is that the language difference was due to Korea’s increased security importance to Japan.

131 Eisaku Sato, ‘Address to National Press Club’, 21 November 1969. An incomplete document in the National Archives suggests that at one point, the US pushed for this speech to promise a ‘prompt and favorable’ response. The document, of which page 3 is the only page available, is in NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460.
obligations’ appears to be important, as America had no treaty obligation to defend the offshore islands.\textsuperscript{132}

Although not all of the relevant records have been declassified, it is likely that these modifications—all of which were a strengthening of Japan’s initial position—were American suggestions, intended to reassure the ROC and ROK.

The US moves to manage the reactions of the ROC and ROK

In the lead-up to the Nixon-Sato summit, the ROKG continued its efforts to influence reversion negotiations. In an August interview President Park expressed his concern that a ‘downgrading of U.S. bases’ in Okinawa could be one of several factors that ‘may create power vacuum in this part of world’.\textsuperscript{133} The State Department assessed that the ROKG maintained the objective of securing new American bases in Korea, ‘particularly if U.S. bases in Japan and especially Okinawa are lost of their use is excessively circumscribed’.\textsuperscript{134} At a joint ministerial conference between South Korea and Japan, South Korean ‘FonMin Choi….stressed (1) Japan’s and ROK security closely connected: (2) from position ROK security, ROK seriously concerned about Okinawa reversion’. Choi also pressed Aichi in private, and was told that ‘GOJ advocates firm maintenance Japan-US Security Treaty’.\textsuperscript{135} Though less publicly vocal, the ROC was also concerned: an aide memoire was presented to the US, and in response Green ‘assured Ambassador Chow that we have fully in mind the security interest of the GRC and other countries directly concerned’.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{132} Sato, ‘Address to National Press Club’.
\textsuperscript{133} Seoul’s 4291 to Washington, 8 August 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 15-1 KOR S, Box 2279.
\textsuperscript{134} Memorandum for the President, 1 August 1969, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 7 KOR S, Box 2277.
Table 3: Showing the evolution of language in Sato’s speech to the National Press Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>General Statement - ROK</th>
<th>Prior Consultation - ROC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Aug 69</td>
<td>If an armed attack against the Republic of Korea were to occur, the security of Japan would be seriously affected. Japan would decide its position positively and promptly on the basis of the foregoing recognition. If the United States-R.O.C. treaty ever invoked against an armed attack from outside, it would be a threat to the peace and security of the Far East, including Japan. In view of our national interest, we would deal with the situation in the Taiwan area on the basis of the foregoing considerations, in connection with the fulfilment by the United States of its defense obligations.</td>
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The State Department was aware that the ROK and ROC’s concerns were likely to intensify as the Nixon-Sato summit approached. On 23 September, the Department cabled the US Embassies in Seoul, Taipei and Tokyo, suggesting that Dick Sneider, who was now playing a lead role in the reversion negotiations, visit the three countries. ‘Mr Sneider could...present general summary of negotiations and U.S. objectives re Okinawa to selected host government officials’. The US Embassy in Seoul cautiously welcomed this idea, but suggested that any briefing be done in a low-key manner. Diplomats also noted ‘ROKG has been relatively silent on this issue of late mainly because of indications that Japanese Government has taken into consideration ROK views’. The Embassy in Taipei reported that a visit by Sneider would be ‘most valuable’, even if it was used by the GRC to ‘reiterate their own views’.139

Though the American and Japanese Governments had made efforts to reassure both Korea and Taiwan, some reason for concern remained. In early October 1969, opinion polling in Japan showed that 56% of non-Okinawan Japanese believed that Japan should veto any American effort to defend Taiwan or South Korea from bases in Japan.140 Still concerned about the reversion negotiations, President Chiang informally invited a senior Japanese politician to Taipei. This politician intended to ‘explain GOJ’s position on Okinawan reversion and reassure GRC leaders about continuing conservative support for GRC’s security in post-reversion period’.141

In late October, Sneider visited Taipei. The US Embassy reported that his visit ‘appears to have been quite useful in bringing subject of Okinawa reversion into

140 See Tokyo’s 8276 to Washington, 8 October 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 2 JAPAN, Box 2242. 60% of Okinawans polled responded that Japan should veto such strikes.
more realistic discussion – despite lack of any state agreement on issues involved’. Sneider tried to reassure the ROC by describing ‘GOJ apparent recognition that U.S. capability to fulfil its defense obligations to other countries in East Asia like GRC and Korea was important not only for those countries, but also for Japan’. Sneider also ‘emphasized firmness of U.S. defense commitments as expressed by President Nixon’.142 Sneider briefed the Korean Prime Minister, in Seoul, on 7 November. The US Embassy reported that Sneider ‘simply indicated in general terms progress being made, ROK interests fully recognized by GOJ/US, and expressed belief ROKG would not find final results unsatisfactory but did not provide details’. The US Ambassador to South Korea felt that Sneider made a ‘masterful report to PM’ and that it should ‘prove most helpful in dealing with further reactions’.143

Despite the best efforts of the US and Japan, the ROC and ROK still feared that the reversion of Okinawa would jeopardise their interests. Only a few days before Prime Minister Sato arrived in the United States the GRC Foreign Minister, Wei Tao-ming—‘apparently on instructions from President Chiang’—met with Secretary Rusk. Rusk told him that the US had ‘worked hard in negotiations to provide for GRC security interests’, and intimated that ‘there will be language in joint communiqué which in effect will indicate that Japan will look affirmatively on our use of Okinawan bases to honor our treaty commitment to GRC’. Prior to Sato’s speech and the release of the Nixon-Sato communiqué, this appears to be the most explicit statement of reassurance given to either the ROK or ROC. Foreign Minister Wei seemed content, and said ‘If you find security arrangements satisfactory, I think we will go along with you on that’.144

142 Taipei’s 4306 to Washington, 28 October 1969, Secret, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460. Interestingly, the Japanese Embassy in Taipei found out about this meeting and requested that the American Embassy brief them on it. See Taipei’s 4305 to Washington and Tokyo, 28 October 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460.
143 Seoul’s 6147 to Washington, 8 November 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460. This cable mentions that the Japanese Embassy in Seoul also requested that the American Embassy brief them on this meeting.
The ROK’s concern persisted, and on 17 November 1969 they presented yet another aide memoire to the United States. This document noted that the ROK was ‘strongly opposed to any form of change which would impair value of the military bases and their speedy and effective utilization...any such change will inevitably entail adverse effect on security of ROK’.\(^{145}\) The ROKG also planned to summon the Japanese Ambassador and, ‘on direct instruction President Park’, issue him a similar document. The US Embassy in Seoul reported that according to the Korean Foreign Minister, and despite America and Japan’s assurances, the ROKG ‘continues to be concerned [with] issues [of] nuclear weapons and unrestricted use of bases in emergency’.\(^{146}\)

The communiqué and press club speech

With Sato’s press club speech and the release of the Nixon-Sato communiqué scheduled for 21 November, the Japanese and US governments prepared to brief the ROC and ROK as promptly as possible.\(^{147}\) The communiqué itself made provision for the full reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administration. The new Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, U. Alexis Johnson, described this as meaning ‘no nuclear weapons, and no direct operations against targets outside of Japan, without prior consultation’. But this was accompanied by Sato’s press club speech, in which he would imply that ‘the Japanese government would in practice respond favorably to American requests to use bases in both Japan and Okinawa in the event of communist aggression against Korea or Taiwan’.\(^{148}\) As Wakaizumi Kei recalls, ‘The two governments had...agreed that the prime minister would...reinforce Japan’s commitment (already expressed in the communiqué) to preserving security in the Far East, particularly with regard to Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam’.\(^{149}\)


\(^{149}\) Wakaizumi, *The Best Course Available*, p.308.
In order to shape media reporting on the communiqué and Sato’s speech, Johnson gave a background briefing in which he drew special attention to Sato’s comments on Korea and Taiwan. Johnson told the press that what Sato ‘intended to say in his speech (which had been the subject of long negotiation) had influenced what language we were prepared to accept in the communiqué’. The State Department also instructed its embassies in a variety of Asian countries to explain the communiqué and press club speech to their hosts. US missions were to note that despite US bases in Okinawa now being subject to the prior consultation clause, ‘forthright statements by Prime Minister [Sato]…provide basis for common understanding in the event of any contingency…Statements…regarding Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam merit special emphasis’.

The ROK and ROC reactions were, all things considered, mild. The GRC issued a statement in which it described the ‘joint communiqué’s attention to relationship between Ryukyu problem and Asian regional security as “appropriate”’. The US embassy assessed that the GRC was ‘resigned to what it considers an unwelcome development’. As might be expected given its higher level of concern, Korea was unwilling to signal even such a tacit acceptance of the US-Japan agreement. In an oral statement, the Foreign Minister simply noted that the ROKG ‘continually requested that both the United States and Japanese Governments take necessary measures not to reduce the value of United States military bases in Okinawa and not to impair their speedy and effective utilization’. Downplaying the significance of the Nixon-Sato communiqué, this statement expressed the ROK’s hope ‘that the position of the Korean Government will be fully reflected in future negotiations between the United States and Japan’. The US Embassy in Seoul considered the statement ‘relatively restrained in view of

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150 Johnson, The Right Hand of Power, p.546. Priscilla Clapp suggests that Johnson drew media attention to these phrases for the benefit of the American congress, but provides no supporting evidence for this claim. See Clapp, Managing an Alliance, p.34. At any rate, the evidence presented in this Chapter suggests that the need to manage the reactions of the ROC and ROK would also have very likely been an influence on Johnson’s press briefing.

151 Washington’s 195884 to various US Embassies in Asia, 21 November 1969, Confidential, NARA, RG 319, HCARI, Box 26.

intense concern of President Park over future US bases Okinawa. ROKG has cloaked its dissatisfaction because it cannot admit communiqué represents evidence its attempts influence US and Japanese Government to accept its “no change whatever” position have failed.\textsuperscript{153}

The nuclear issue

One particularly sensitive issue was that of nuclear weapons, and the possibility that they might be reintroduced into Okinawa during an emergency. Paragraph 8 of the Nixon-Sato communiqué was a masterpiece of diplomatic obfuscation:

\begin{quote}
The Prime Minister described in detail the particular sentiment of the Japanese people against nuclear weapons and the policy of the Japanese Government reflecting such sentiment. The President expressed his deep understanding and assured the Prime Minister that, without prejudice to the position of the United States Government with respect to the prior consultation system under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the reversion of Okinawa would be carried out in a manner consistent with the policy of the Japanese Government as described by the Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

The official explanation of this paragraph is that while Okinawa would revert to Japanese administration without any nuclear weapons present, the US Government could request the re-introduction of nuclear weapons under the prior consultation arrangements. However, in a secret minute, Sato and Nixon agreed that Japan would permit the reintroduction of nuclear weapons to Okinawa in times of crisis. This was not dissimilar to the pre-approval arranged in the secret “Korea Minute” of 1960, except that Sato promised to respond favourably during the prior consultation process, which would take place at the time of ’great emergency’.\textsuperscript{155}

Given the maritime nature of Taiwan’s defensive situation, and the more precarious continental situation faced by the ROK, it is unsurprising that the US might have made a special effort brief to Seoul on paragraph eight of the communiqué. The US Embassy in Seoul made some effort to brief the ROK, but

\textsuperscript{153} Seoul’s 6359 to Washington, 22 November 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460.
\textsuperscript{154} Text of Joint Communiqué, 21 November 1969, Department of State Bulletin, 15 December 1969, p.556.
\textsuperscript{155} Wakaizumi, The Best Course Available, p.236.
reported that ‘Both MOFA\textsuperscript{156} and Blue House professed inability understand implications of para 8 of communiqué on nuclear weapons. Would appreciate any additional interpretation you may wish to provide, but please keep in mind ROK propensity (especially FONO\textsuperscript{157}) to view with alarm details of any explanation we may offer’\textsuperscript{158}. The available records do not reveal the extent of any further explanation given to the ROK. It seems unlikely that the State Department would explicitly confirm to Seoul the existence of the highly secret nuclear agreement between Nixon and Sato. But this oblique reference raises the possibility that some further effort was made to reassure South Korea about American intent and capability to defend them with nuclear weapons, if required.

**The alliance audience effect from August – December 1969**

Despite America’s best efforts to reassure the ROC and ROK, they remained concerned that Okinawan reversion would damage their own security. With few other options to pursue, they continued to publicly and privately encourage—or occasionally demand—that the US not permit reversion to occur if it resulted in unacceptable restrictions to the use of military bases on Okinawa. The ROC and ROK presented several demarches to Washington, and publicly implored both the US and Japan to consider the regional role of Okinawan bases. These events support hypotheses 1 and 2 of the alliance audience effect framework.

The framework’s third hypothesis—which expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies—is strongly supported by the communiqué itself and the way it was explained by the United States. As the communiqué was being negotiated, the State Department continued its “hand-holding operation” by arranging for Dick Sneider to brief Taipei and Seoul on the negotiations. In Washington, Secretary Rusk reassured the ROC Foreign Minister that Taipei’s

\textsuperscript{156} Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
\textsuperscript{157} Foreign Office.
\textsuperscript{158} Seoul’s 6359 to Washington, 22 November 1969, Confidential, NARA, SNF, 1967-1969, RG 59, POL 19 RYU IS, Box 2460.
security would not be damaged by the reversion of Okinawa. Several drafts of the joint communiqué and Sato’s speech show that over time, the sections on Korea and Taiwan were made more explicit. Although the available documents do not prove it irrefutably, it is very likely that this reflected Washington’s determination to, in the words of Johnson, ‘signal to both friend and foe that USG military capability remains basically unimpaired’. This argument is supported by the fact that the US made a special effort to emphasise these carefully negotiated sentences: Johnson highlighted their significance to the press, and US embassies in Asia were instructed to emphasise them to host nations. It also appears that the US embassy in Seoul made a special effort to reassure the South Koreans on the issue of nuclear weapons rights. These extensive measures show that as Washington finalised the reversion negotiations, it paid close attention to how the joint communiqué and Sato speech would be perceived by other allies. Washington also sought to reassure allied capitals that the regional defence value of Okinawa would not be degraded by the island’s reversion to Japanese administration.

Conclusion

The alliance audience effect framework is clearly supported by the conduct of the reversion negotiations. As Marshall Green later reflected,

_The bases in Japan and especially the Ryukyus were also very important to carry out our treaty commitments in other parts of East Asia. To some extent, it might appear to our other allies in East Asia that the Japanese had some kind of controlling hand over the use of our facilities...That could wreak havoc with the fabric of our relationships with those countries._

While the administrative details of Okinawa’s reversion were negotiated after the Nixon-Sato summit—and actual reversion did not occur until 1972—the main negotiations took place from 1967 – 1969. During this period, the ROK and ROC closely observed the US-Japan relationship and sought information about the conduct of negotiations. The ROK was extremely concerned, and the ROC moderately concerned, that a reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty

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159 Tokyo’s 5907 to Washington, 18 July 1969, Secret, NARA, RG 319, HCARI, Box 19.
160 Interview with Marshall Green, 13 December 1988, ADST, FAOHP.
would diminish the ability of US forces to defend them against any act of aggression. Furthermore, if the US, as it negotiated with Japan, was indifferent to these ROK and ROC concerns, then this too would reveal that America did not consider the defence of the ROK or ROC to be important strategic interests. The efforts of the ROK and ROC to monitor these negotiations offer strong support for the alliance audience effect framework’s first hypothesis, which expects that a state’s actions in on alliance will influence how its allies perceive its reliability.

The framework’s second hypothesis expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk. The behaviour of the ROC and ROK throughout this period provides further support for this hypothesis. Concerned that the reversion of Okinawa might adversely affect their security, the ROK and ROC pursued several courses of action to mitigate the risk that Okinawan reversion could jeopardise their interests. Both countries repeatedly and consistently reminded the US and Japanese of their dependence on Okinawa and encouraged an outcome which would not impair the strategic value of US forces on Okinawa. They explored the possibility of a new collective defence organisation, PATO, but this idea—like the “Pacific Pact” two decades earlier—was not feasible without active American support. Fearful that the PATO concept might have posed a deliberate or inadvertent risk to the negotiations, the US encouraged Seoul and Taipei to adopt a low-key approach.

The knowledge that the ROC and ROK were closely watching the Okinawa negotiations prompted the US to proactively manage these relationships simultaneously alongside the negotiations with Japan. The archival evidence in this chapter provides very strong support for hypothesis three, which expects that America’s behaviour will be influenced by the prospect of alliance interdependence: the possibility that US actions are being observed by, and are influencing, other allies. As expected by the alliance audience effect framework, the US adopted a policy of simultaneous alliance management. A “hand-holding operation” was launched to reassure Seoul and Taipei – at first this involved

keeping the relevant allies informed of progress in the negotiations, but it also involved managing the alliances in a way that would minimise the risk of ROK actions impeding the US-Japan negotiations. Despite the US imploring the ROK to take a low-key approach, the possibility that Seoul’s rhetoric could jeopardise the US-Japan negotiations was a real concern for the American negotiators. The complex interdependencies at play in this situation provide strong support for the alliance audience framework. The ROK was watching the US-Japan negotiations and, concerned that its interests were at stake, privately and publicly emphasised the defensive value of Okinawa. These US-ROK interactions were in turn observed by Japan, and led the US to discourage the ROK’s lobbying efforts, lest they spark entrapment fears in Japan and hinder the reversion negotiations.

The final content of the Nixon-Sato communiqué and Sato’s press club speech show that in the reversion negotiations, Washington was aware that it needed to produce a result that would provide some reassurance to Seoul and Taipei. Over time, language in the communiqué and speech was strengthened so as to strongly hint that Okinawan bases could be used for the defense of Taiwan and South Korea. Johnson, in his background briefing to the press, went beyond strong hints and made it clear that these statements represented a Japanese commitment to respond favourably if the ROC or ROK were attacked. US officials knew that these alliances—though legally discrete—were practically interdependent.
Conclusion

Assessing the alliance audience effect framework

This dissertation has examined, critiqued and challenged one of the oldest and most commonly believed maxims of foreign policy: that disloyalty to one ally will undermine other alliances. This is a central tenet of deterrence theory and while it has swayed the judgement of leaders throughout history, it was especially influential on American decision-makers during the Cold War.

This concluding chapter contains three sections. The first summarises the alliance audience effect framework and evaluates its validity within the case studies examined. The second section identifies the substantial theoretical contributions made by the dissertation, and also discusses the framework’s limitations. The third section considers the alliance audience effect framework’s relevance for other alliance theories, and touches upon its practical and contemporary relevance.

Assessing the alliance audience effect framework

What did the case studies reveal?

The alliance audience effect framework expects that a state will observe its ally's behaviour in other alliances, and that these observations will affect that state’s beliefs about the ally’s reliability. If a state doubts its ally's reliability, then the framework predicts that they will act to mitigate the risks caused by this unreliability. If the ally is unreliable because they pose risks of entrapment, the state will attempt to distance itself from the ally's policies, reduce tensions, conciliate adversaries or restrain the ally. If the ally poses risks of abandonment, the state will seek to improve its security by reassuring themselves of common interests with the ally, by improving its own defence capabilities, by seeking new allies or by settling disputes with adversaries. If these two hypotheses are
supported, then the framework expects this causal dynamic to influence the behaviour of the common ally. The common ally might acknowledge the possibility of flow-on effects on other alliances, but seek to reduce these through a policy of “simultaneous alliance management”. Alternatively, the common ally might seek to manipulate this alliance interdependence for its own ends: in an effort to “set the example”, the common ally might deliberately adopt—or eschew—a policy within one alliance precisely because this decision will influence the attitudes of other allies.

**Hypothesis 1:** State C will monitor allied State A’s behaviour in the A-B alliance in order to better understand State A’s interests and capabilities. These observations will affect State C’s perceptions of State A’s reliability.

The case studies provided strong support for hypothesis 1. In the uncertain strategic environment of Asia after the Second World War, those states aligned with America carefully observed Washington’s policies toward other friendly nations. Given American vacillation and the obvious Communist threat to the Republics of China and Korea, policy choices such as the China White Paper, the withdrawal of US forces from the Korean Peninsula, and Acheson’s “defensive perimeter” speech all affected confidence in US reliability. Later, in the mid-1950s, America’s commitment to Nationalist China’s security was a worry to several US allies with security interests in Asia. While Formosa itself was of significant strategic value, most US allies could not say the same for the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The primary interest for these allies was the avoidance of a general war between the Communist and Western blocs, so these allies restrained Washington through diplomatic means and, ultimately, a refusal to fight alongside the US in any battle for the offshore islands.

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis—which featured US threats to use nuclear weapons against the People’s Republic of China—strongly influenced Tokyo’s concerns about US reliability. The Japanese people already chafed under the vestiges of the post-war occupation, but the one-sided security treaty did more than generate domestic discontent. America’s legal right to use bases in Japan
for any purpose related to the security of the Far East gave the United States the ability to commit Japan to a war against Tokyo’s will. Whereas, in the early 1950s, Japan had feared an American withdrawal from Asia, in the mid-1950s Tokyo feared that Washington’s bellicose attitude toward the Communist bloc posed perilous risks of entrapment. Finally, nearby allies like the ROC and ROK paid careful attention to the evolution of the US-Japan alliance relationship. While the 1960 revision did not imperil their security interests, the reversion of Okinawa certainly had the potential to do so. As US-Japan negotiations progressed in the late 1960s, Taipei and Seoul deliberately and carefully monitored these for any sign that Japanese administration of Okinawa would reduce its military value to the United States.

Hypothesis 2: If State C perceives its ally, State A, to be unreliable—as posing a risk of abandonment, or a risk of entrapment—then State C will attempt to mitigate this risk.

Hypothesis 2 expects that if a state perceives its ally to be unreliable, it will act to mitigate this risk. Again, the case studies examined provided strong support for this concept. In 1949 and early 1950, when states feared that America would withdraw from Asia, they adopted a variety of measures intended to solidify the US presence. Japan offered basing rights, while the ROC, ROK, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines pleaded for bilateral or regional security pacts. Countries supported America’s defence of South Korea by providing combat troops, base usage and logistical support. During the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, countries fearful of entrapment worked to restrain Washington: they used diplomatic means, like “Operation Oracle”, to monitor and influence US policy toward de-escalation. Japan, due to the 1951 Security Treaty, was unable to quickly mitigate the risk of entrapment, but did so over the longer term by revising its alliance with the United States to enable prior consultation for military operations launched from mainland Japan. Finally, from 1967 – 1969 the ROC and ROK lobbied Washington and Tokyo in an effort to ensure that their security interests were not jeopardised by negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa.
**Hypothesis 3:** State A’s actions will be influenced by the possibility that its behaviour in the A-B alliance will affect State C’s reliability perceptions.

The final hypothesis of the alliance audience effect framework expects that America’s actions will be influenced by the prospect of alliance interdependence: the possibility that its behaviour in one alliance will affect the reliability perceptions of other allies. The dissertation demonstrated qualified support for this causal relationship. There were several cases where the likely reaction of US allies was a key influence on American policy-making: the decision to defend South Korea, Eisenhower’s policy toward the offshore islands in 1955, and the conduct of Okinawa reversion negotiations were the most prominent instances. However, there were also a number of cases where the views of allies were disregarded by decision-makers – South Korea’s insistence that Quemoy held symbolic value did not sway Eisenhower, and Dulles was unworried about Japan’s fears during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. As discussed earlier, the common theme is that in these instances, the US held significant leverage and influence over their ally because of the ally’s limited realignment options. South Korea had no choice but to continue to rely upon the United States for security, and in the mid 1950s Tokyo was unable to quickly amend its security relationship with the United States. Such exceptions show that hypothesis three applies most strongly in cases where the observer ally has security options other than alliance with the United States. In such circumstances, Washington will consider, and be influenced by, the ally’s views. But when the ally has no other feasible security option, then the United States does not need to take special consideration of the ally’s position.

In summary, the case studies examined provide strong, but not unqualified, support for the alliance audience effect framework. As explained below, hypothesis 3 did not apply when the observer ally was completely dependent on the United States for security.
The framework’s contributions and limitations

Most importantly, this dissertation has demonstrated the need to carefully delineate between ideas of loyalty and reliability within alliance politics. These terms have often been regarded as synonymous, but the evidence examined has shown that states will not inevitably suffer a crisis of confidence if their ally is disloyal to one of its other allies. That is, a state’s disloyal treatment of one ally might be welcomed by the state’s other allies as proof of reliability. More important than any moral judgement about an ally’s “loyalty” is whether its actions demonstrate its reliability. During the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, most US allies were utterly unconcerned about the idea of American “disloyalty” to Taipei – indeed, most of them actively desired it. When North Korea launched several provocations on the Korean Peninsula in the late 1960s, South Korea protested America’s decision against a forceful response. The silence of other US allies, however, is unsurprising. America’s efforts to restrain Seoul demonstrated that Washington sought to reduce the likelihood of conflict on the Peninsula – an interest shared by America’s other Asian allies.

The second contribution of the dissertation has been to show that a state’s allies do not share a universal or common belief about that state’s alliance reputation. Because states have different interests, they will interpret allied behaviour in different ways. This was most clearly demonstrated during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis – Tokyo, London, Ottawa, Canberra and Wellington were all fearful that the offshore islands could spark a general war, and these capitals were relieved when the crisis subsided. For these allies, American reliability increased as security tensions decreased. But for the Republic of Korea—driven by Rhee’s desire to restart the Korean War—America’s unwillingness to defend the offshore islands was further proof that Washington’s interests were not convergent with those of Seoul, and thus US policy toward the offshore islands was evidence of American unreliability.

Thirdly, the dissertation has shown that it is useful for the United States to be perceived as a reliable ally, as this can prevent allies from adopting policies
contrary to Washington’s interests. States doubting the reliability of their ally will pursue policies designed to improve their own security, but these may not be—from Washington’s perspective—desired changes. Had there been more serious US-PRC military clashes during the Cold War, it is entirely feasible that Japan would have concluded that the best security policy available was a form of armed neutrality. Such a decision would have severely curtailed America’s military power projection capabilities in Asia. In order to demonstrate America’s reliability to Japan, Washington needed to adopt less confrontational postures towards the PRC and reduce the entrapment risk faced by Tokyo. Once the US did so, Japan was able to adopt a closer security association with the US, and also publicly accept its own role in regional security.

The final contribution of this dissertation has been to show that because alliance interdependence is underpinned by reliability, not loyalty, Washington can use this interdependence for its own purposes. It is often assumed that any form of alliance interdependence must work against American interests—entrapping or entangling Washington into unnecessary wars due to concerns for “credibility” or “prestige”. It is true that alliance interdependence has regularly required Washington to adopt a policy of simultaneous alliance management—it has needed to reassure observing allies that their alliance remains solid, despite events in another alliance. The reversion of Okinawa is a classic example of this dynamic—Marshall Green’s “hand-holding operation” was designed to reassure the ROC and ROK that their interests would not be sacrificed to reinforce the US-Japan alliance. However, there are instances where the US has successfully used alliance interdependence for its own purposes: to “set the example” of what behaviour is acceptable from allied states. Based on his observations of America’s firm negotiations with the Republic of Korea in 1953, Nationalist China’s President, Chiang Kai-shek, knew that in order to obtain his own alliance with the United States, he would have to sacrifice his dream of reuniting China by force.
Limitations

The alliance audience effect framework does have limitations. Most importantly, it does not predict how states will attempt to mitigate the unreliability of their ally – it offers no view on whether states will balance or bandwagon in response to allied unreliability. However, a few insights can be gleaned from the dissertation’s case studies.

In the period examined, the first instinct of US allies fearing abandonment was to seek information in an effort to more accurately judge and encourage American reliability. Once allies had done so—and they were confident that their interests converged with Washington’s—they then adopted policies intended to cement America’s presence and security responsibilities in Asia. Allies did this in a variety of ways: Japan sought to solidify America’s Asian presence through an offer of bases in 1950, Nationalist China encouraged America to guarantee Korea’s security, and Korea advocated an aggressive American approach in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. America was often, but not always, responsive to the concerns of its allies – it understood their apprehensions and, where it could, offered detailed explanations of its policies in an effort to reassure allied capitals. Though, during the 1949 – 1969 period, the first instinct of allies fearing abandonment was to reassure themselves of US reliability, this does not preclude the possibility that allies might, under different circumstances, increase their own defensive armaments, build nuclear weapons, or seek new security partners.1

When US allies feared entrapment, they shared these concerns with the US and attempted to influence US policy – their first instinct was to raise their different

perspective with American decision-makers in constructive attempts to resolve differences between friends. As expected by hypothesis 3, Washington was often responsive to these concerns. America’s actions were influenced by allied opinion throughout the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, although its overall policy of supporting the Nationalists was not quickly reversed by a lack of allied support. However, Eisenhower’s decision to not defend the offshore islands was influenced—arguably, even determined—by the concerns of US allies. The evolution of Washington’s policies during this crisis demonstrates the crucial influence that allies can have on Washington’s outlook and actions.

However, there were several instances where the concerns of allies were known to Washington, but did not appear to have a noticeable or immediate impact on US policy. Examples include Korea’s pleas for an alliance in 1949, Japan’s fears of entrapment during the mid-1950s, and Seoul’s encouragement of an aggressive policy in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. In these instances, US policymakers appear to have concluded that allied concerns did not require action. Korea would not align with the Communist Bloc simply because Washington was unwilling to sign an alliance. Japan could not quickly de-align itself from the US because of the unequal nature of the 1951 Mutual Security Treaty. In 1955, Seoul’s security was still completely dependent on America’s military presence—it was not going to adversely change its defence policies due to dissatisfaction with America’s approach to cross-Strait conflict. Accordingly, the preferences of these allies did not need to influence US policymaking. As noted in Chapter 4, examples like these show that the case studies examined provide only qualified support for hypothesis 3. The dissertation has shown that when a state’s ally is highly dependent on the alliance for security, and does not have feasible alternatives to the alliance, the state does not need to worry much about the possibility of an alliance audience effect.2

2 This is consistent with Glenn Snyder’s finding that states less dependent on an alliance for security have greater bargaining power within intra-alliance bargaining. See Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, Chapter 9.
Generalisability

The dissertation advanced and considered a narrow application of the alliance audience effect framework, but it also has wider relevance. Chapter 2 considered the formation of the first three Asian alliances, and the interdependence dynamics observed did not change significantly after the signing of the treaty texts. Given that these dynamics do not appear to have significantly changed even though an alliance was formalised, this constancy suggests that the alliance audience effect framework could be applied in situations where formal alliances do not exist. One advantage of the audience effect framework, therefore, is that it may not be limited only to alliance relationships. For example, “security partners” who cooperate militarily with the United States, but are not treaty allies, might observe America’s other relationships for indications of US reliability, and US allies might watch Washington’s treatment of non-allied security partners. In 1950, as security partners became formal allies, during treaty text negotiations the cross-alliance comparisons because more explicit and detailed: soon-to-be-allies scrutinised texts and agreements in a way that wasn’t possible earlier.

Further research is required to see whether the framework is applicable beyond America’s Asian alliance network. Promising avenues of inquiry include the Chinese reaction to Soviet policy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the reactions of America’s Middle Eastern security partners to the abandonment of the Mubarak Government in Egypt, and the examples provided in the dissertation’s Introduction. The framework might yield insights for understanding allied reactions, and alliance interdependence, beyond the Asian hub and spoke alliance system.

Other case studies from Asia in the Cold War

During the second half of the Cold War, America’s Asia policy entered a period of flux: US allies again had concerns about the direction, intent and constancy of US policy in Asia, and perceptions of American reliability appear to have declined in
response. The Nixon Doctrine and Okinawa reversion negotiations were followed by Nixon’s decision to reduce troop numbers in Asia (from ‘727,300 in January 1969 to 284,000 by December 1971’), an increasingly dissatisfied American Congress endeavouring to limit the President’s authority in conflict, the initiation of the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, the withdrawal of all combat troops from Vietnam in March 1973, Nixon’s resignation in August 1974, and the fall of Saigon in April 1975.³

The defence policies of US allies in this period deserve a book of their own, but perhaps the most important developments were the efforts of Korea and Taiwan to develop their own nuclear weapons. Several events are cited by different authors as being the catalysts for these efforts: most note the impact of the Nixon Doctrine, but other authors note that troop reductions in Korea, rumours of a complete withdrawal from Korea, and the eventual withdrawal from Vietnam may also have affected the ROK’s thinking.⁴ The ROC’s nuclear program is thought to have begun in response to the PRC’s successful nuclear test in 1964.⁵ But events in the following years gave Taipei further cause for concern: in 1969 the US cautiously approached a rapprochement with Communist China, and in November 1969 President Nixon ordered the 7th Fleet to no longer patrol the Taiwan Strait.⁶ Changes to the US-PRC relationship throughout the 1970s gave the ROC even more cause to doubt American reliability. In 1977, the US Embassy in Taipei warned that ‘The underlying security fears of the ROC...will continue to exist as our own role and policies in Asia develop and change, and our “protection” becomes increasingly less credible. These fears will continue to

³ Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, p.61.
⁵ For a general analysis of the ROC nuclear program, see David Albright and Corey Gay, ‘Nuclear nightmare averted’, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 54:1, 1998, pp.54-60.
provide some elements of the ROC with an argument for nuclear weapons development'.

In this period, the alliance audience effect was probably also at work in Japanese observations of American alliance behaviour. Although the US did reduce its forces in Japan, Victor Cha writes that Tokyo was also apprehensive about America’s posture on the Korean Peninsula: ‘Japan clearly linked the American troop cuts in Korea with its own security. Sato expressed his apprehension over the decision with uncharacteristic fervour in meetings with Secretary of State William P. Rogers’. Later, Cha claims that the withdrawal from ‘Vietnam and the Carter plan [for troop withdrawals from Korea] shook confidence in the United States as a reliable ally in Tokyo’. The evidence is limited, but exchanges such as this suggest that Japan—just like in 1950—had monitored American behaviour, was concerned by the withdrawals from the Korean Peninsula, and worried about American reliability.

America’s Vietnam War policies would also provide support for hypothesis 3. Johannes Kadura argues that although Nixon and Kissinger desired a situation in which South Vietnam might be propped up indefinitely by the limited intervention of American air power, a secondary ‘insurance policy’ was employed. This ‘two-track approach’ involved ‘further maneuvers to uphold South Vietnam and simultaneous disassociation from the ally’, so that if South Vietnam fell Washington could attribute this to Saigon’s incompetence, not a lack of American resolve or loyalty. In 1969, President Nixon’s Secretary of State and National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, said ‘However fashionable it is to ridicule the terms “credibility” or “prestige”, they are not empty phrases; other nations can gear their actions to ours only if they can count on our steadiness’. In language reminiscent of John Foster Dulles’ alarmist predictions during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, in February 1975 Kissinger told Secretary of Defense

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8 Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, p.71.
9 Cha, Alignment Despite Antagonism, p.176.
11 As quoted in Kadura, The War after the War, p.27.
Robert McNamara ‘if we lose Vietnam, Korea may go; Japan will shift and we will have bitter divisiveness here for years’. Such evidence suggests that beliefs about alliance interdependence were also very influential in the 1970s. However, it again appears that fears about the regional effects of “disloyalty” were not realised. As Kadura notes, ‘Korea, the Philippines, and to some degree Thailand were continuing to rely on Washington—they simply had no other option...Malaysia, Australia and Singapore were even turning more to the United States after the fall of Indochina’. Despite what some might have described as American disloyalty to South Vietnam, Washington’s allies maintained some confidence in American reliability. This again reinforces the usefulness of delineating between loyalty and reliability, and the need to worry most about the reaction of allies who have viable options other than their alliance with the US.

The rupture of ANZUS was perhaps the most dramatic alliance interaction of the 1980s, and it too appears to support the alliance audience effect framework. The New Zealand Labour Party, in its 1984 election platform, adopted a “nuclear-free policy”. After its election, New Zealand’s new government was warned by Washington that ‘it was incumbent on an ally to accept the visits of American vessels’, and this included those capable of carrying nuclear weapons. When the US requested that a vessel, the USS Buchanan, receive approval to visit New Zealand, the New Zealand Government decided that it would not permit a port visit unless the US confirmed that the Buchanan was not carrying nuclear weapons. This, of course, would have broken long-standing American policy, which was to “neither confirm nor deny” (NCND) the presence or position of nuclear weapons. New Zealand’s refusal to back down, and Washington’s refusal to break the NCND policy, led to the United States to suspend its alliance commitment to New Zealand. In August 1986, Shultz announced that ‘We part company as friends, but we part company as far as the alliance is concerned’.

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12 As quoted in Kadura, The War after the War, p.122. It is fascinating to note that Kissinger—the cold and calculating advocate of realpolitik—thought of credibility along the same lines as the morally-minded and religious John Foster Dulles.
13 Kadura, The War after the War, p.153.
15 As quoted in Hensley, Friendly Fire, p.267.
Why did the US react so harshly to one of the original Asia-Pacific allies? It was afraid of an alliance audience effect prompting other allies to adopt similar positions. As Gerald Hensley, a former New Zealand official writes, ‘New Zealand was small and remote but it was causing trouble to the United States and opened up the possibility of similar movements in Australia and Japan’. Had the United States caved in and broken the NCND policy, Washington feared that this would precipitate identical demands from other allies. As Hensley notes, ‘NCND was vital and the US could not have different policies among its alliances’. This is a clear illustration of hypothesis 3 at work – Washington believed that other allies would observe interactions within ANZUS, and that if a special deal was brokered with Wellington, then other allies would demand similar concessions. Accordingly, Washington dealt harshly with Wellington to “set the example” for other observing allies.

As expected by hypotheses 1 and 2 of the alliance audience framework, it does seem that developments within ANZUS were being observed by other allies, and affecting their beliefs about US reliability. Press reports at the time noted the obvious implications for the US-Japan alliance. One academic, writing about New Zealand’s efforts to receive explicit confirmation that US Navy vessels were not carrying nuclear weapons, assessed that ‘if New Zealand persists—and succeeds—it will be very difficult for the ruling party in Tokyo to deflect antinuclear forces in Japan’. The implications for the US-Philippines alliance were also considered in media reporting during 1986.

**Contributions to the alliance literature**

The alliance audience effect framework intersects with, and has relevance for, other components of alliance theory.

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16 Hensley, *Friendly Fire*, p.56.  
17 Hensley, *Friendly Fire*, p.266.  
19 Oberdorfer, ‘U.S. Withdraws New Zealand’s ANZUS Shield’. 
Alliance restraint

Research on alliance restraint—particularly restraining the nuclear ambitions of allies—intersects neatly with the alliance audience effect framework. Though an alliance might be formed in order to restrain a state, this alliance can then be observed by other allies. More alliances mean more possible data for observer allies, and thus the more alliances a state has, the greater its need to carefully manage the interdependence of these alliances. As Chapter 3 argued, a strong stance within one alliance relationship can “set the example” for other allies, and encourage them to adopt or eschew particular policies. In such scenarios, the alliance audience effect can manifest in two seemingly opposed forms. For example, in 1953 Eisenhower felt that allies would react poorly to any perceived abandonment of Korea, but neither could Washington allow Seoul to manipulate it into a war so obviously contrary to American interests. To allow this would be to set a dangerous example for other allies – it would show that America, out of concern for its reliability or loyalty images, could be manipulated by devious allies. By adopting a firm but fair policy toward Seoul, and explaining this policy to Taipei, Washington influenced Chiang Kai-shek’s expectations. In turn, Chiang calibrated his own alliance requests to minimise Washington’s entrapment risks and thus maximise his prospects of attaining an alliance.

Chapter 1 argued that at its extreme, the alliance audience effect could prompt a state—after having observed its ally’s behaviour in a separate alliance—to conclude that the ally was totally unreliable, and that the risk of abandonment should be mitigated by the development or acquisition of nuclear weapons. While this did not occur in the period considered, the attempted proliferation of nuclear weapons by US allies in the 1970s suggests that such scenarios remain plausible. Studies of attempted proliferation suggest that declining faith in the reliability of an ally can indeed prompt efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and

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the case studies in this dissertation show that events external to an alliance relationship can still influence member beliefs about the ally’s reliability.\textsuperscript{21} The possibility of allied nuclear ambitions will likely be a key focus for US policy over the next few decades. Unlike the 1970s, today some US allies in Asia may be able to develop nuclear weapons before coercive restraint attempts can stop them. As Washington considers this issue, the interdependent nature of the alliance system will also influence policy: the US will find it difficult to accept the nuclear status of one ally, but deny the same option to other allies.

\textbf{Client states and powerplays}

The dissertation’s findings also challenge Victor Cha’s “powerplay” thesis.\textsuperscript{22} Cha argues that a bilateral alliance system was formed so that America could maximise its control over client state allies, but the empirical material considered in this dissertation shows that the security commitments (and eventual alliances) granted to the ROC and ROK regularly limited Washington’s policy options. The formation of these alliances did enable America to influence Seoul and Taipei, but at no point did this approach effective control, and it is unclear as to whether Washington’s influence was actually increased by the signing of an alliance.

By signing alliances with Seoul and Taipei, Washington may have decreased its freedom of action—and perhaps its ability to restrain the ROC and ROK—because America had formally committed its “prestige” to their defence. The desire to ensure that other allies held favorable views of American reliability meant that Washington had to devote considerable time and attention to the ROK and ROC. In 1950, South Korea—even before it was a formal ally—had to be defended, lest Japan and other nations lose confidence in the United States and drift toward neutralism. In 1953, an intransigent Syngman Rhee could not be simply cut away—because it might be interpreted as another abandonment of South Korea—but nor could he be allowed to restart the Korean War. In 1955,

\textsuperscript{21} For a list of such research, see footnote 25 on p.15.
\textsuperscript{22} Cha, ‘Powerplay’ and Cha, \textit{Powerplay}. 
Washington lobbied the ROC to withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu, but US leaders—despite their best efforts—could not coerce Chiang Kai-shek into doing so. Indeed, Dulles complained to the New Zealand Ambassador, Leslie Munro, ‘on more than one occasion’ that many people viewed Chiang Kai-shek as ‘purely a satellite – that he would do what he was told to do by the Americans. He [Dulles] said that was far from being the case’.23

While the US was able to simultaneously manage its alliances, set appropriate examples and avoid the worst-case outcome in each instance, the security commitments given to the ROC and ROK might have actually decreased America’s ability to coerce them into actions that aligned with American interests. These countries were able to maintain confrontational postures towards more powerful adversaries only because their alliances with the US created the possibility of allied support. Though, as Cha argues, the bilateral structure of America’s Asian alliance system may seem to maximise Washington’s power over smaller allies, signing alliances created alliance interdependence, and this created the need to protect allied beliefs about American reliability. Thus, it could be argued that by signing alliances with the ROC and ROK, the US actually decreased its leverage over Taipei and Seoul.

The powerful influence of this interdependence stems from the bilateral nature of the hub and spoke alliance system. Significant bilateral interactions, when they occur in front of the alliance audience, can have system-level effects. This, in turn, raises questions about the importance of the ‘why is there no Pacific NATO?’ debate. The focus on this issue has meant that a possibly more important question—do the Asian alliances interact in a system-like fashion?—has, until now, been overlooked. Rather than comparing the Asian alliance system to the structure that developed in Europe, emphasis could be placed on understanding the dynamics unique to the hub and spoke system. Given that this alliance structure has system-like qualities, there is a greater need to examine the entire alliance superstructure and the interdependencies within it.

23 Interview with Leslie Munro, 10 September 1964, Wellington, JFD OHP, Mudd Library, Princeton University.
Free-riding through manipulation

In recent years, US allies in Asia have again complained about the uncertain direction of America’s strategic policy in Asia. Stephen Walt has expressed concern that by appealing to America’s ‘credibility obsession’, US allies could manipulate the United States into fighting unnecessary wars and subsidising their own security. Walt writes that ‘The credibility obsession also made it easier for U.S. allies to free-ride...because they could always get Uncle Sucker to take on more burdens by complaining that they had doubts about American resolve’. Walt is especially suspicious about such dynamics in modern Asia. Against the backdrop of aggressive Chinese actions, Walt argues that the credibility concept creates a situation in which US allies don’t make adequate provision for their own defence: ‘it is easier to complain about U.S. credibility than to dig deep and buy some genuine military capacity’.

However, it is not clear if America’s alliances function as Walt expects. Although Walt suggests that US allies can easily manipulate the United States by appealing to credibility, Washington has strong incentives to reject such efforts. In the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, self-interested appeals to US credibility—such as Seoul’s claim that ‘in this part of [the] world Quemoy can be [a] symbol, loss of which...would have serious repercussions in Asia’—did not achieve the desired result. Furthermore, on those occasions when Washington did suspect that allies were attempting policies of manipulation—such as Rhee’s efforts to obtain an alliance that did not restrict his desire for reunification—the US responded strongly in order to demonstrate that it could not be duped. The idea of manipulating allies by appealing to their credibility or reliability images is a promising area for further research, but the case studies considered in this dissertation do not support Walt’s thesis.

25 Walt, ‘Pay No Attention to that Panda Behind the Curtain’.
26 Seoul’s 283 to Washington, 10 September 1954, Secret, NARA, CDF, 1950-1954, RG 59, Box 4209, 793.00/9-1054.
Alliance entanglement

The alliance audience effect framework also has relevance for what Michael Beckley calls ‘entanglement theory’ – the idea that ‘alliances drag states into wars by placing their reputations at risk, socializing their leaders into adopting allied interests and norms, and provoking adversaries and emboldening allies’. Entanglement occurs when ‘loyalty trumps self-interest: a state is driven by moral, legal, or reputational concerns to uphold an alliance commitment without regard to, and often at the expense of, its national interests’. Concluding that American concerns about entanglement are often exaggerated, Beckley notes that on a number of occasions the views of US allies have influenced Washington toward policies of restraint.

This dissertation’s analysis of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis provides much greater detail on one of Beckley’s cases, and supports his conclusion that allied concerns about American reliability are not always prompts for a more aggressive policy from Washington. Though it can be argued that America’s alliances entrap or entangle it into unnecessary and costly conflicts, this dissertation’s case studies demonstrate the exact opposite dynamic at work. As Beckley notes, ‘allies often help...by...encouraging the United States to stay out of wars altogether’.

It is often assumed that because any interdependence between discrete alliance commitments must hinge on America’s loyalty, alliance interdependence only creates entrapment risks for the United States. By delineating between loyalty and reliability, this dissertation has shown that alliance interdependence can actually help to mitigate entrapment risks for the United States. If America’s general loyalty mattered most to other allies, then the US would never be able to effectively restrain an ally or abandon them in response to their own reckless


\[29\] Beckley, ‘The Myth of Entangling Alliances’, p.48. For Beckley’s summary of the literature arguing against alliances on grounds of entanglement, see, pp.7-12.
and aggressive behaviour. But there is a risk that excessive American loyalty could lead other allies to believe that Washington can be entrapped – to conclude that by appealing to America's reputation for credibility or its reliability image, they could manipulate America into a war against its interests. Because the US will never want its allies to believe that Washington can be easily manipulated, the alliance audience effect can actually protect the United States from getting too preoccupied with its own sense of loyalty. In short, Washington needs to be seen as reliable, but never gullible.

**Conclusion**

Ideas about loyalty, disloyalty, reputation and alliance interdependence have been powerful and pervasive influences on US policy. The belief that disloyalty to one ally would lead other allies to lose confidence in the United States almost resulted in war between the United States and Communist China in 1955. Absent psychological factors, the objectives would have been strategically worthless real estate: Quemoy and Matsu. But the real issue at stake was America's image as a reliable ally: Dulles was convinced that to abandon the offshore islands would cause other American allies to distrust the United States. As the preceding analysis has shown, this belief—based on the idea of a reputation for loyalty—was wrong. Other American allies like the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and Australia were concerned about a surfeit—not a deficit—of American loyalty to Nationalist China. These allies wanted American policy to demonstrate that Washington's interests were convergent with their own. They wanted an ally that was reliable – this was far more important than whether the ally was loyal to Taipei.

America's decision to intervene in the Korean War—and the ecstatic reaction of regional allies—might seem to challenge this sceptical treatment of loyalty. But these allies were not reacting to an affirmation of America's moral and upright national character – epitomised in its loyalty to Seoul. Rather, they were relieved that Washington’s interests were convergent with their own, and that common action could be concerted to achieve shared goals.
Jonathan Mercer concludes his book by arguing that the United States should not fight for its reputation, because commitments are not interdependent. The evidence considered in this dissertation challenges this argument. It is questionable as to whether reputations exist, given that each US ally is likely to have its own unique view on American policy, but there will undoubtedly be situations in which the likely reactions of allies will—and should—be a significant influence on US policymakers. It is usually assumed that alliance interdependence manifests in a way inimical to American interests—that the need to protect a reputation for loyalty will inevitably drag the United States into unnecessary conflicts—but this is not the case. US allies do not inevitably encourage aggressive responses, but they definitely observe, and are influenced by, American policy toward other allies.

Though alliance interdependence might create the risk that America’s concern for its reliability image could be manipulated by allies, the case studies examined do not suggest that this possibility is particularly problematic. Allies were usually honest and forthright in explaining their fears to the United States, and Washington—to its credit—usually listened carefully. Notably, alliance interdependence did not result in the entrapment or manipulation of the United States; rather, the need to demonstrate that Washington could not be manipulated by duplicitous allies was more influential than self-interested appeals to reputation.

In the 1949 – 1969 period, the first instinct of allies doubting American reliability was to cling closer to Washington: to seek reassurance, to gain access and insight, to influence US policy, and to reaffirm that US interests remained convergent with their own. But alternate reactions are possible: doubts about US reliability in the 1970s prompted some allies to start nuclear weapons programs, and these were only brought to an end by a combination of US coercion and reassurance. America’s policies should not be solely determined by the likely reactions of American allies, but it is folly to insist that these reactions should not be considered at all. By carefully managing alliance

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interdependence—either through simultaneous alliance management or the skilful setting of examples—US decision-makers adroitly managed their Asian alliances through the first twenty years of Cold War. Given the ongoing rise of China, divergent allied views and preferences, and recurring doubts about American reliability in Asia, similar finesse will be required in the years ahead.
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