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Alliance Formation, Domestic Political Economy, and Third World Security

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Because of its great-power and realist orientation, the theoretical literature on international alliances and alignments fails to provide an adequate basis for understanding the alignment behavior or broader security policies of contemporary Third World states. Focusing on the trade-offs political leaders make among domestic and international goals, this article argues that in these states, choices between external alliances and internal military preparations as alternative security strategies are often determined more by domestic political and economic considerations than by systemic structures and threats. Although the focus here is on Third World countries, this argument also has important but neglected implications for the great powers of the past.

Although it is now conventional to speak of the "long peace" since 1945, this peace has largely been confined to the great powers while the rest of the world continues to be engulfed by violent conflict. International war, which for centuries has been concentrated in the hands of the great powers, has for the last half-century gradually been shifting toward the Third World. The end of the Cold War, which some hoped might reverse this process, seems only to have accelerated it.¹ These trends are now reflected in the theoretical literature on international conflict and security. Whereas many Northern-oriented scholars have begun to direct their attention toward theories of cooperation and peace, focusing on topics such as the absence of war between democracies, and writing books entitled *The Long Peace*

and *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, Southern-oriented international theorists still focus on the reality of internal and external conflict.²

If we are to have any hope of reversing this intensification of warfare, we must better understand the sources of Third World conflict and security policy in a changing global system. In this article we focus on one integral piece of this puzzle—international alliances and alignments, which play a central role in Third World conflict and security policy just as they have for the great powers for centuries. In spite of the importance of Third World alliances, neither the literatures on alliance theory nor that on Third World security has much to say about their distinctive features.

The alliance literature, though theoretically sophisticated in many respects, is characterized by two features that limit its contribution to our understanding of Third World alliances and alignments. One is a substantive focus on the great powers; the other is a realist analytic perspective that emphasizes the external security interests of states and downplays the importance of domestic factors. As we shall argue, this external orientation contrasts sharply with the literature on conflict and security policy in Third World, which emphasizes the internal sources of security threats and foreign policy in the Third World. Much of the Third World security literature, on the other hand, is country or region specific, lacks a general theoretical orientation, and fails to build on some useful insights in the traditional alliance literature. To the extent that it deals with alliances and alignments, it often focuses on alliance policy in a bipolar world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union and says relatively little about alliances between weaker states.³

The great-power and realist orientation of the “mainstream” alliance literature and the limited theoretical breadth of much of the Third World security literature require us to draw insights from both if we are to understand more fully the dynamics of Third World conflict behavior in general and alignment behavior in particular. Our aim is to construct a conceptual framework for the analysis of alliance behavior that is more relevant to the Third World experience. We begin with a brief elaboration of the great-power and realist biases in the alliance literature and the limitations they impose for our understanding of Third World

security policy.⁴ We then explore the role of external alliances and alignments in Third World security policy through a theoretical framework that emphasizes both the domestic and international interests of Third World regimes; the internal and external threats to those interests; and the positive and negative trade-offs among these different interests. We conclude with a discussion of the potential impact of the decline of the Cold War on Third World security. Although our focus is primarily on the role of alliances and alignments in Third World security policy in the contemporary era, we will note that many of our theoretical arguments have important but generally neglected implications for the great powers of the past.⁵

THE ALLIANCE LITERATURE

Although international war has been shifting away from the great powers, the focus of the theoretical study of war and peace has been much slower to change, and a great-power orientation still defines most of the literature on international conflict. As Holsti argues, “Our organizing concepts, theories of international relations, strategic analyses, and explorations of systemic change . . . are based, explicitly or implicitly, on the patterns of European and Cold War history. Yet, since 1945, most wars have not initially involved the great powers.”⁶ This great-power orientation derives from the Eurocentric focus of Western international theory, the Rankean conception of European history as the history of the great powers, the great-power bias in balance of power theory and its longstanding preeminence in the field, and the influence of the Cold War and analogous European experiences on American academic thought.⁷ It has facilitated the analysis of many aspects of international relations, but it has impeded theoretical progress in the study of Third World conflict behavior and security policy.

Another aspect of traditional alliance theory that limits its relevance to contemporary Third World behavior is its strong realist orientation and emphasis on the primacy of external security interests and the constant threats to those interests in an anarchic international system. Thucydides, for example, argues that mutual fear of a third party is the only solid basis on which

an alliance can be formed and sustained, and Liska argues that "Alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something."⁸ In the face of external threats, states seek alliances for the primary purpose of enhancing their effective military capabilities through combination with others.

This "capability aggregation model" of alliances is inherent in the longstanding balance of power hypothesis that states, and particularly great powers, balance against stronger states to prevent them from attaining a position of dominance in the system,⁹ and historically bids for hegemony have always been opposed by blocking coalitions of other great powers.¹⁰ But the most militarily powerful actors are not always the greatest threats, and an alternative hypothesis is that states balance against threats rather than against power per se and that under some conditions states (particularly weaker states) bandwagon with stronger states rather than ally against them.¹¹ In either case, the emphasis is still on military power and security interests and the external threats to those interests and not on domestic factors. Although there has been a surge of interest in the domestic sources of security policy in the theoretical literature in the last few years,¹² this is only beginning to affect the study of alliances.¹³

The great-power and realist biases in the theoretical literature on alliances and alignments leave it relatively silent concerning Third World alliances in general or how state-society relations in particular might give rise to distinctive patterns of alignment behavior. Although there is a growing literature that argues that unit-level attributes—notably democracy—are important for understanding conflict and alignment patterns, our interest in state-society relations focuses on how they both limit the security choices available to Third World elites and provide a motivational basis for establishing an alliance. We attempt to show how the domestic political economy influences political leaders' formulation of state interests in general and their conception of security in particular, how it constrains political leaders' access to societal resources, and how it creates incentives to secure needed resources through external alignments in spite of costly alliance concessions and risks of entrapment.

Before we begin this discussion, it will be useful to distinguish our approach from the argument recently advanced by

David. Although David also examines the domestic sources of Third World alignments, he focuses more narrowly on the domestic political interests of the elite in power and minimizes the impact of economic variables. He argues that states engage in "omnibalancing" against both external and internal threats and highlights "omnibalancing's emphasis on aligning to resist threats rather than on aligning with the better provider."¹⁴

Although we agree that noneconomic political factors may be important,¹⁵ we give primary emphasis to the domestic political economy and to the interaction effects of economic and political variables. Internal economic weaknesses influence alliance choices directly by denying the state the economic resources necessary for a strategy of internal mobilization. They also influence alliance choices indirectly by reducing the level of domestic political support for the regime in power and imposing political constraints on further domestic sacrifices. In both cases there is an incentive for political leaders to ally with an economically more powerful state that might provide scarce resources, which, in turn, might help resolve internal economic and political problems.

One can find numerous cases that fit each of these causal sequences, but our argument is that the most frequent threats to the domestic security of Third World elites tend to originate in weaknesses in the domestic political economy rather than in more narrowly defined and autonomously generated political threats. Although David provides a strong argument that Mengistu's decision in the 1970s to align Ethiopia with the Soviet Union rather than with the United States was based on political rather than economic criteria, he is less convincing that Sadat's decision to ally with the United States was also made for political rather than economic reasons.¹⁶ We are sympathetic to David's overall claim that domestic threats represent an important source of external alignments, but we broaden our focus to include dynamics rooted in the domestic political economy.

THE DEFINITION OF STATE INTERESTS

The realist assumption that states have a hierarchy of goals and that external security needs dominate, whatever its validity for

the great powers of the past, is more questionable in the contemporary Third World. It has become commonplace among those who study Third World politics that political leaders tend to perceive the central threats to state security as deriving more from domestic than from foreign sources.¹⁷ These leaders not only give primacy to domestic interests over external security interests but even conceive of security primarily in domestic terms. Jackson and Rosberg observe that the principle of sovereignty affords many Third World states a measure of external security that they wholly lack in their domestic systems. The ability of many Third World political elites to enjoy even a modest amount of domestic stability is so limited that Rothstein concludes that for Third World states "the concern for political stability always prevails over a concern for economic development".¹⁸

Situations do arise, of course, in which militarily weak states face immediate and serious threats to their territorial integrity from more powerful neighbors, and they may have no choice but to respond to such threats through external alliances or internal military preparations. In this sense the traditional realist assumption that external security is a prerequisite for the achievement of all other objectives may be true.

It is important to distinguish, however, between the magnitude and the likelihood of security threats. Threats to territorial integrity are very high in magnitude but relatively rare, even for smaller states.¹⁹ Threats to other security interests such as the maintenance of a regional balance of power are greater in frequency but lesser in magnitude. These goals, which tend to dominate Western security thinking, are generally less compelling for Third World states, where leaders face enormous resource gaps and serious threats to social welfare and domestic political stability. We agree with Ayoob that in many cases "where external threats do exist they often attain saliency primarily because of the insecurities and conflicts that abound within Third World states."²⁰

The relative importance of external and internal threats is a function of several different factors. One is the strength of the state relative to society. Buzan focuses on the state's "sociopolitical cohesiveness" and distinguishes between "strong" and "weak" states in terms of the degree of political legitimacy.

Weak states lack any robustness, are highly permeable, face tremendous domestic threats, and therefore cannot give priority to any but the most direct, serious, and immediate external threats. The relative importance of external and internal goals, as well as the threats to those goals, may be reversed for strong states.²¹

Thus because state survival in the Third World is rarely at stake whereas governmental stability and survival frequently are, because state decisionmakers generally attend to immediate threats first, and because their risk orientations toward threats involving high values but low probabilities vary considerably, it is problematic to assume that external security goals will be given priority in the foreign policy calculations of Third World states. The relative priority of external security objectives and domestic goals will vary under different conditions for different states. The hierarchy of state goals and the trade-offs among them must not be defined a priori, but must instead be seen as an important question for empirical investigation.

Although we have spoken in terms of the dichotomy of external and internal goals of states, we must recognize that each of these may consist of several different dimensions. On the domestic side we can distinguish among the goals of social welfare, economic development, and domestic political stability (which in turn can be broken down into the stability of state structures and the stability of a particular regime in power). Although these domestic interests are closely interconnected and can easily be aggregated and contrasted with external interests, for some theoretical purposes it is useful to distinguish among these domestic interests and to recognize that they may not always be mutually reinforcing.

KEY TRADE-OFFS AMONG COMPETING INTERESTS

The theoretical literature has always recognized that alliances involve costs and risks as well as benefits and that there are alternative means for meeting external security threats. Balance of power theorists often note that states can rely on internal military preparations or external alliances.²² Alliances provide security guarantees and can be formed quickly in response to an

external threat but they involve some loss of autonomy and some risks of entrapment and abandonment, whereas internal means are more costly in economic terms. Only rarely, however, do these theorists explore the critical question of the conditions under which a state pursues one strategy rather than another.²³ Scholars have recently initiated more rigorous studies of critical trade-offs between competing interests and between alternative strategies for achieving those interests. In particular, in the formal theoretical literature there has been some discussion of trade-offs between the goals of security and autonomy and those between the strategies of internal mobilization and external alliance.²⁴

Although these studies have begun to integrate internal budgetary constraints into their models of the trade-offs between internal military buildups and international alliances, they generally ignore the domestic political dimension of these strategic choices and the unique constraints affecting Third World states. The domestic implications of the loss of autonomy generated by external alignments²⁵ may be especially high for Third World states with a historical tradition of external dependence and with tenuous claims to domestic authority, particularly if the alignment concessions are perceived to infringe on the sovereignty of the state and if these concessions involve the presence of foreign troops or interference in their domestic political affairs.²⁶

States can often avoid the costs incurred by external alliances by relying on a strategy that involves the internal mobilization of military resources. This avoids the loss of autonomy and the risks of abandonment and entrapment involved in external alliances, but it may involve other costs. The extraction of resources for armaments may provide short-term military security, but at the cost of weakening the long-term strength of the economy and therefore the long-term military potential and security of the state.²⁷ Moreover, some societies may simply lack the resources to support a military establishment adequate to deal with their security threats.²⁸ Military spending also can reduce a state's ability to satisfy important domestic welfare goals, which may in turn generate social discontent and undermine domestic political support for the regime in power.

EXTERNAL ALLIANCES AND THE QUEST FOR RESOURCES

The discussion to this point has focused on variables that influence state choices between alliances and armaments as alternative strategies for dealing with external security threats. But political leaders form external alliances or alignments for another reason besides the security guarantees that they provide: namely, to secure resources that they urgently need to deal with pressing internal problems and to reinforce their own hold on positions of political power. Allies often provide economic resources that benefit the economy as a whole or certain supporters of the regime in power, or military resources that can be used for internal as well as external security purposes.²⁹ The importance of alliances as a source of economic resources, military equipment, and—particularly in earlier times—manpower³⁰ is generally ignored by a literature that derives from the European great-power experience and that conceives of alliances exclusively in terms of the external security guarantees they provide. The resource-securing function of external alignments is particularly important for Third World leaders and its neglect in the theoretical alliance literature is a serious omission.

The role of external allies in providing critically needed economic resources suggests that relatively well-endowed great powers are particularly desirable as alignment partners for Third World states. This is not always true, however, and economically well-endowed regional actors may also be sought as allies quite independently of the security guarantees that they might provide, as illustrated by Egypt's turn to the oil-rich Gulf states in 1973.³¹ Moreover, the economic benefits of an alignment with a great power might be offset by domestic political costs generated by the perception of excessive alignment concessions or of a historical tradition of exploitation by and dependence on the external power (see our subsequent discussion of the case of Jordan).

Although the alignment concessions required to secure external resources—whether to deal with external or internal threats—may be substantial, a strategy of internal military mobilization of resources can be even more costly (as well as much slower). It diverts resources from important social welfare

and economic development goals, and the inability to satisfy these goals at some minimal level can generate social discontent and undermine political support for the regime in power. The unwillingness to choose between these highly valued but costly goals often leads to the simultaneous pursuit of several of them, which only accentuates the "resource gap."³² In order to minimize the resource gap without causing a sacrifice of multiple and costly domestic political and economic objectives, state officials have incentives to rely on external alignments and the resources they provide rather than on costly internal efforts to deal with external security threats.

These strategic choices are all the more difficult because many Third World regimes are held together by a narrow base of political support and by tenuous coalitions that are often secured less by a mobilizing ideology than by material benefits that can be delivered by state managers.³³ This further sharpens the tension between the national security, social welfare, and domestic political interests of many regimes. Although defense spending frequently placates the military, which is nearly always a critical coalition partner, it can also lessen the ability of the regime to maintain its basis of political support by diverting resources that might otherwise be used to distribute financial rewards and privileges to other coalition members. That is, extraction processes, far from strengthening the state's military power against foreign challengers, might quicken the government's demise at the hand of its own society.

State leaders' interest in forming external alignments to secure badly needed resources for both internal and external goals is reinforced by the fact that those leaders do not always have direct and immediate access to all of society's resources. The realist conception of an autonomous state that can mobilize the material resources of society in a frictionless manner³⁴ is as inappropriate a characterization for security studies as it is for studies of foreign economic policy.³⁵ State officials are constrained in their efforts to satisfy their external and internal goals by budgetary limitations and by political and economic structures that limit their access to societal resources.

The extent to which political leaders have access to the resources of society (or can bargain for them at a reasonable political cost) is a function of the strength of the state relative to

society. But even supposedly strong states can face substantial societal constraints. In his study of Israeli and Egyptian alignments, for example, Barnett argues that a primary motivational basis for each of these supposedly strong states' decision to ally with its superpower patrons was the societal constraints on the state's access to the means of war. This was particularly true during the post-1967 period, when government leaders were pinched between a highly charged international environment and an increasingly unforgiving domestic environment.³⁶

Because effective military power is a function of the state's ability to extract economic resources from society and to use them for productive military purposes, and because states differ in their extractive and mobilizing capabilities, the attempt to measure this dimension of state strength in society facilitates the construction of more valid indicators of a country's effective military strength.³⁷ It is important to recognize, however, that military capability and the resources on which it is based are not unidimensional entities. We must distinguish in particular between men, money, and material as distinct components of societal resources that underlie military power and potential.³⁸ State extractive capacities vary across these components, and the domestic costs to political leaders for access to these resources also vary. Each of these factors affects state choices between self-reliance and reliance on others for security needs.

It is well recognized that most Third World states have little infrastructural capacity and therefore have few policy instruments to penetrate and extract resources from society.³⁹ Therefore, most Third World leaders tend to rely on indirect methods of resource extraction. Indirect methods offer a dual advantage: they not only are less visible, and therefore less likely to generate societal resistance, but because they are also regressive they are less likely to go against the interests of the dominant classes. In general, revenue extraction is one of the most controversial and politically explosive issues confronting Third World leaders, and a too concerted effort can easily undercut the government's foundations.

The state's production of armaments is constrained principally by the country's economic structure. The only countries that have achieved self-sufficiency in the production of most major weapons systems are those with a large GNP, an expan-

sive industrial base, and numerous high-technology industries.⁴⁰ Although many Third World governments would prefer to have an independent arms production capacity and thereby preserve their autonomy, this goal is constrained by an insufficient industrial base, the inability to achieve the desired economies of scale, and a lack of appropriate technology, all in an age in which military technology has become increasingly sophisticated and expensive.

Although the societal constraints on the ability of Third World states to mobilize money and material are well recognized, their impact on the mobilization of manpower is equally important but frequently ignored. States often allow economic and domestic political considerations to affect the social composition of their military establishments. They may exempt certain elements of the population from conscription in order to allow them to remain in economically productive sectors, or to avoid alienating politically influential groups, and only when the state is confident of its hold on power is it willing to allow subordinate classes access to instruments of coercion that might also be used for rebellion. Thus there tends to be a direct positive relationship between the state's legitimacy and its ability to conscript widely.⁴¹ Because of the low levels of legitimacy and political stability of many Third World regimes, most of these states avoid mass conscription and rely instead on an army drawn from individuals that have demonstrated their loyalty to the state, either through kinship ties or patron-client relations.⁴²

Note that this argument applies to some of the great powers in previous eras as well as to contemporary Third World states. Although Prussia is a classic case of a militarized society in which domestic welfare is sacrificed for the sake of the military power of the state, Howard notes that King Frederick William I (1713-1740) organized the Prussian army "with infinite care to impose the least possible strain on the fragile economy of his lands."⁴³ A century later the fear of the revolutionary potential of mass armies, and the conviction that the Napoleonic style of warfare was more conducive to overturning the states system of Europe than to preserving it, were the primary reasons why at the end of the Napoleonic Wars most great powers reverted to the eighteenth-century pattern of "aristocratic officers and long-serving professional troops kept isolated from the rest of the

community."⁴⁴ That is, the army was seen as an instrument of the dominant class for the maintenance of social order as much as a Clausewitzian instrument of national policy.

These economic and political constraints on the state's mobilization of societal resources can be a powerful incentive to make alignment concessions to others in return for military support for dealing with both internal and external threats to state security and political stability. The domestic political economy structures the strategic opportunities available to state leaders, and thereby shapes the trade-offs between a policy of internal mobilization and strategic alliances. Because most advanced industrial democracies have higher capacities and therefore face fewer societal constraints than do Third World states, they are better able to consider an internal mobilization policy should they perceive that a strategic alliance might come at tremendous cost to their autonomy. Conversely, because most Third World states have neither the legitimacy, the infrastructure, nor policy instruments, they will often be more willing to rely on external allies (and to accept a degree of dependence) than to divert scarce internal resources into the military sector.

One can find numerous examples that fit our emphasis on the resource-providing function of international alliances and alignments. One is the alignment behavior of Jordan's King Abdullah before 1951. As the head of an Arab state that had no major cities, natural resources, or national identity, and whose very existence was the strategic invention of the British Empire to serve British interests, Abdullah attempted to maintain his domestic stability and regional legitimacy by relying on his strategic importance to Britain and the financial resources that he could extract on that basis. Although Abdullah could not do without Britain's financial assistance, he could do without the stigma that accompanied an Arab leader who was too closely associated with an imperial power. He attempted to mitigate his perceived dependence on Britain by constructing alignments with other Arab states in general and establishing his credentials as leader of the pan-Arab movement in particular. Abdullah's complex alignment patterns were designed primarily to increase the flow of material resources to the regime for domestic survival and secondarily to increase his domestic and regional ideological standing. He perceived no short- or medium-term

external threat to the state (even Israel was not perceived as an immediate threat), and consequently a realist emphasis on capability aggregation and balancing against external threats misrepresents the motivations behind King Abdullah's foreign policy.⁴⁵

A similar story holds for post-1945 Syria. As a weak state that was both highly penetrated by other states and haunted by domestic instability, the ruling Ba'ath Party's decision in 1958 to form the United Arab Republic with Egypt was driven more by domestic than international threats. It is best understood as a desperate move by the Ba'ath to avoid the prospects of having to form a coalition with domestic rivals. As Seale argues, "it was . . . the Ba'ath's [domestic] weakness . . . which caused it to press with special urgency for a formal link with Egypt. . . . A union with Egypt seemed to the party the means whereby it could triumph over its local rivals and propagate its doctrine to the whole Arab World."⁴⁶ Fears of external dependence were outweighed by the relative gains it would make over domestic rivals.

ADDITIONAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This discussion of the domestic sources of international alignments and alliances has some important implications for the relative-gains debate in international relations theory. Whereas structural realists argue that states aim primarily to maximize gains relative to adversaries and that this positional orientation impedes international cooperation, neoliberal institutionalists argue that states are concerned primarily with absolute gains and that this facilitates cooperation. Much of this debate focuses on the international structural conditions that shape state incentives and impede or facilitate interstate cooperation.⁴⁷

What is missing in this debate is the acknowledgment of a domestic dimension, particularly for Third World states. Third World political leaders, we argue, are more concerned with the impact of international outcomes on their own political gains or losses relative to their domestic rivals than with either relative or absolute gains on the international level. Because Third World leaders frequently give primacy to domestic interests and threats

to those interests, under conditions of particularly severe internal threats they may be willing to enter into international arrangements that leave them worse off relative to other foreign actors but better off relative to domestic actors. This was clearly evident in Syria's decision to enter into a union with Egypt, but the extent to which this pattern can be generalized to other Third World states or to other states is an empirical question that needs to be investigated.

A similar argument can be applied to Krasner's modified realist hypothesis that the New International Economic Order represents an attempt by Third World political leaders to increase their power vis-a-vis the West.⁴⁸ Krasner argues that these leaders prefer authoritative over market mechanisms because of vulnerability of the latter to economic fluctuations in the world economy; that is, Third World leaders attempt to increase their resource base by drawing on international sources to better their domestic position. The critical but unstated assumption here is that the threats to which Third World leaders are vulnerable are the *domestic*, not foreign, threats that are unleashed by changes in the world economy. Our hypothesis—which remains to be tested empirically—is that the demand by Third World decisionmakers for the NIEO may be motivated more by an interest in securing their position and power against domestic rivals than in increasing their power relative to the West. Third World leaders may be interested in positional considerations and relative gains, but with respect to domestic rivals rather than foreign ones.

It is important to note that our emphasis on the domestic constraints on the security choices available to Third World states does not imply that those constraints are entirely internal in origin. The underlying sources of these constraints on Third World states derive to some extent from the colonial experience and from the nature of the capitalist world-economy. In other words, the structure of the international system, and the incorporation of the Third World state within that structure of authority, have limited the ranges of strategic choices available to Third World leaders in general and largely precluded an internal mobilization policy in particular. Therefore, when faced with severe external threats Third World states are more likely than are their First World counterparts to "bypass bargaining

with their subject population," as Tilly argues, and go to external sources for assistance in dealing with their security needs.⁴⁹

One consequence of this process is to reproduce both the Third World state's "alien" nature and, consequently, its limited strategic choice set. This is so for two reasons. First, leaders have lost an opportunity to generate some domestic consent that is produced when they bargain with societal groups for access to the means of warmaking. Second, by turning to external sources of support these already less than legitimate governments are likely to be viewed as even less so than they were before. As a consequence, many Third World states are caught in a cycle: because of their historical evolution within and relationship to the international system, when faced with external security threats they generally seek external assistance, which only serves to reproduce their lack of legitimacy and narrow strategic choice set.

In suggesting this line of argument, we attempt to draw a direct analogy to the dependency paradigm that recognizes the relationship between: (1) the evolution of the Third World state within an already constituted international system; (2) how an externally influenced domestic political economy and international environment significantly limit the strategic choices available to Third World leaders; and (3) how these constraints often propel Third World leaders to act in a manner that reproduces both their weak domestic position and their dependent international situation.

These considerations lead us to hypothesize that the ability of state leaders in the Third World to secure international resources in order to deal with external and internal threats and improve their domestic positions might lessen in the new post-Cold War environment. The ability to secure external resources was dependent in part on a particular international environment, namely, a bipolar superpower rivalry in which security was perceived in zero-sum terms and that made many Third World states key strategic bounties. The decline of the Cold War has altered that international structure and will reduce the resources available to certain strategically placed Third World countries.

One implication is that Third World states, less able than in the past to extract resources from the international community

to placate domestic groups, might be more vulnerable to threats from society and less able to maintain their positions of power and prevent domestic conflict and violence. Another is that state leaders will face greater pressure to accommodate their societies, and that this process might finally generate greater legitimacy and establish a tighter state-society compact. In the long run, this might help to decrease the frequency and salience of internal security threats.

CONCLUSION

We reject the realist assumption that international alliances and alignments are formed primarily in response to external security threats. We argue instead that an explanation of alliance formation and of the trade-offs states make between internal military preparations and external alliances must include the domestic as well as foreign policy goals of state leaders and the domestic political and particularly economic constraints that limit their freedom of action.

This is especially true of Third World states, where the legitimacy of the regime is often tenuous, where salient security threats are often domestic in origin, and where threats to economic subsistence and domestic political stability are usually severe. The ability of political leaders to build up their armaments is often seriously constrained by inadequate resources, by competing demands on those scarce resources imposed by the needs of social welfare and economic development, by limits on the access of state officials to the resources of society, and by political pressures on regimes with a precarious base of domestic support. Political constraints against extensive conscription are even greater. These domestic and international conditions create strong incentives for Third World political leaders to form external alignments to secure urgently needed economic and military resources to promote domestic goals, respond to external and internal security threats, and consolidate their domestic political positions.

This picture of the sources of international alliances and alignments in the Third World departs in significant ways from the capability aggregation model advanced by realist theory. It

raises serious questions as to whether theories of alliance formation developed for the great powers and modeled on the recent European experience can be directly applied to the contemporary Third World. But it also raises questions about the validity of the capability aggregation model of alliance formation for the European great powers themselves—especially in the early stages of state formation in the first few centuries of the modern system, but also during the last two centuries.⁵⁰ Political scientists have finally begun to catch up with historians in recognizing the influence of domestic political and socioeconomic variables on military preparedness, imperial expansion, and the outbreak of war,⁵¹ and it is time that same sensitivity to domestic factors begins to inform theoretical and empirical research on alliances and alignments.⁵²

NOTES

1. On the distribution of past wars, see Q. Wright, *A Study of War*, 2nd ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). On the shift of war toward the Third World, see J. D. Singer, "Peace in the Global System: Displacement, Interregnum, or Transformation," and M. Brecher and J. Wilkenfeld, "International Crises and Global Instability: The Myth of the Long Peace," in C. W. Kegley, Jr., ed., *The Long Postwar Peace* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), Chs. 3-4.

2. M. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80 (December 1986): 1151-61; J. Gaddis, *The Long Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); J. Mueller, *Retreat From Doomsday* (New York: Free Press, 1990). On Third World conflict, see B. L. Job, ed., *The Insecurity Dilemma* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 1992).

3. Robert Rothstein, for example, generally neglects minor-minor alliances and focuses primarily on European small powers who face direct threats from a great power (*Alliances and Small Powers*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1968). See also M. Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers* (New York: Free Press, 1972); M. Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, 1981). Note that to the extent that great powers are generally better economic providers than are other states, we focus more on great powers than on regional actors as alliance partners of Third World states.

4. Although neither a great-power bias nor a realist perspective necessarily implies the other, there may be some connection. The fact that great powers by definition are well endowed economically relative to other states has directed attention away from the question of internal resource constraints that might drive alliance behavior. Great powers have also been perceived (with some exaggeration) to be politically more stable than other states, and this has directed attention away from internal security threats that might influence the trade-offs political leaders make between armaments and alliances.

5. For the purposes of this study we define an alliance as a formal or informal relationship of cooperation between two or more states involving mutual expectations of some degree of policy coordination on security issues under a range of conditions in the future. Thus we define alliance broadly to include informal alignments as well as formal alliance treaties. This is consistent with S. M. Walt, *The Origin of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), which can be consulted for a survey of definitions.

6. K. Holsti, "International Theory and War in the Third World," in Job, *Insecurity Dilemma*, pp. 38-39.

7. The World War I case has been particularly influential, and many of our theories of alliances derive from the view of the destabilizing consequences of the rigid and interlocking alliance system of 1914. On great-power biases in the international conflict literature, see J. S. Levy, "The Causes of War: A Review of Theories and Evidence," in P. E. Tetlock, J. L. Husbands, R. Jervis, P. C. Stern, and C. Tilly, eds., *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, Vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 215-216.

8. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner (New York: Penguin Books, 1954); G. Liska, *Nations in Alliance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), p. 12. Similar statements can be found in W. L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Press, 1964); O. Holsti, P. T. Hopmann, and M. D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances* (New York: Wiley, 1973), pp. 4-14; Walt, *Origin of Alliances*, Chs. 1-2.

9. H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); E. V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1955), pp. 58-62; K. N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), Chs. 6, 8.

10. L. Dehio, *The Precarious Balance* (New York: Vintage, 1962); J. S. Levy, "Theories of General War," *World Politics* 37 (April 1985): 344-374.

11. Walt, *Origin of Alliances*; R. Jervis and J. Snyder, eds., *Dominoes and Bandwagons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

12. See the reviews by J. S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (Spring 1988): 653-673; and M. N. Barnett, "High Politics Is Low Politics: The Systemic and Domestic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967-77," *World Politics* 42 (July 1990): 529-562.

13. The emerging literature on the domestic sources of alliances includes S. R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics* 40 (January 1991): 233-256; M. N. Barnett and J. S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-1973," *International Organization* 41 (Summer 1991): 369-395; D. W. Larson, "Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?" in Jervis and Snyder, *Dominoes and Bandwagons*, pp. 85-111; M. McCinnis, "A Rational Model of Regional Rivalry," *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (March 1990): 111-135; J. D. Morrow, "Arms Versus Allies: Trade-offs in the Search for Security," *International Organization* 47 (forthcoming, Winter 1993).

14. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," p. 250.

15. For example, we emphasize the social and political rather than economic constraints on conscription strategies.

16. Years of war preparation had bankrupted the Egyptian economy, and Sadat desired a new policy that would infuse the Egyptian economy with newfound oil wealth from the Gulf States and with Western capital. External factors were also important, in that Sadat believed that only Kissinger could deliver

Israel. See M. N. Barnett, *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State, and Society in Egypt and Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

17. E. Azar and C. Moon, eds., *National Security in the Third World* (Hants, U.K.: Edward Elgar, 1988); M. Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of the Third World," *World Politics* 43 (January 1991): 257-283, at 263; A. Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in A. Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); A. Rouquie, *The Military and the State in Latin America*, trans. P. E. Sigmund (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); David, "Explaining Third World Alignment"; Holsti, "International Theory."

18. R. Rothstein, "National Security, Domestic Resource Constraints, and Elite Choices in the Third World," in S. Deger and R. West, eds., *Defense, Security, and Development* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), pp. 140-158. See also R. Jackson and C. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics* 35 (October 1982): 1-24; J. S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), pp. 179-182.

19. Thus Strang notes that "in over five centuries of Western expansion, only 11 non-European polities recognized as sovereign have been formally subordinated as dependencies"; D. Strang, "Anomaly and Commonplace in European Expansion: Realist and Institutional Accounts," *International Organization* 45 (Spring 1991): 154. See also Rothstein, *Alliances*, p. 247.

20. Ayoob, "Security Problematic," p. 263.

21. B. Buzan, "Peoples, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in the Third World," in Azar and Moon, *National Security*.

22. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance*.

23. In the last decade many realpolitik theorists have followed Waltz (*Theory of International Politics*) and argued that "external balancing" through alliances is more common in multipolar systems whereas "internal balancing" through arms production is more common in bipolar systems. This hypothesis may be true for the great powers but it has little to say about the alliance behavior of Third World states. Interactive effects with the offensive/defensive balance of military technology are added by T. Christensen and J. Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization* 44 (Spring 1990): 137-168. On different strategic trade-offs in bipolar and multipolar systems, see G. H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36 (July 1984): 461-495.

24. M. F. Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test," *Western Political Quarterly* 37 (December 1986): 523-544; J. D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (November 1991): 904-933; McGinnis, "Rational Model." For a quantitative study of these trade-offs for the great powers during 1870-1914, see B. Most and R. M. Siverson, "Substituting Arms and Alliances, 1870-1914: An Exploration in Comparative Foreign Policy," in C. F. Hermann, C. W. Kegley, Jr., and J. N. Rosenau, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 135.

25. External alignments may, under some conditions, generate political benefits for state leaders by enhancing their legitimacy; Larson, "Bandwagon Images," pp. 92-94.

26. These domestic political implications are given more attention by McGinnis, "Rational Model"; Barnett and Levy, "Domestic Sources"; Morrow, "Arms Versus Allies." Also Liska, *Nations in Alliance*, Ch. 5; Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, pp. 49-50; McGinnis, "Regional Rivalry."

27. K. Knorr, *Military Power and Potential* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1970); R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987). For a formalization of the trade-off between short-term military power and long-term economic development and military potential, see E.M.S. Niou, P. C. Ordeshook, and G. F. Rose, *The Balance of Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

28. This is emphasized by R. Rothstein, *The Weak in the World of the Strong* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

29. This includes training a state's military establishment as well as providing military equipment; see Singer, *Weak States*, pp. 297-303. On the importance of internal security, see note 17.

30. On the importance of mercenary armies in the early modern period, see M. Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), Ch. 2.

31. Barnett, *Confronting the Costs*. Note also that our resource-seeking model of alliances is not confined to Third World states. The Soviet Union's willingness to abandon its longstanding support of Iraq and align with the United States and the West in the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf crisis had little to do with external security concerns or balance of power politics. It was motivated instead by the need for access to the economic resources of the West in the context of the dismal performance of the Soviet economy and the implications of economic failure for Gorbachev's hold on political power.

32. Rothstein, *Weak in the World of the Strong*, Ch. 6; Rothstein, "National Security," pp. 140-158.

33. C. Clapham, *Third World Politics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). State officials also attempt to maintain or enhance their domestic political support through symbolic means, including the pursuit of belligerent foreign policies to rally the population around the patriotic symbols of the nation. See J. S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in M. Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 259-288.

34. This reflects the assumption—shared by many realists, neorealists, and economic nationalists alike—that high politics is separate from low politics. See Barnett, "High Politics."

35. On the latter, see P. J. Katzenstein, ed., *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

36. Barnett, *Confronting the Costs*. Note that this interpretation challenges Walt's (*The Origin of Alliances*) neorealist explanation of Egyptian and Israeli alliance behavior.

37. A.F.K. Organski and J. Kugler, *The War Trap* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), Ch. 2; A. C. Lamborn, *The Price of Power: Risk and Foreign Policy in Britain, France, and Germany* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1991).

38. S. Huntington, *The Common Defense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 1. This point is developed further by Barnett, "High Politics."

39. See E. Eshag, *Fiscal and Monetary Problems in Developing Countries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); L. Snider, "Identifying the Elements of State Power: Where Do We Begin?," *Comparative Political Studies* 30 (October 1987): 314-356; J. Due, *Indirect Taxation in Developing Countries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

40. See S. Neuman, "International Stratification and Third World Military Industries," *International Organization* 38 (Winter 1984): 185.

41. On conscription, mercenarism, and state legitimacy, see A. Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, (1985), pp. 233-234; H. Beukema, "The Social and Political Aspects of Conscription: Europe's Experience," in M. Anderson, ed., *The Military Draft* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Press, 1982), pp. 479-491; J. E. Thomson, "State Practices, International Norms, and the Decline of Mercenarism," *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (March 1990): 23-47; C. Tilly, *Capital, Coercion, and European States* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 80-84. Also M. Janowitz, "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies," in G. Haries-Jenkins and J. van Doorns, eds., *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 127-130.

42. These considerations lead Wendt and Barnett to argue that the Third World state's lack of legitimacy has created a situation wherein leaders are reluctant to engage in a policy of mass mobilization because their principal security fears are domestic in nature. Accordingly, these leaders are likely to engage in a capital-intensive militarization posture, one that requires that they acquire these sophisticated weapon systems from external sources. A. Wendt and M. Barnett, "The Strange Case of Capital-Intensive Militarization in the Third World," paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1991.

43. M. Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 69.

44. *Ibid.*, 84. Also see R. Preston and S. Wise, *Men in Arms*, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979), pp. 203-209; G. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 81, 85.

45. M. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain, and the Making of Jordan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 3.

46. P. Seale, *The Struggle for Syria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 317.

47. J. Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); D. Snidal, "Relative Gains and the Pattern of International Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 85 (December 1991): 701-726; R. Powell, "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *American Political Science Review* 85 (September 1991): 1303-20.

48. S. Krasner, *Structural Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

49. Tilly, *Capital*, pp. 207-208.

50. On the domestic sources of international conflict during the last four centuries, see D. Kaiser, *Politics and War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); on parallels between the European experience of state making and the experience of contemporary Third World states, see Ayooob, "Security Problematic"; C. Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

51. See J. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and Strategic Ideology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); see also note 12.

52. This raises the question of whether we need separate theories to explain the alliance behavior of the great powers, Third World states, and others, or whether it is possible to construct a general theory of alliances and alignments that is applicable to all states under a wide variety of domestic and international conditions.