Prestige and the Restraint of Power in International Relations

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Attestation

I attest that this thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars of international politics have long linked states' quest for prestige with assertions of national power: diplomatic saber-rattling, scrambles for colonies, arms races, and outright war. This thesis charts a sharply divergent, previously neglected, path to international prestige—foreign policy restraint. The argument in brief is that states seek prestige by conspicuously holding back from the use of power and thereby spurning opportunities for national gain.

Departing from the prevailing conception of restraint as merely a kind of inaction, this thesis reframes restraint as a *performance*. Performances of restraint are constituted intersubjectively when a state is perceived to refrain from pursuing its interests to the extent that its power allows. Forswearing the acquisition of nuclear weapons, liquidating profitable military interventions, renouncing territorial claims, de-escalating diplomatic crises, curbing carbon emissions—each of these policies of self-limitation, and many more besides, may constitute performative restraint if recognized as *volitional* (emanating from the actor's will) and *supererogatory* (exceeding the actor's normative obligations).

To secure others' recognition of their performances, states appeal to existing normative standards of restraint in international society. By conspicuously exceeding those standards, states express both (1) their *material capacity*—the abundance of underlying resources that equips them to voluntarily forgo self-interested behavior; and (2) their *moral character*—the exemplary virtues that underlie their prosocial choices. When states believe that they can credibly perform restraint, triggering these signaling mechanisms, they may "hold back" from acquisitive or assertive policies in order to "rise above" others in terms of prestige. Notably, "holding back to rise above" appeals to states as an expressive strategy exactly because it is materially costly and socially non-obligatory.

This thesis draws upon insights into the performative nature of restraint from cognate disciplines and everyday life, integrating them into an overarching account with reference to Erving Goffman's dramaturgical model of social action. It illustrates how "holding back to rise above" applies in four diverse historical cases: (1) the United States' Good Neighbor Policy of non-intervention in Latin America (1933-40); (2) Germany's post-reunification foreign policy, culminating with its non-participation in the US "Coalition of the Willing" for the Iraq War (1991-2005); (3) India's decades of spurning of nuclear weapons and championing non-proliferation (1964-98); and (4) China's restraint of its carbon emissions in the context of global climate change mitigation (1992-2017). In short, the thesis contributes to a wide range of debates in IR over the sources of international prestige and the reasons for states' costly compliance with social standards.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 427 BCE, amid years of fighting to preserve its empire, Athens faced a revolt by a weaker polity, Mytilene. Enraged at this defiance of their hegemony, the Athenians determined to slaughter the offending city's men and enslave its women and children. A messenger set out for Mytilene bearing those orders. But by the next day, passions had ebbed and doubts had risen. A debate in the Assembly ensued. Cleon—"the most drastic of the citizens"—rose first to defend the brutal display of Athens's power. He insisted that allies' "obedience is not won by concessions, made to [our] own detriment, but by domination based on force rather than popularity."[1] This speech met with much approval, yet Cleon did not have the last word. Another respected citizen, Diodotus, rose to argue that Athenian prestige required restraint: "For the maintenance of our empire I consider it much more expedient to tolerate injustice done to us than to justify, as we could, the destruction of people we would do better to spare." Such forbearance, Diodotus continued, "will be to our future good and the immediate alarm of our enemies, as it *shows greater strength to adopt a well-reasoned policy towards one's opponents than to take aggressive action which combines force with folly*."[2] Moved by this novel appeal to its interests, the Assembly voted to spare all but the revolt's leaders. A second messenger dispatched to Mytilene arrived just in time to avert the impending slaughter.

This dramatic episode from Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* features two concepts—prestige and restraint—that often seem highly discordant in International Relations (IR). Attaining prestige—respect and deference accorded in light of one's superior traits or qualities—requires states to periodically assert their relative excellence in valued domains of activity.[3] But restraint registers as the opposite of assertive activity; it entails "*not* doing something that an agent has the

[1] Thucydides 2009, 149.
[2] Id, 153, emphasis added.
[3] O'Neill 1999, 85–92; Wood 2013; Kim 2004.

opportunity, capabilities, and prevailing conditions to do successfully."[4] The prestige motive evokes conspicuous consumption,[5] populist nationalism,[6] great power imperialism,[7] and rising powers' revisionism.[8] It ostensibly provokes "arms races, territorial expansion, and diplomatic crises, as well as the outbreak and intensity of wars."[9] In contrast, familiar forms of restraint include the *non*-use of force, *non*-proliferation, *non*-intervention, *non*-escalation, and *non*-retaliation.[10] In debates about grand strategy, restraint figures as a "modern form of isolationism," and thus as an antidote to imperial "hubris."[11] In short, few studies have considered restraint as a means of acquiring prestige (or status or reputation[12]) in international relations.

This neglect spans the realist perspective attributing prestige to "massed material resources," and the constructivist perspective attributing it to "the symbolic resource of exemplary behavior according to some civilization-specific standards."[13] Like Cleon, realists disdain the notion that prestige may derive from mere compliance with "whatever norms of international conduct and the subterranean movements of world opinion may gradually bring forth."[14] They regard prestige as the "glory of power over other communities,"[15] or simply as the "reputation for power," which states acquire through the "effusive display of military might."[16] Here, "power refers to the economic, military, and related capabilities of a state, [while] prestige refers primarily to the perceptions of other states" with respect to one's material power.[17] Prestige functions as a "currency" in

[4] Renda 2021, 23; referencing Steele 2019a, esp. 14.
[5] Gilady 2018, chap. 1.
[6] Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021, 2–3.
[7] Onea 2017, 113–4; Momsen 1980, 5.
[8] Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 4–5.
[9] Macdonald and Parent 2021, 359.
[10] For example, see Stanton 2016 (non-use of force); Meiser 2015 (non-intervention); Rublee 2009 (non-proliferation); Posen 2015 (retrenchment); Straus 2012 (non-escalation of conflict).
[11] Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky 1997, 5; Walt 2019.
[12] The IR literature often uses prestige and status interchangeably. However, status can also be used more broadly to refer to classification or group membership, even though certain classifications ("criminals," "rogue states") *diminish* prestige. The terms are equivalent only when status is used to mean *high* status. Similarly, only a *positive* reputation can correspond to prestige. On prestige and cognate concepts, see Maner 2017, 527; Thompson 2014, 220–2; Kelley 2017, chap. 2 esp. 31-59; Erickson 2015, chap. 2.
[13] Neumann 2014, 86; see also Duque 2018.
[14] Dore 1975, 207; Mercer 2017 (expressing skepticism over the 'illusion' of international prestige when conceptually distinguished from material power).
[15] Lebow 2008b, 20–2; Lebow 2003, chap. 3; Markey 1999, 135.
[16] Morgenthau 1949, 84; Wood 2013, 393; Renshon 2017, chap. 1.
[17] Gilpin 1981, 30–2; Wight 1978, 97.

international politics, allowing powerful states to secure deference without recourse to force.[18] Yet while prestigious states may therefore develop a "reputation for self-restraint,"[19] the actual pursuit of prestige remains "as important as raw aggression in affecting the likelihood of international conflict."[20] Rising powers are expected to "demonstrate[e] their worthiness for promotion into a system's elite through displaying some degree of martial prowess on the battlefield..." [21] Explaining war remains a key context for invoking prestige in IR, reflecting the enduring influence of this realist view.[22]

In contrast, other research suggests that demanding prestige through force is quixotic because coercion reveals a failure to secure voluntary deference.[23] Studies in sociology and social psychology emphasize the prosocial sources of standing in social hierarchies.[24] And though international prestige grants privileges—from spheres of influence to prerogatives within international institutions—it also imposes corollary obligations to help uphold international order, including through restraint.[25] In the common contractual model of hierarchy, powerful states face incentives to "exercise self-restraint in spite of their right to govern through power as they see fit."[26] David A. Lake has argued that if super-ordinates violate the limits of legitimate conduct authorized by their subordinates, they risk losing the right to expect deference within a circumscribed realm.[27] "Respect for the weaker side is not simply noblesse oblige or an act of generosity of the stronger;"[28] subordinates bargain for this respect in exchange for their voluntary deference. Yet, crucially, differences in standing ostensibly exist prior to these bargains being struck. The implication, clear in John Ikenberry's influential

[18] Gilpin 1981, 31. For critical perspectives on Gilpin's influential conception of prestige, see Ikenberry 2014b, esp. chap. 2.
[19] Morgenthau 1949, 57.
[20] Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam 2005, 267.
[21] Thompson 2014, 219; Volgy et al. 2011.
[22] Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014; Lebow 2010, chap. 2; Renshon 2017; Wood 2013.
[23] Gil-White and Henrich 2001, 10–11; Maner 2017, 526; Maner and Case 2016, 138–42.
[24] Henrich, Chudek, and Boyd 2015, 2–3; Cheng et al. 2013, 104–6; Price and Van Vugt 2014, 1–8; Gintis, Smith, and Bowles 2001, 113–7.
[25] Bull 1977, 194–222; Bukovansky et al. 2012, 1–11.
[26] Zarakol 2017, 6; Lake 2011, 20–4; Hurd 1999, 379–80. A related empirical finding is that states' prestige (measured as centrality in the social networks of international institutions) *decreases* their conflict propensity by enhancing their social power. See Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006, esp. 7.
[27] Lake 2011, 20–1. On how this model of hierarchy, and its key concept of authority, diverges form Gilpin's functionalist understanding of prestige, see Lake 2014, 65–9.
[28] Womack 2008, 294–7; see also Kavalski 2013, 253.

account, is that powerful states' "strategic restraint" serves to preserve and institutionalize status ultimately achieved through other means, chiefly, victory in major wars.[29] Scholars have recognized the potential for prestige hierarchies to produce restraint, while overlooking the potential for restraint to produce prestige in the first place.

Much of the constructivist literature discloses a similarly lopsided logic despite transcending the liberal institutionalists' explicitly contractarian, implicitly functionalist, conception of hierarchy.[30] Constructivists recognize that states have "aim[ed] to become prestigious for reasons that span the types, including military, economic, cultural, diplomatic, intellectual or humanitarian…"[31] The sources of prestige derive from socially constructed—and thus historically and culturally contingent—"packages of ordering ideas and rules."[32] "Identity… [is the] vehicle for attaining self-esteem. [States] want to belong to high-status groups and institutions for this reason, and act in ways that secure them admission and standing within those groups."[33] Social hierarchies become "moral ordering tools:"[34] the pursuit of prestige is mediated by norms of "good citizenship."[35] This conception seems to link "self-restraint and self-control and gaining respect and self-confidence by conforming to the social code…"[36] Certainly, a lack of restraint incurs shame, stigma, and opprobrium—the very opposite of prestige.[37] This dynamic promotes conformity with social rules.[38] However, while insufficient restraint definitely diminishes prestige, abundant or superior restraint is rarely taken to enhance it.

[29] Ikenberry 2001, chap. 3; Ikenberry 2011a; Ikenberry 2014a; see also Lake 2014; Kupchan 2014; Mastanduno 2014.
[30] Neumann 2014, 91–2; Clunan 2014, 273; cf. Lake 2010, 594; Donnelly 2012, 8.
[31] Wood 2013, 393.
[32] Kupchan 2014, 20.
[33] Lebow 2008b, 16; see also Larson 2012, 58–67; Clunan 2014, 279–80.
[34] Adler-Nissen 2017a, 202. Research into the historical sociology of IR affirms the central role of moral principles and "social logics" in ordering hierarchies. Hobson and Sharman 2005.
[35] Donnelly 2017, 263; Brysk 2009, 34–9; Wohlforth et al. 2018; Wheeler and Dunne 1998.
[36] Lebow 2018, 52, 342; Lebow 2008b, 49–61, 126, 263–79, 291.
[37] See Suzuki 2017, 219–24; Murray 2019, 13–4; Zarakol 2010, 8–12; Fordham and Asal 2007; Towns 2009.
[38] The extensive literature here has grown out of scholars' increasing interest in states' costly compliance with international law and human rights norms over the past three decades. For foundational contributions, see Franck 1990, 38; Chayes and Chayes 1998, 152, 274; Risse et al. 1999, 23–4, 243–5; Johnston 2008, xxvi, 95; Sandholtz and Stiles 2009. Cf. Smith-Cannoy 2012.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

And yet, at least since Diodotus, commentators have "profess[ed] to admire the self-restraint… displayed by those who, 'considering their power,' [have] been 'more observant of justice' than circumstances demanded."[39] This notion spans the Book of Isaiah[40] and *The Analects*,[41] medieval ideals of chivalry[42] and modern ones of masculinity.[43] Thus a nineteenth century etiquette book advised its well-bred readers to "[i]ssue your commands with gravity and gentleness, and in a reserved manner…"[44] In aristocratic duels, such *noblesse oblige* was expressed by the "delope," a strategy of "throwing away" one's first shot into the ground or far wide of the opponent in order to signal moral superiority and courage.[45] In Pierre Bourdieu's study of honor feuds in a very different context, the Kabyle society of colonial Algeria, he reported that "a man who finds himself in a favorable position" wins praise if he "refrain[s] from pushing his advantage too far, and…temper[s] his accusations with moderation."[46] And in his later study of *Distinction* in modern France, Bourdieu concluded that "the dominant aesthetic… proposes the combination of ease and asceticism, i.e., self-imposed austerity, restraint, [and] reserve…"[47] The "sophisticated" classes' social displays often purport to elevate ethical concerns—ranging, today, from climate change to human rights—over the base, practical, wants of the masses.[48] The restraint required to uphold high standards is taken to demonstrate material abundance and moral superiority.[49]

Related dynamics play out in domestic and international politics. At the domestic level citizens reward leaders who engage in "ritualized displays of self-

[39] Linklater 2016, 51.
[40] God says to Israel: "For the sake of my reputation I hold back my anger; the for the sake of my prestige I restrain myself from destroying you." Isaiah 48:9 (NET). Also notable are the New Testament's frequent exultations of meekness and humility. For instance, see 1 Peter 5:5 (NET): "And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." See also Wohlforth et al. 2018, 537.
[41] "The Master said, 'To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue.'" *The Analects,* Book 12, Chap. 1.
[42] "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge." Tamora in *Titus Androcinus,* Act I, Scene 1. On the ethic of noble moderation, see Shagan 2011, 30. And on the aesthetics of noble mercy, see Wagner-Pacifici 2005, 88–92.
[43] Goldberg 2020; Tapscott 2020, 1569.
[44] Quoted in Goffman 1956, 480-481.
[45] Reilly 1978, 358–9. See also Frevert 1998, 49–50.
[46] Bourdieu 1979, 101.
[47] Bourdieu 2013, 171–2; Elias 1994, 152–3.
[48] Bourdieu 2013, chaps 5–7. See also Coulangeon, Demoli, and Petev 2014, 119–29; Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh 2010.
[49] Weber 2013, 305; Bourdieu 1984, 196; Elias 1994, 78; Goffman 1956, 490.

deprecation."[50] Hence politicians' tendency to virtue-signal personal modesty.[51] And when the 2016 Republican presidential candidate Scott Walker bragged about his bargain-store suits,[52] he (unwittingly, one presumes) channeled nineteenth-century diplomatic practice: American ministers were instructed to maintain a conspicuously modest style of dress while representing their vigorous republic in Europe's decadent courts.[53] Examples more serious than the sartorial also abound. Consider Gandhi's theory of non-violent resistance, predicated upon the ascetic notion that individual self-restraint could project self-possession and ultimately enable self-rule.[54] Geopolitically, great powers compete to convey their relative restraint by championing, in China's formulation, "non-conflict, non-confrontation and win-win cooperation."[55] Echoing Mao, Xi Jinping has pledged that "[h]owever strong it may grow, China will never seek hegemony, expansion, or a sphere of influence."[56] For his part, Barack Obama claimed to "believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. But what makes us exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law; it's our willingness to affirm them through our actions."[57] Elsewhere he made the link explicit: "Part of our capacity to lead is linked to our capacity to show restraint."[58]

In sum, the notion that conspicuous restraint can itself convey prestige transcends cultural and historical contexts. Examples from everyday life, cognate disciplines, and world history anticipate the main contribution of this dissertation for IR. To distill the argument: States can seek prestige through restraint because the conspicuous and costly "holding back" of their capacity to realize their interests—that is, of their power[59]—expresses might and magnanimity. This

[50] Gil-White and Henrich 2001, 170; Cheng, Tracy, and Henrich 2010, 334; Maner 2017, 528; Goode 1978, 21–2.
[51] Examples abound. Barack Obama linked himself to his Kansas grandparents, who "didn't like show-offs. They didn't admire braggarts or bullies. They didn't respect mean-spiritedness, or folks who were always looking for shortcuts in life. Instead, they valued traits like honesty and hard work. Kindness and courtesy. Humility; responsibility; helping each other out." Politico 2016. For a very different example, "Chinese state media praises Xi Jinping's 'thrifty' style and highlights efforts to live like common people." McCarthy 2020.
[52] Phelps 2015.
[53] Ringmar 2013, 24.
[54] "Gandhi made… the consequent of self [defined elsewhere as the "attainment of purity of thought and emotion"] an indispensable preparation for the larger task of attaining freedom and selfhood for the nation." Sarma 1980, 221; see also Dhiman 2015; Rudolph 1966.
[55] Wang 2020.
[56] Quoted in Lee 2021. See also Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 103.
[57] Quoted in Boot 2016.
[58] Quoted in Ikenberry 2011a, 324.
[59] For a discussion of this conception of power, see Baldwin 2016, chap. 2; Barnett and Duvall

argument addresses three questions: First, what does restraint mean in practice, as an active part of states' foreign policies? Second, how does restraint convey prestige in world politics? Third, when does the desire for prestige motivate states to undertake policies of restraint? Below, I briefly outline how I answer these questions and provide a roadmap for the chapters to follow.

What Does Restraint Mean in Practice?

The crux of this argument is reframing restraint as a *performance*. As alluded to above, much of the IR literature treats restraint as a (non-)outcome to be explained, that is, as explanandum rather than explanans.[60] The formulation of restraint as "non-X" obscures what it means in practice and thus occludes its potential to convey prestige.[61] Brent J. Steele's recent study of *Restraint in International Politics* helpfully frames it as an active and dynamic process: the "going against or resisting something we would otherwise expect to prevail."[62] Steele traces this process across multiple levels of analysis—including, perhaps most intuitively, human psychology. The paradigm of psychological (self-)restraint consists of individuals suppressing their base urges and appetites, instead deferring to reason when it counsels compliance with social rules.[63] Yet the context of prestige-seeking—individuals claiming credit for their public conduct—casts restraint not merely as a mental process leading to conduct, but as a category of conduct in itself. Reason is both privately exercised and publicly exemplified; rules are privately obeyed and publicly followed. An urge may be conspicuously suppressed, an activity, conspicuously limited.[64] In short, leaders may express their states' restraint through the "performative enactment of foreign policy."[65]

Building on Steele's work,[66] my account of performative restraint also draws

2005, 44–7; Holsti 1964, 181.
[60] Steele 2019a, 14.
[61] For a similar point, discussing the "relative theoretical invisibility of factors that cause an outcome *not* to occur, see Straus 2012, 344.
[62] Steele 2019a, 22.
[63] Ibid., chap. 2; cf. Lebow 2008, 125.
[64] Schelling 1976, 80; Roskin 1974, 135.
[65] Parker and Rosamond 2013, 234 (emphasis removed).
[66] While Steele (2019a) contrasts restraint with performativity (e.g., 52, 75, 86), the model I develop conforms closely to his three precepts of restraint in general, in that it involves *agents and structures*, bridges *materialist and idealist ontologies*, and discloses a *normative or moral quality* (65).

upon Erving Goffman's dramaturgical model of social action.[67] Goffman deploys the performance metaphor to analyze the strategies that individual actors adopt for "impression management" vis-à-vis their audience(s).[68] Performances comprise "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants."[69] Many everyday activities or habits remain unconscious and only incidentally expressive. But in the course of interaction, Goffman held, the individual may also deliberately "contrive to conduct himself in such a way that others, through their interpretation of his conduct, will impute the kinds of attributes to him he would like others to see in him."[70] IR scholars acknowledge the expressive aspect of restraint in discussing its potential to signal assurance or accommodation,[71] and its (implicit) role in coercive threats.[72] Prior studies have mostly overlooked, however, the potential for restraint to express states' positive qualities—the sources of their prestige.

States' leaders perform restraint by positioning their state such that observers expect it to use force or otherwise assert its power but then declining to do so. For example, as the Mytilenean Debate and many examples since illustrate, "[v]ictory in war can be used to create and manipulate prestige through self-restraint" when states exercise mercy by returning or otherwise passing up conquered territories.[73] Performative restraint becomes salient when it diverges from observers' expectations, which are generally indexed to social norms, rules, or standards. A wealth of prior studies have identified the "primary institution[s]" and "fundamental practice[s]" of restraint across international societies,[74] from early-modern East Asia[75] to the rules-based liberal order.[76] But many norms correspond, either implicitly or explicitly, to "supererogatory standards" delimiting restraint that is "nonobligatory" and "praiseworthy."[77] Leaders may invoke such standards to present their restraint as both (1) *supererogatory*—exceeding what

[67] On the promise and perils of applying this model in IR, see Schimmelfennig 2002.
[68] Goffman 1959, 240; Goffman 1956, 23.
[69] Goffman 1959, 6.
[70] Goffman 1956, 489; see also Goffman 1955, 213–22; Alexander 2006, 62.
[71] Ward 2017a, 19, 22; Goddard 2018, 7–23; Ikenberry 2011b.
[72] A threat is only effective if it includes an implicit promise to refrain from threatened conduct in the case of a target's compliance. Schelling 1960; Jervis 1976.
[73] Kim 2004, 43; see also Doty 1993, 309.
[74] See Little 2011, 177. For an overview of the literature, see Linklater 2016; Linklater 2015; Reus-Smit 2009; Dunne 1998; Buzan 1993; Bull 1977.
[75] Spence 1990, 191–2; Kang 2010a; Kang 2012.
[76] Sørensen 2011, 66–88; Donnelly 2012, 154–5; Ikenberry 2014a; Hurd 2018; Jahn 2018.
[77] Jurkovich 2020, 699.

they must do and what others would tend to do under the circumstances—and (2) *volitional*—stemming from their will and reflecting a voluntary choice. Forswearing the acquisition of nuclear weapons, liquidating profitable military interventions, renouncing territorial claims, declining to retaliate against a trade partner's tariffs, choosing to de-escalate a diplomatic crisis, adopting environmental regulations that curb carbon emissions—each of these policies, and many more besides, may be framed as volitional and supererogatory, corresponding to a counterfactual but credible act of national assertion.

While performances of restraint often center on highly ritualized interactions among diplomats, in "stage-managed" settings such as international summits, they are not limited to those contexts, nor narrowly bounded in terms of time or space.[78] They may extend across multiple interactions and often will involve a rotating cast of characters. Here the performance model notably diverges from the "practice theory" approach that has gained increasing purchase in IR and which is grounded in the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.[79] Practices are "socially meaningful patterns of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world."[80] Prior studies have pointed to practices of restraint constituting security communities,[81] upholding non-intervention,[82] sustaining deterrence,[83] underlying compliance with international law,[84] and comprising international institutions.[85] Yet practices, as the building blocks of routine, "everyday" interactions, can hardly function as conspicuous signals of states' socially valued qualities.[86] As Erik Ringmar puts it, "[p]ractices are 'presentational,' not re-presentational; they are not to be seen or noticed in their own right and they have an audience not by design but only by coincidence."[87] Performances draw upon background assumptions and practices that are ingrained

[78] Cf. Steele 2019b; Pacher 2018; Pouliot 2016b; see also Goffman 1961.
[79] For an overview, see Adler and Pouliot 2011. For various appraisals, see Andersen and Neumann 2012; Ringmar 2014; Schindler and Wille 2015; Kustermans 2016; McCourt 2016.
[80] Adler and Pouliot 2011, 4.
[81] Adler 2008, 197; Pouliot 2008; Pouliot 2010.
[82] Little 2011.
[83] Adler and Pouliot 2011, 25.
[84] Brunnée and Toope 2011; Reus-Smit 2011.
[85] Onuf 2012a; Raymond 2019.
[86] Discussing the taken-for-granted nature of practices, see Hopf 2018; Hopf 2010; Kustermans 2016; cf. Adler and Pouliot 2011, 16.
[87] Ringmar 2013, 28–9; Ringmar 2014.

in and sustained by habit; but the manipulation of these assumptions and practices is itself "not the effect[] of routinization."[88] Like all prestige-seeking behavior, performative restraint is conspicuous, seeking to elicit favorable social judgements about an actor's relative excellence on valued and salient domains of comparison.[89]

This dissertation aims to establish the explanatory utility of performative restraint for the study of international prestige-seeking. Nonetheless, this model remains based on a *metaphor*, which enables at most an "analytical re-description" of world politics.[90] I do not claim that performances of restraint exist "out there," or that states' leaders analyze the world in terms of dramaturgical elements like stages and scripts. Rather, I propose the performance model as a heuristic for recovering actors' "subjective meanings," that is, how they "understand themselves and their situations…"[91] By modeling restraint as a performance, we can uncover analytical generalities about when leaders believe that restraint will convey prestige upon their states, and by extension, develop an account of when the desire for prestige will motivate states to undertake relatively restrained foreign policies.

How Does Performative Restraint Convey Prestige?

Often prestige within a group is attributed to individuals' "performance" in that group's characteristic activity or central task.[92] Despite its currency in common usage, this conception of performance proves problematic in IR, given the difficulty of determining a subset of activities (let alone a single activity) on which to base the distribution of states' prestige.[93] As noted above, an influential vein of realist scholarship does attempt to make such a determination on functionalist grounds, attributing prestige to the material ingredients of states' military power.[94] But military might has not historically been the sole, nor even the primary, source of international prestige.[95] To take just one telling example, today states value their "grades" on domestic policy metrics, such as combatting human trafficking or protecting women's rights, which have virtually no bearing upon military

[88] Rawls 1987, 139.
[89] Scott 1996, 100; O'Neill 1999, 85–92.
[90] Pouliot 2015, 250; cf. Andersen and Neumann 2012, 462.
[91] Jackson 2010, 145.
[92] Berger, Ridgeway, and Zelditch 2002; Ridgeway 2001; Magee and Galinsky 2008; Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972.
[93] Cf. Johnston 2008, 82.
[94] Morgenthau 1949, 43; Gilpin 1981, 30–4.
[95] Wood 2013, 389; Renshon 2017, 136–40, 261–4; Dore 1975, 202; Wood 2014, 101.

capabilities.[96] While realists treat military capabilities as if they were a universal currency, the "resources" that confer prestige vary across contexts because they derive from social conventions—ultimately, the "meta-hierarchy" of values that prevails within a given society.[97]

Moreover, prestige does not automatically derive from *possessing* valued assets or qualities but depends upon the ways in which these are *displayed*, again in keeping with social conventions and norms. Per Goffman, "[p]ower of any kind must be clothed in effective means of displaying it, and will have different effects depending upon how it is dramatized."[98] This causes the distributions of prestige and material resources to diverge. Just as there are "distressed gentlefolk" and impoverished aristocrats in domestic societies, there may be "toothless lion states" that retain status despite having been eclipsed in military and/or economic terms.[99] Conversely, socially mobile actors—whether the *nouveau riche* or rising powers—may be dismissed as "parvenus" and denied respect despite their riches.[100] Successful performances do not merely provide objective evidence of an actor's assets; they also communicate to an audience that the actor is a responsible, even virtuous, character.[101]

As discussed at length in the next chapter, performances of restraint can fulfill both of these expressive functions. Where capabilities are fungible or additive, states' leaders can invest in or deploy them incrementally to create the impression that they are building towards a particular act of assertion. Leaders then draw attention to their states' power by promising not to use it, whether through formal commitments or ad hoc policy announcements. It becomes expressively significant that states claim to possess but *do not deploy* the ability to reap material gains. As a form of prosocial behavior, such restraint represents a costly handicap: it signals

[96] Kelley 2017; Towns 2009. For similar historical examples, see Larson and Shevchenko 2010a, 189 (eighteenth-century Europe); Kang 2010a, chap. 3 (early modern China); Khong 2019, 121 (post-1945 Japan).
[97] Goldhamer and Shils 1939, 172–6. Here, following Goffman, I adopt a broadly Durkheimian conception of prestige and social hierarchy, where social value derives from collective attributions of meaning (rather than arising from objects themselves). On Goffman's debt to Durkheim, see Manning 1992, 34–5. And on the Durkheimian conception of status in IR, see Neumann 2014, 91–3; as well as Freedman 2016, 800; Reus-Smit 2009, 30.
[98] Goffman 1959, 241. In fact, even realists such as Hans Morgenthau recognize that power is "most effective when masked." Quoted in Lebow 2003, 232.
[99] Dore 1975, 192; Freedman 2016, 803; Bottero 2005, 41.
[100] Lebow 2008b, 398–408, 429–38; Murray 2019.
[101] On conventional signals in IR, see Goddard 2018, 11–2; and, more broadly, Bliege Bird and Smith 2005.

that a state already possesses sufficient resources for self-help.[102] And prosocial behavior sends a moral signal in addition to a material one. Indeed, that performative restraint may signal actors' relative virtues distinguishes it from the mere assertion of power, which risks incurring moral opprobrium even as it demonstrates material might.[103] States want to show that they are "global good Samaritans."[104] They value a reputation for "responsibility" and commitment to international norms because moral prestige confers special benefits, namely, the right to help shape and uphold international order.[105] In sum, by dramatically surpassing international society's standards of restraint, states may express both an abundance of material resources, evidenced by their freely forgoing additional gains, and an array of moral virtues, reflected by their principled prosocial behavior

When Do States Perform Restraint?

While IR scholars have extensively studied *why* prestige motivates states' leaders, who value it for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons,[106] *how* prestige motivates the adoption of specific policies remains relatively undertheorized.[107] A leading approach draws from Social Identity Theory (SIT), pioneered by the social psychologist Henry Tajfel and most thoroughly applied in IR by Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko.[108] The analytical lens of SIT focuses on prestige-seekers' "beliefs about the nature of intergroup relations, in particular beliefs about status relations and their stability and legitimacy, and about intergroup permeability."[109] From these premises Larson and Shevchenko derive three "identity management strategies" for states' leaders: *social mobility*, when they emulate the practices of higher-status states and seek integration into international institutions; *social creativity*, when they pioneer new domains of status attainment through norm entrepreneurship; and *social competition*, when they directly challenge established powers on the metrics that underlie their supremacy, especially military

[102] Gilady 2018, 94; Zahavi and Zahavi 1999. On prosocial prestige-seeking, see 140 Busby 2010, 140; Levy 1993.
[103] Löwenheim 2003; Kaufmann and Pape 1999; Steele 2005.
[104] Brysk 2009, 24–9; Lumsdaine and Risse-Kappen 1993, 174.
[105] Larson and Shevchenko 2014, 48–56; Pouliot 2014, 192–218; Koh 2003, 1480.
[106] Johnston 2008, 75; Kelley 2017, 38–44; Kim 2004.
[107] Renshon 2017, 136–40, 261–4; Bezerra et al. 2015.
[108] Tajfel and Turner 2004; Larson and Shevchenko 2019. For earlier discussions, and critical appraisals, see Lebow 2008a, 478; Hymans 2002, 6; Mercer 1995.
[109] Abrams and Hogg 1999, 10.

capabilities.[110] However, as Larson and Shevchenko's own research has shown, restraint and spurning the use of force may serve each of these strategies of mobility,[111] creativity,[112] or competition.[113] In short, SIT lacks determinacy for predicting when leaders will seek prestige through performative restraint.[114]

Fortunately, modeling restraint as a performance entails a causal process through which it is brought into being or put on.[115] The dramaturgical perspective largely shares SIT's conception of strategic social actors.[116] Yet it adds situational determinacy to the process whereby actors, as "conscious mediators[,] weigh the options given to them by…[social] structure."[117] Actors' choice of prestige-seeking strategies centers, not on global evaluations of status hierarchies, as per SIT, but on the "constraints and moral ground rules that emanate from the interaction situation itself."[118] Specifically, two elements of a social interaction shape the possibilities for performative restraint within it: the situationally applicable repertoire of social rules, and actor's strategic judgments.

First, social rules constrain performance opportunities because states must be able to plausibly exceed convergent expectations about their appropriate conduct in the domain of foreign policy at hand. Performative restraint is only possible when prevailing standards permit exceptions, countenance extenuating circumstances, or remain sites of contestation and inconsistent compliance—in short, when states are not automatically expected to adhere to the standards. The normative environment determines when, and to what extent, restraint will be considered supererogatory and, therefore, praiseworthy.[119] This rules out performative restraint in reference to categorically prohibited activities or those that remain taboo. An act of assertion must be at the very least "thinkable" for observers if actors are to make their countervailing restraint semantically significant. More than a constraint *in extremis,* the framing effects of international

[110] Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 5–14.
[111] Larson and Shevchenko 2014, 43–56.
[112] Larson and Shevchenko 2010b, 74, 83; Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 103, 124, 155, 195.
[113] Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 9, 101, 245.
[114] For a related critique, see Ward 2017b, 184.
[115] Here, as an intersubjectively constituted social fact, a performance serves as explanans in addition to explanandum. See Pouliot 2016b, 50.
[116] See, e.g., Goffman 1983, 11 ("Social structures don't 'determine' culturally standard displays, [but they do] help select from the available repertoire of them").
[117] Quoted in Hopf 2010, 547.
[118] Pouliot 2016a, 12.
[119] Jurkovich 2020, 700–1.

standards determine the degree of dramatic tension that obtains as a state appears to approach a threshold of assertion. The greater this tension, the more potentially expressive, and thus strategically valuable, "holding back" from that threshold will appear.

Second, leaders operate strategically within the constraints of social structure. They anticipate the expressive effects of prospective performances and weigh these effects against the impression which they desire to give off. A key judgment is whether their target audience will perceive their performance as a plausible representation of prestigious assets and qualities—in a word, whether their performance will appear *credible*. The next chapter delineates several factors which affect whether performances of restraint will appear credible. These include whether an actor has previously had success engaging in the activity from which it claims to refrain, and whether it can draw upon a general reputation for prosocial behavior. The actor's perception of its own credibility is refracted through the eyes of its target audience; it attempts to adopt observers' perspectives to assess whether they have reason to find a performance credible. Such assessments remain relational and iterative: an actor can (re)assess and (re)adjust its performances in light of audience reactions. In general, actors seek confirmation that their performances have conveyed prestigious qualities, in the form of audience members displaying respect and deference.[120] And they will abandon performative restraint if it repeatedly fails to elicit this desired response.[121]

This suggests that established great powers are well-positioned to perform restraint because they will have previously demonstrated their power without compromising their moral authority.[122] However, performances of restraint do not solely pertain to any one type of state or international role.[123] Middle powers,[124] and even some revisionist ones,[125] have sought prestige by performing restraint. Across

[120] Lindemann and Ringmar 2016; Lindemann 2010; Ringmar 2002.
[121] As discussed in the next chapter, a significant literature focuses on the denial or withholding of recognition in IR. If performative restraint is met with sustained, manifest, disrespect, leaders may lash out at their audiences in anger or frustration. Yet this is a limiting condition for the theory of prestige-seeking through performative restraint, rather than an integral part of it
[122] Aslam 2013, chap. 2; Simpson 2004.
[123] Cf. McCourt 2012, 379.
[124] Kavalski 2013, 259; Suzuki 2009; Karim 2018.
[125] Potential examples include Japan's withdrawal from the Sino-centric world order, early Soviet military policy, and nineteenth-century US isolationism. Ward 2017, 19; Bukovansky 1997.

various interaction situations, performative restraint emerges as an occasionally viable prestige-seeking strategy for states with uneven capabilities and checkered reputations.[126] In important policy domains such as climate change mitigation, small, poor, or weak states may even face opportunities to outdo the great powers in terms of costly self-denial.[127]

PLAN OF THE CHAPTERS

While Chapter 2 elaborates the theory of prestige-seeking through performative restraint, the following chapters apply it in four historical case studies. Prior research has linked prestige with military interventionism, nuclear proliferation, and carbon-fueled economic growth. In contrast, I show how prestige-seeking can also lead to restraint in each of these areas. Chapter 3 focuses on the United States' "Good Neighbor Policy" of non-intervention in Latin America during the 1930s. In response to concerns about waning US prestige in the region, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration transitioned from giving grudging concessions to Latin Americans' demands for less overt US interventionism, to orchestrating a wholesale regional rapprochement predicated upon benevolent US hegemony. Policymakers made a deliberate effort to exceed Latin American elites' expectations of their restraint, thereby signaling—they believed—might and moral exemplarity. The chapter traces the evolving US performances, from non-intervention in Cuba and the revocation of the Platt Amendment (1933-4), to the non-intervention pledges at Montevideo (1933) and Buenos Aires (1936), to the disavowal of traditional tools of political influence in Nicaragua (1936-7) and Mexico (1938).

Chapter 4 turns to Germany's non-participation in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. By refusing to deploy its military power, in defiance of the Bush Administration, Berlin sought to signal its confidence as a "grown up" country after reunification and its independence from its Cold War patron. By the turn of the century, Chancellor Gerhardt Schröder and other leaders could point to a decade of constructive German participation in "peace enforcement" operations. They invoked this context to present non-intervention in Iraq as volitional,

[126] See Goffman 1956, 480 (noting that there is not a "single note expressing a single relationship between two individuals active in a single pair of capacities, but rather a medley of voices answering to the fact that actor and recipient are in many different relations to one another").
[127] Genovese 2020; more broadly, De Carvalho and Lie 2015.

corresponding to an underlying capability to intervene, and therefore as an expression of German sovereignty. Moreover, the Bush Administration's embrace of unilateralism and disregard for international norms created an opportunity for Berlin to emphasize its moral superiority as a champion of principled restraint. Ultimately, Germany's performative restraint vis-à-vis the United States aimed to bolster Berlin's twin bids for a UN Security Council Seat and informal leadership of the European integration process.

Chapter 5 applies the theory to India's nuclear program. New Delhi conspicuously performed "nuclear restraint" after its main rival, Communist China, conducted a nuclear test in 1964. Emphasizing their ability to go nuclear if they chose, Indian leaders claimed to deserve moral authority on account of their exceptional commitment to non-proliferation. They believed that continued restraint boosted their standing among other non-aligned countries and anticipated that it would secure specific diplomatic concessions from the other nuclear powers. At the same time, Indian leaders were anxious to underline the volitional nature of their restraint; they attempted to shape emerging non-proliferation norms to accommodate a future "nuclear option." Their failure to do so under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) led to India's "peaceful nuclear explosion" in 1974, intended to dramatize New Delhi's holding back from the nuclear threshold. However, as restraint under the NPT became synonymous with renouncing the nuclear option altogether, this shifted policymakers' preferences and set the stage for India's outright nuclear tests in 1998.

Chapter 6 goes beyond the realm of international security to consider China's restraint of carbon emissions in the context of climate change mitigation. Facing isolation in international climate change negotiations after the 2009 Copenhagen Conference, China performed restraint, spurred on by three developments. First, the discursive shift from top-down mitigation commitments to bottom-up contributions set the stage for Beijing to present its non-emission policies as supererogatory and morally exceptional. Second, Chinese leaders came to see emissions-limitation commitments as a signal of their material rise as a hub of "green" innovation and a model of "clean" growth. Third, developed countries—especially the Unite States—linked Chinese non-emission to their recognition of its international responsibility and constructive role in global governance. While limited in important ways, China's performance of emissions restraint culminated

in championing the 2015 Paris Agreement, despite this entailing significant concessions vis-à-vis developed economies.

These chapters span time—from the 1930s to the 2010s—and space—from Buenos Aires and Berlin to New Delhi and Paris. They involve both great powers—the United States on the cusp of global leadership and China at a pivotal moment in its international rise—and middle powers—from post-colonial India to post-reunification Germany. Finally, these cases of prestige-seeking through performative restraint disclose various degrees of success—the United States and China met with general approbation, Germany faced a mixed reception, and India found its audience arrayed against it. The conclusion compares the cases across these and other dimensions, and explores performative restraint as a mechanism for promoting international cooperation and rule-following in the context of global governance more broadly.

CHAPTER 2

SEEKING PRESTIGE BY PERFORMING RESTRAINT

"All the world is not, of course, a stage,
but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify."[1]

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman deployed the extended metaphor of a performance as a "conceptual framework" to evaluate social interaction and the techniques of individual self-expression.[2] Individuals inevitably possess capabilities, desires, motives, and intentions that observers cannot readily perceive or feasibly glean for themselves.[3] Due to their limited knowledge, observers will be "forced to accept some events as conventional or natural signs of something not directly available to the senses."[4] This condition of information asymmetry sets the stage for performances. "Instead of allowing an impression of their activity to arise as an incidental by-product of their activity, [individuals] can reorient their frame of reference and devote their efforts to the creation of desired impressions."[5] While actors may be tempted to project qualities or assets that they do not possess, Goffman does not see performances as inherently deceitful. Many qualities or assets that actors do in fact possess remain latent; they must be dramatized or presented to be accurately perceived. Through performances, the "individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts [about his "claimed capacities"] that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure."[6]

Performances consist of material things, including actors, the settings they inhabit, and the props they employ, which are "sequenced temporally and choreographed spatially."[7] But they also encompass elements such as motives and intentions that enter the scene through the "productive nature of language."[8] These

[1] Goffman 1959, 72.
[2] Ibid., 254, 239; Manning 1992, 145.
[3] Persson 2019, 46; Mor 2009, 226.
[4] Goffman 1959, 2.
[5] Ibid., 249-50.
[6] Goffman 1956, 19–20.
[7] Alexander 2006, 35; Berezin 1997, 156.
[8] Hansen 2006, 15; Kratochwil 2014, 56–63; Onuf 2012a, 10.

elements are not tangible: their meaning is not given but must rather be interpreted. The "expressive aspect of social action" comprises "not only [how] we act, but… how our actions are perceived by other people."[9] This renders performances part of a wider category of intersubjectively constituted social facts that emerge relationally, as between an actor and its audience.[10] Performances succeed when the audience adopts the definition of the situation fostered by the actor. The attendant need to play to one's audience limits performances to the interactants' shared "universe of basic narratives and codes and cookbook of rhetorical configurations."[11] Shared rules and standards—including standards of restraint—are enabling as well as restrictive. "[R]ules of conduct transform both action and inaction into expression, and whether the individual abides by the rules or breaks them, something significant is likely to be communicated."[12]

This performance heuristic and the dramaturgical account of social action that it informs provide significant purchase for the study of international prestige.[13] Prior studies have insightfully incorporated Goffman's work on managing shame and stigma into IR.[14] This leaves a second face of the "social coin," which has "awe on one side and shame on the other."[15] With respect to awe or prestige, Goffman's perspective supplements the prevailing view that they derive from tangible "status symbols" or "prestige goods" like handbags and sportscars or, in the context of world politics, aircraft carriers and foreign aid budgets.[16] Goffman recognized that "status… is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated."[17] Thus, restraint becomes eligible, as a kind of performance, to communicate socially valued qualities. For instance, Goffman noted that individuals "exercise[e] systematic modesty" and "play down the expression of sheer wealth in order to foster the impression that standards regarding birth, culture, or moral earnestness

[9] Persson 2019, 5.
[10] Alexander 2006, 35.
[11] Ibid., 58. See also Krebs and Jackson 2007, 45–7.
[12] Goffman 1956, 476. See also Onuf 2012, 24-5, 29
[13] On the application of Goffman to IR, see Schimmelfennig 2002. For examples, see Steele 2019b; Carson 2015; Adler-Nissen 2014; Zarakol 2010; Mor 2009; Barnett 1998; Jervis 1976.
[14] For an overview, see Adler-Nissen 2017b, 32–3. See also Adler-Nissen 2014; Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021.
[15] Goffman 1959, 70, 108. See also Johnston 2008, 24; Kelley 2017, 18n57.
[16] Gilady 2018; Trigg 2001. The seminal text is Veblen 2009.
[17] Goffman 1959, 75; Manning 1992, 37.

are the ones that prevail."[18]

This chapter develops a model of performative restraint in international politics along these lines, in which states' leaders are the actors and audience members. Through a process of identification, leaders become personally invested in their states' status and prestige; they seek to represent their states in the best possible light.[19] While Goffman developed his theory in the context of face-to-face interaction, he did not limit his analysis to individuals, also theorizing the collective performances of "teams" that represented a single—that is, corporate—"front."[20] States' leaders function as a team in the sense of coordinating their official conduct to project or maintain a consistent impression. This coordination often takes place explicitly behind the scenes. It also occurs naturally because the factors determining performative possibilities, such as resources and reputations, attach to states as corporate entities. Though my account emphasizes leaders' beliefs and motives, it also situates them within the "cultural environments" that permeate international relations.[21] Social standards and expectations, as much as leaders' skills or preferences, ultimately shape states' performances of restraint.

The chapter proceeds in four sections. The first outlines a model of performative restraint as the volitional and supererogatory "holding back" of an opportunity to assert national power. The second section proposes general signaling mechanisms whereby these performances of restraint represent actors' abundance of material capabilities and moral exemplarity. It also discusses the possibilities and limits of misrepresentation with respect to performative restraint. The third section builds on the performance model to theorize a causal mechanism—what I call "holding back to rise above"—leading to states' conspicuous, costly, restraint in world politics. The final section addresses cases and methods. It elaborates alternative explanations of foreign policy restraint that derive, respectively, from a logic of material consequences, a logic of normative

[18] Ibid., 37-8, 60; Goffman 1955, 237.
[19] A leader's standing in international politics typically reflects the standing of his or her state, and treatment of the leaders is taken to reflect upon the state. See Wendt 1999, chap. 5; O'Neill 1999, 11–6; Steele 2008, 15–20; Kelley 2017, 5; Renshon, Dafoe, and Huth 2018. Arguably, this process extends, as Reinhold Neibhur put it, to the "man in the street, [who] with his lust for power and prestige thwarted by his own limitations and the necessities of social life, projects his ego upon his nation and indulges his anarchic lusts vicariously." Quoted in Browning, Joenniemi, and Steele 2021, 58–9.
[20] Goffman 1959, chap. 3. See also Goffman 1983, 8.
[21] Schimmelfennig 2002, 426.

appropriateness, and a logic of domestic political interests. These contending explanations generate specific and divergent implications, which are evaluated in the historical cases taken up by subsequent chapters.

THE SYNTAX OF SOCIAL RULES

A substantial body of scholarship—especially by English School and constructivist scholars—attests to the importance of international standards of restraint. Drawing upon the process sociology of Norbert Elias and the international historical sociology of Martin Wight, Andrew Linklater has extensively traced the "commitment[s] to prudence, moderation, and self-restraint that no single culture or civilization has monopolized."[22] While the content and format of standards of restraint have varied over space and time, they have remained integral to the "constitutional structures"[23] of diverse international systems, from Ancient Greece,[24] to medieval Christendom,[25] to early modern Asia,[26] to the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe,[27] to the post-war "liberal international order."[28] For instance, the Concert of Europe was sustained by "agreed principles of self-restraint" and "a commitment to the principle of 'self-limitation,'"[29] which took concrete form as the institutions of great power responsibility: "compensations; indemnities; alliances as instruments for accruing power and capability; *raison d'etat;* honour and prestige; Europe as a family of states; and finally, the principle or goal of balance of power itself."[30] These standards of restraint set out specific ways in which states should limit their power in pursuit of self-interest: foreswearing certain means of acquiring material resources or and forgoing certain opportunities to assert (coercive) influence over others.[31]

Most studies of such standards have focused on tracing their origins and/or

[22] Linklater 2016, 435.
[23] Reus-Smit 1997; Reus-Smit 2009.
[24] Wight 1977, 33–5.
[25] Hall 1997.
[26] Kang 2010b.
[27] Haas 2018, 73–82; Mitzen 2013; Schroeder 1989; Kissinger 1994, 70–7.
[28] Deudney and Ikenberry 1999; Ikenberry 2001; Deudney 2007. Cf. Nye 2016 (linking US restraint to its hegemonic position in liberal order, more than the content of the order); Gill and Cutler 2014 (offering a critical perspective on the restraining effects of neoliberal globalization).
[29] Linklater 2016, 227–9.
[30] Quoted in Raymond 2019, 47.
[31] Butterfield and Wight 1966, 13; Suganami 1983; Hurrell 2007.

examining their constraining effects on states' behavior. But they also function constitutively as *frames*: "schemes of interpretation for the meaning of an act."[32] For actors, social norms, standards, and rules also serve as "enabling conventions, in the sense of…the rules of syntax of a language." [33] Like any form of communication, performances rely upon actor and audience sharing a semantic system—a set of expressions that encode mutually intelligible meanings.[34] "The ability to understand the most elementary contours of a performance depends on an audience knowing already, without thinking about it, the categories within which actors behave."[35] Actors can invoke norms and standards to (favorably) compare their conduct to that of key reference others, including their past selves.[36] Through this "rhetorical action," or the "strategic use of norm-based arguments," actors render their performances not only intelligible but conspicuous.[37]

This strategic conception of social rules[38] differs in subtle but important ways from other constructivist scholarship in IR that focuses on the causal effects of norms on states' behavior via persuasion and other socialization processes.[39] In Goffman's model, actors need not internalize the standards that they perform: "*qua* performers, individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realizing standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized…"[40] Still, the syntax of social rules limits actors to *bounded improvisation*: they can "use and manipulate cultural schemata and social rules for their advantage,"[41] but not invent them whole cloth. Indeed, actors must reconcile competing imperatives. Their performances of restraint must depart from background assumptions and practices to become salient, while still being tethered to them to remain meaningful. As discussed below, this introduces a limiting condition for social situations in which actors will perceive restraint as a viable performance.

[32] Goffman 1971, 231.See also Manning 1992, chap. 3; Goffman 1974.
[33] Goffman 1983, 5.
[34] Ibid., 4–5, 15; Goffman 1955, 224–36; Goffman 1974, 85.
[35] Alexander 2006, 58.
[36] Duque 2018; Freedman 2016.
[37] Schimmelfennig 2001, 48. See also Stimmer 2019, 271; Krebs and Jackson 2007, 47; Goddard 2018, 41.
[38] Manning 1992, 25, 158-65.
[39] Schimmelfennig 2002, 198. Cf. Risse 2000; Checkel 2005; Onuf 2012a.
[40] Goffman 1959, 251. See also Steele 2012, 43–5.
[41] Mor 2009, 421. See also Goffman 1971, 237; Goffman 1974, 84; Ringmar 2012, 7; Hopf 2018, 692–3.

Surpassing Standards, Exceeding Expectations

A distinctive implication of the performance model is that performative restraint cannot take the form of mere compliance—either conscious or routinized—with social norms. Many standards of restraint acquire the character of social norms, informing "collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity."[42] Norms entail a sense of "oughtness," corresponding to society's convergent expectations that specific actors will engage in certain behaviors and refrain from others.[43] Performances must appear volitional, reflecting an actor's intentions and originating in its will.[44] Yet compliance with norms tends to obscure individuals' agency in two ways. First, observers tend to notice only when actors deviate from their expectations, while normal, routine, and expected behaviors fail to achieve salience. (It is exactly this tendency for society to single out negative deviance that has led IR constructivists to view norms as constraints on states' behavior, especially their use of force.[45]) Second, even when an actor is perceived to be complying with a norm, observers tend to attribute compliance to social pressures or forces beyond the actor's control. It should be noted that norms prescribe (and proscribe) conduct for actors based on their respective social identities: what is deemed ordinary or even mandatory for one person may be exceptional for another.[46] And observers update their expectations of an actor's proper behavior in response to its past conduct, demonstrated preferences, known proclivities, etc.[47] These caveats notwithstanding, it is generally the case that compliance with observers' convergent expectations—that is, situationally normative behavior—lacks a performative quality. Successful performances of restraint harness the "meaningful contingency" or dramatic tension that exists when states have the option to assert their power.[48]

The existence of relevant restraint norms enables performances, not in directly prescribing/proscribing patterns of conduct, but in establishing standards

[42] Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 54; Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink 1998, 891.
[43] Abott et al. 2000, 408–12; Finnemore and Toope 2001, 744.
[44] Alexander 2006, 55.
[45] Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Stimmer 2019.
[46] Research on sumptuary laws restricting consumption reveals that restrictions often vary in proportion to status: high-status individuals are expected to adhere to strict standards of restraint. See Hunt 1996; Boone 1998, 2.
[47] The salience of facts about a person emerges from the background of that person's biography known to observers. Goffman 1963, chap. 2.
[48] Rauer 2006, 282.

that actors can surpass, exceeding an audience's convergent expectations. Performances of restraint instantiate "supererogatory standards," which have a "nonobligatory" character and delineate "praiseworthy" actions.[49] Like norms, supererogatory standards inhere within specific contexts and apply to specific identities. For instance, several studies have found that, in the context of civil wars, the non-targeting of civilians can become a conspicuous form of restraint, which non-state rebel groups use to seek international support and legitimacy.[50] In this sense actors may benefit from low expectations. Consider that for South Sudan, a poor state wracked by instability and violence, acceding to the international mine ban treaty appeared as a "demonstration of responsible statehood," whereas developed democracies were simply expected to join the regime.[51] Conversely, yhis dynamic also applies to hegemonic states with a history of flaunting international law. Harold Koh suggests that "the process of visibly obeying international norms builds U.S. 'soft power,' enhances it moral authority, and strengthens U.S. capacity for global leadership…"[52] For states without as much discretion to act, obedience usually remains invisible.

Because what counts as a performance of restraint depends upon the norms, rules, and standards that prevail in a given interaction, a generic definition must consist of "analytical generalities."[53] These derive from the criteria that actors and audiences employ to recognize restraint across time, space, and policy areas.[54] In general, *not deploying power for material gain* counts as restraint for observers when it registers as *volitional*, expressing an actor's organic will rather than external coercion or environmental constraint, and *supererogatory*, exceeding the actor's normative obligations. Each performance of restraint corresponds to a potential assertion of national power, that is, to a counterfactual scenario in which the performing state used its available capacities to advance recognizable interests—often at others' expense. I refer to these counterfactual acts of assertion as "power-policies." Analytically, performances of restraint relate to power-policies as non-X to X. States' leaders perform restraint in the following form: "I am poised

[49] Jurkovich 2020, 700–1.
[50] Stanton 2016; Ratner 2004; similarly, Jo and Thomson 2014 (granting access to detainees).
[51] Bower 2015, 359 emphasis added.
[52] Koh 2003, 1480.
[53] Pouliot 2015, 251–2. For complementary methodological discussions, see Pouliot 2007; Hopf 2002, esp. xi.
[54] Searle 1995, 124.

to do X, which would advance my state's interests. (Many or most in my position have done X.) But I am choosing to do non-X anyway."[55]

RESTRAINT AND SELF-PRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Reframing restraint as a performance in this way discloses numerous potential pathways to prestige that IR has neglected in the realms of *security*—military non-intervention, nuclear non-proliferation; *economics*—trade non-retaliation, non-emission of CO_2; *diplomacy*—crisis non-escalation, political non-interference; and *global governance*—costly compliance with international law. We can now consider what, in general, such performances mean for performers' social standing. While prior studies have characterized restraint as a special practice and obligation of great powers, but they do not have a monopoly on performative restraint as a pathway to prestige.[56] Entirely aside from signaling what *kind* of actor one is—a primary function of material status symbols—performances also communicate more granular information, including the specific (latent) assets and qualities that one possesses and the degree to which one possesses them.[57] As Victor Turner notes, etymologically "performance" derives from the Old English *parfournir*, meaning "to furnish completely or thoroughly."[58] "Performing is a way of showing."[59] This section identifies two specific qualities that states leaders, in performing restraint, take it to signal: abundant material capabilities and exceptional moral character.

Representing Material Capabilities

Performative restraint gestures to resources that would equip the actor to profitably assert its will—in a word, to an actor's "inactive" power.[60] Power resources do not automatically convey prestige but rather must be made conspicuous for an audience. Power may be felt most viscerally through its non-use, as Foucault recognized with respect to the sovereign whose power "appeared with more spectacular effect than ever when it interrupted the executioner's gesture with

[55] This model can be applied at various levels of abstraction spanning space and time. A performance of restraint may be defined as a years-long grand strategy or as a momentary action. However, when it is used in the more metaphorical and abstract sense, the model of performative restraint will consist of many smaller, momentary, micro-performances.
[56] McCourt 2014; Aslam 2013.
[57] Goffman 1956, 492; Goffman 1951, 294–5.
[58] Turner 1980, 160.
[59] Ringmar 2012, 18; cf. Pouliot 2016b.
[60] Lukes 2005, 77–8; see also Schelling 1960, 22–8.

a letter of pardon… The sovereign was present at the execution not only as the power exacting the vengeance of the law, but as the power that could suspend both law and vengeance."[61] A similar phenomenon recurs in international diplomacy when a state's (proactive) promise to refrain from acting in a certain way broadcasts the possibility of it acting in exactly that way. For example, when in "December 2015, while on a visit in Myanmar, Chinese [Premier] Wen Jiabao declared that China 'vowed not to meddle in Myanmar's affairs,'" this pledge "add[ed] to the qualms of western actors about China's increased international agency through the promise and practice of enhanced trade relations."[62] Such statements comprise two implicit rhetorical devices. One is the implicit claim to possess the capacity for the policy that is ostensibly forsworn. The other is the implicit claim to possess the strategic latitude to voluntarily forswear the policy. Choosers are demonstrably not beggars. Leaders see the appeal in claiming, like Woodrow Wilson, that their states can "*afford* to exercise the self-restraint of a truly great nation, which realizes its own strength and scorns to misuse it."[63]

The expressive significance of restraint in material terms owes to more than rhetorical assertions that a state possesses material assets and corresponding capacities for national self-assertion. Signaling theory holds that the *actual non-use* of an evident, strategically valuable, capability enhances its significance. Because restraint entails the non-use of material assets for personal gain, it is a costly behavior.[64] Specifically, it demonstrates an actor's ability to bear opportunity costs and, by extension, its underlying sense of material security. This logic implicates the "handicap principle," which holds that "waste can make sense, because by wasting one proves conclusively that one has enough assets to waste and more." [65] Many examples of the handicap principle involve conspicuous consumption. [66] But the same expressive effect may be achieved through

[61] Foucault 1995, 53. Discussing the aesthetic politics of power displays, see Steele 2012, 25–30; Fujii 2017; Berezin 1997.
[62] Kavalski 2013, 256.
[63] Quoted in Haley 1970, 100 (emphasis added).
[64] Technically, restraint entails both "ex ante" and "ex post" costs – the former because actors must invest in underlying capabilities in order to render their restraint credibly volitional; the latter because performances of restraint can shape observers' expectations about actors' future conduct and thus make violations costly. See Quek 2017. Yet contra costly signaling theory, I do not maintain that the costly nature of restraint makes it inherently credible. Cf. Bliege Bird and Smith 2005, 332.
[65] Zahavi and Zahavi 1999, 229.
[66] Gilady provides several applications of the principle in IR, such as maintaining an "aging aircraft carrier, playing host to the [Olympic] games, or accepting leadership positions in

conspicuous asceticism—refraining from enjoying goods one could afford. The phenomenon of "going green to be seen" is a microcosm of seeking prestige through restraint: behaving in an environmentally responsible manner to signal privilege and moral bona fides.[67] In the sustainability literature, this phenomenon has been called "status seeking through moderation," whereby "prestige derive[s] from voluntary self-restraint in consumption."[68] Or consider the Silicon Valley fashion consultant with a "number of super-successful Silicon Valley clients who dress in ripped denim, Vans shoes, and T-shirts. They are worth hundreds of millions, even more, but it's a status symbol to dress like you're homeless to attend board meetings…"[69] Because these individuals have such exceptional wealth, their status is beyond doubt. Subverting expected displays of wealth calls attention to their capacity for such displays while demonstrating that they can afford to rise above them. Like the traditional old money types that Goffman referenced, the new occupants of the uppermost echelon of wealth and power are *too rich* for conspicuous consumption.[70]

In a different vein, the handicap principle also applies to other-regarding or prosocial behaviors because a "prosocial actor needs sufficient resources to ensure self-help as well as enough to practice other-help."[71] Sociology, anthropology, and evolutionary psychology research finds that prestige often derives from prosocial behaviors such as costly altruism,[72] impersonal generosity,[73] and self-sacrifice on the part of leaders.[74] Claiming to act on behalf of one's group is a particularly effective strategy for prestige-seeking because, under many social codes, "[h]onor was thought to elude those who sought it too actively, but to attach itself to those who achieved or displayed it with cultivated nonchalance."[75] The familiar corollary of this logic is that performing a good act only to be seen as having done it diminishes the moral value of the act—if not altogether than at least relative to an

international governance." Gilady 2018, 15; Musgrave and Nexon 2018, 615.
[67] Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh 2010.
[68] Vlek 1995, 1210.
[69] Quoted in Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan 2014; see also Eckhardt, Belk, and Wilson 2015.
[70] Goffman 1959, 75.
[71] Gilady 2018, 94; see also Johnston 2008, 88.
[72] Hardy and Van Vugt 2006; Van Vugt 2006; Henrich, Chudek, and Boyd 2015; Glazer and Konrad 1996.
[73] Henrich 2009; Boone 1998; Gintis, Smith, and Bowles 2001.
[74] Price and Van Vugt 2014; Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh 2010.
[75] Lebow 2008b, 291.

equivalent act done for intrinsic reasons.[76] Prestige-seeking actors seek to preserve a fiction whereby they exercise restraint not for their own sake, but for the sake of others. And in the context of international anarchy, they often succeed in framing restraint as an "individually costly but collectively beneficial" act.[77] It thus joins other forms of prosocial prestige-seeking in IR such as "competitions of beneficence" and "competitive promise-keeping."[78]

Representing Moral Character

Thus, restraint discloses moral meanings in addition to material ones.[79] Restraint as a virtue spans the Judeo-Christian and Confucian traditions,[80] medieval ideals of chivalry[81] and modern ones of masculinity. [82] It informs the Hellenistic ideal of reason, the aristocratic code of noblesse oblige, the bourgeois value of sophistication, and the modern practice of self-deprecation.[83] An exhaustive list falls beyond the scope of this chapter. Still, several discursive categories are particularly important for framing restraint as a source of moral prestige in world politics:

(1) Standards of "civilization" and "barbarity." Restraint is a hallmark of individuals and societies considered civilized.[84] Complex systems of rules—whether etiquette, domestic political institutions, or international law—define social organization in "modern," "advanced," and "rational" communities.[85] Societies and the individuals that belong to them are ordered hierarchically according to the extent of their rule-governed conduct.

(2) Responsibility. Following rules marks one as responsible and therefore worthy of holding a position of privilege, leadership, and authority. At the Founding of the UN, British minister Anthony Eden invoked the classic dictum that "[t]he

[76] Johnston 2008, 83; Franck 1988.
[77] Bliege Bird and Smith 2005, 221; Willer 2009, 24; Gintis, Smith, and Bowles 2001. In IR, Lake 2010; Kindleberger 2013; Kustermans 2019.
[78] Busby 2010, 140.
[79] Indeed, this is what distinguishes performative restraint from coercive threats, which comprise contingent promises not to use force (i.e., if the target of a threat complies with its terms). See Schelling 1960, 22-8.
[80] See Isaiah 48:9 (NET); *The Analects* Book 12, Chap. 1.
[81] See Shakespeare's *Titus Androcinus*, Act I, Scene 1.
[82] See Obama quoted in Goldberg 2020.
[83] Goffman 1956, 480–1; Bourdieu 1979, 101.
[84] Elias 2000; Linklater 2016; more broadly, Gong 1984; Stroikos 2014.
[85] Buzan and Lawson 2015, chap. 4; Weber 2013, 33–8.

greater the power any State commands, the heavier its responsibility to wield that power with… restraint upon its own selfish impulses."[86] Today, aspiring members of the Security Council justify their bids with reference to, not their material power, but their commitment to upholding peaceful conflict resolution, non-intervention, and the rule of law.[87]

(3) Gender and maturity. Restraint is coded as masculine, in opposition to childish and/or feminine overreaction and hysteria.[88] Writing to Khrushchev after JFK's death, Jackie Kennedy invoked this dynamic: "big men know the needs for self-control and restraint—little men are sometimes moved by fear and pride. If only in the future the big men can continue to make the littles ones sit down and talk, before they start to fight."[89] Feminists validate restraint as a virtue when praising women for managing, better than men, to control their passions.

(4) Liberalism. The "liberal normative presumption in favor of law means that promoting international law becomes both a political virtue and a professional obligation. It suggests that international law is *naturally good* because it restrains governments from behaviors that are antisocial either towards states or their own people…" [90] Thus, in the liberal international order, costly compliance with international law functions as a "status signal."[91]

When states invoke these discourses to positively portray their own actions, they engage in "virtue signaling" or "moral grandstanding:" they are "publicly signaling [their] values or virtues in a grandiose way with a goal of garnering attention and admiration."[92] This entails specific rhetorical practices, including "a kind of moral one-upmanship, or 'ramping up,'" in which actors make "increasingly strong claims to 'outdo' other discussants as they try to show that they are more morally sensitive, or care more about justice." [93] Moral standing remains a positional good, with individuals vying to surpass each other in terms of respectability. In this sense, "self-restraint… is not a 'nice' strategy."[94]

Moreover, as metrics of moral standing, "understandings and practices of

[86] Quoted in McCourt 2014, 48–56.
[87] Larson and Shevchenko 2014, 48–56; Pouliot 2014, 192–218; Linklater 2016, 446.
[88] Steele 2019a, 36-7, 101-2; see also Tapscott 2020.
[89] Kennedy 1996.
[90] Hurd 2018, 271.
[91] Koh 1997, 2635.
[92] Grubbs et al. 2019, 5; Tosi and Warmke 2016, 199.
[93] Grubbs et al. 2019, 4.
[94] Adler 2010, 215.

responsibility play a crucial role in distributing, constraining *and licensing* social power."[95] As Norbert Elias and his interlocutors in IR have demonstrated, establishing and applying standards of restraint is a primary strategy of social control on the part of powerful actors. An upper class will establish social rules that its members are uniquely equipped to follow, while reproaching lower classes who lack the knowledge and resources for compliance as "untrustworthy, undisciplined and lawless."[96] Restraint is typically due only to those deemed capable of reciprocating it.[97] The Long Peace in Europe during the nineteenth century coincided with an explosion of colonial violence because "[c]onfidence in their 'civilized' condition led many Europeans to believe they could treat 'uncivilized' peoples as they wished…"[98] At the same time, Western powers condemned Japan's brazen expansionism in northern China. "If [the Western powers in China] exercised any form of restraint, it was often among themselves in not expanding their economic and territorial privileges in a way that would arouse the jealousy of their peers."[99] The liberal discourses that have informed post-WWII standards of international restraint can prove similarly permissive.[100] Liberal powers justify punishing others' illiberal behavior and "enforcing restraint," whether through arms embargos, economic sanctions, or humanitarian interventions.[101] To build support for invading Iraq, George W. Bush delineated in excruciating detail the Iraqi regime's history of torture and human rights abuses, concluding that "[t]rusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option…"[102] More recently, the United States has justified its program of targeted drone killings by framing efforts to minimize civilian casualties as part of a "humane" style of warfare.[103]

No doubt great powers have outsized influence over international norms and standards of restraint, defining "civilized" behaviors such as respecting women's rights and lowering tariff barriers.[104] Yet this relationship between material power

[95] Gusterson 1999, 163 emphasis added.
[96] Elias 1994, 11.
[97] Buzan and Lawson 2015, 210; Suzuki 2009, 69.
[98] Linklater 2016, 13; Buzan and Lawson 2015, 210.
[99] Suzuki 2009, 69.
[100] Deudney 2007.
[101] Damrosch 1993; Steele 2019a, chap. 3.
[102] Bush 2003, 260–4.
[103] Moyn 2021.
[104] Towns 2009 (status of women); Fordham and Asal 2007 (formal equality of women; prohibition on jailing political opponents); Ikenberry 2001, 171 (tariff bariers); Nel 2003

and norm-creation is not absolute; moral authority remains a distinct domain of social comparison from material power, and the orderings of actors on these dimensions often diverge.[105]. Moreover, "[t]he creation of institutions to counter the policy goals of dominant actors and promote alternative standards of behavior is [one] key way that less materially powerful states can influence global politics."[106] Norms and discourses may evolve—through adoption or adaptation—in ways that constrain even the powerful states that originally championed them. A classic example is the "rise to self-assertion" of postcolonial states in Asia and Africa that "turn[ed] the weapons—the ideas, the instruments, the institutions—of the West against itself."[107] Even the most powerful states face pressures to abide by the rules they have set for themselves and others.[108]

Power and the Possibility of (Mis-)Representation

The representation of these prestigious material and moral qualities is "not an objective and given, but an intersubjective and contingent process."[109] The "impression of reality fostered by a performance is a delicate, fragile thing that can be shattered by very minor mishaps."[110] At the same time, "[m]isrepresentations are possible because status is often only supported symbolically."[111] Yet Goffman held that both brazen manipulation on the part of actors and stubborn misrecognition on the part of audience members were limited because all interactants share an interest in upholding the semantic structures upon which their respective standing depends.[112] Iterative interactions foster a "large base of shared cognitive presuppositions, if not normative ones, and self-sustained restraints," which Goffman called the "interaction order."[113] Crucially, the term discloses "[no] implications… concerning how 'orderly' such activity ordinarily is, or the role of

(abandoning protectionism); Lin and Katada 2022 (joining free-trade agreements). For a particularly strong account of hegemonic leadership, attributing significant discretion to the United States to shape international norms of restraint, see Brooks and Wohlforth 2008.
[105] Wohlforth et al. 2018.
[106] Bower 2015, 349.
[107] Emerson 1960, 17; Finnemore and Jurkovich 2014; Acharya 2018.
[108] Donnelly 1998, 5.
[109] Jervis 1976, 11.
[110] Goffman 1959, 56.
[111] Manning 1992, 41.
[112] Goffman 1956, 4; Goffman 1983, 16; Jervis 1976, 135. Cf. Pouliot 2016a, 14.
[113] Goffman 1983, 5.

norms and rules in supporting such orderliness as does obtain."[114] Even domestic societies, let alone international politics, disclose "open-ended conflicts between parties who do not necessarily share beliefs, frequently do not accept the validity of one another's intention[s], and often disagree even about the descriptions that people offer for acts."[115] The public stage frequently serves as an "arena in which a contest or match is held."[116] The interaction order depends, not upon the participants evincing any particular moral disposition to cooperation, but rather upon them recognizing the instrumental value of "traffic rules" for their interactions.[117]

The interaction order manifests as a "working consensus" between actors and audience members about which performances are plausible representations of underlying reality.[118] "In order for their display to be effective, actors must offer a plausible performance, one that leads those to whom their actions and gestures are directed to accept their motives and explanations as a reasonable account."[119] Actors seek to avoid the embarrassment and loss of prestige that occur when "the gap between actual and projected self is unbridgeable."[120] Their "crucial concern" is whether their performance will be "credited or discredited."[121] When an actor is seen as attempting to manipulate its standing through deception or misrepresentation, it is severely punished for breaking the "ground rules of communication."[122] In extreme cases, an actor may discredit itself as a future interaction partner, leading to social isolation.[123] Audience members, for their part, are normally sincere in seeking to understand the communicative intentions behind performances and to glean whatever truth is conveyed by them.

In performing restraint, states purport to represent their power short of deploying it; this in particular raises the issue of misrepresentation. The concept of power is relevant for (mis)representing restraint in two senses that should be carefully distinguished. In the first sense, performing restraint depends upon the

[114] Ibid.
[115] Alexander 2006, 30.
[116] Goffman 1955, 233; Goffman 1983, 4; Junge 2006, 288.
[117] Jenkins 2008, 163–4.
[118] Goffman 1955, 236n22, 224-225; Goffman 1983, 16; Lemert and Branaman 1997, lxiii, lxx.
[119] Alexander 2006, 32.
[120] Manning 1992, 39.
[121] Goffman 1955, 213.
[122] Goffman 1967, 24; Goffman 1959, 59–60.
[123] Goffman 1961, 81.

actor having at least some underlying power-policy capabilities. Goffman understood power as "efficacy or capacity, focusing on the various resources that people can draw upon in their attempts to shape the present and future..."[124] Performances can increase the salience of these resources, idealize them, and exaggerate them. Self-aggrandizement only works at the margins, though: actors cannot invent performances out of thin air or fashion them whole cloth lest they be exposed as emperors without clothes. In the second sense, actors must possess "performative power," or the capacity of actors to "project particular cultural meanings to public audiences in pursuit of instrumental goals or common understanding, [engaging] in contests about narratives, norms of appropriate behavior, the legitimacy of goals and demands, and the definition of cooperation versus defection and of victory versus defeat."[125] A "compelling performance depends not only on whether the knowledge represented is valid or true but also on... the strategic capacity to mobilize resources, people, and networks..."[126] To effectively perform restraint, a state's representatives must have access to salient public platforms and be equipped with the cultural fluency to take advantage of them.[127] The distribution of performative power does not simply map onto the distribution of material power. Nonetheless, the need to plausibly project prosocial intentions is a limiting condition for my theory, ruling out the most marginalized states. Stigma renders actors incompetent of meaningful moral action.[128] As we shall see below, performative restraint tends to elude "parvenu powers" and "rogue states," which are widely condemned and derided.[129] The universe of potential cases remains large, though, encompassing great powers, middle powers, and even small states, which retain a constructive orientation to international order and a degree of situational discretion in their foreign policy.

HOLDING BACK TO RISE ABOVE

The previous section developed an analytical account of foreign policy restraint as a performance that, when presented as volitional and supererogatory, may convey

[124] Jenkins 2008, 159; Persson 2019, 4.
[125] Adler 2010, 204.
[126] Ibid., 204-5. See also Mattern 2007; Eagleton-Pierce 2013.
[127] Alexander 2006, 35; Goffman 1956, 22-3, 34-51; Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 38.
[128] Epstein 2012; Adler-Nissen 2014; Pacher 2019; Terman 2020.
[129] See Lebow 2008, 398-408, 429-438.

material and moral prestige. This account also entails a *causal* mechanism because, if leaders believe that performative restraint conveys prestige, this may cause them to behave in a way that they would not otherwise.[130] Leaders may "hold back" from an opportunity to profitably assert their power in order to "rise above" other states in the hierarchy of international prestige. This section develops a theory of "holding back to rise above" in world politics from the premise that leaders act on the basis of the meanings that they ascribe to restraint as a performance.[131]

Indeed, this premise is central to the tradition of "symbolic interactionism" with which Goffman is often associated.[132] Symbolic interactionism holds that individuals "interpret each other's gestures and act on the basis of the meaning yielded by the interpretation."[133] It follows that, in order to influence its treatment by others, an actor must consider its "self" reflexively, through the eyes of significant others. Social interaction becomes a sort of game or competition in which participants try to "conceptualize the relationship between what they choose to say or do and the effect this has on others."[134] Models of social interaction as a game, competition, or performance imply, controversially, that actors' adoption of a self-reflexive orientation serves—rather than constitutes—their motives and preferences for self-presentation.[135] For Goffman, the individual enters into the interaction situation already concerned to establish his prestige, the "positive social value one effectively claims for himself."[136]

My theory of "holding back to rise above" also takes the desire for prestige

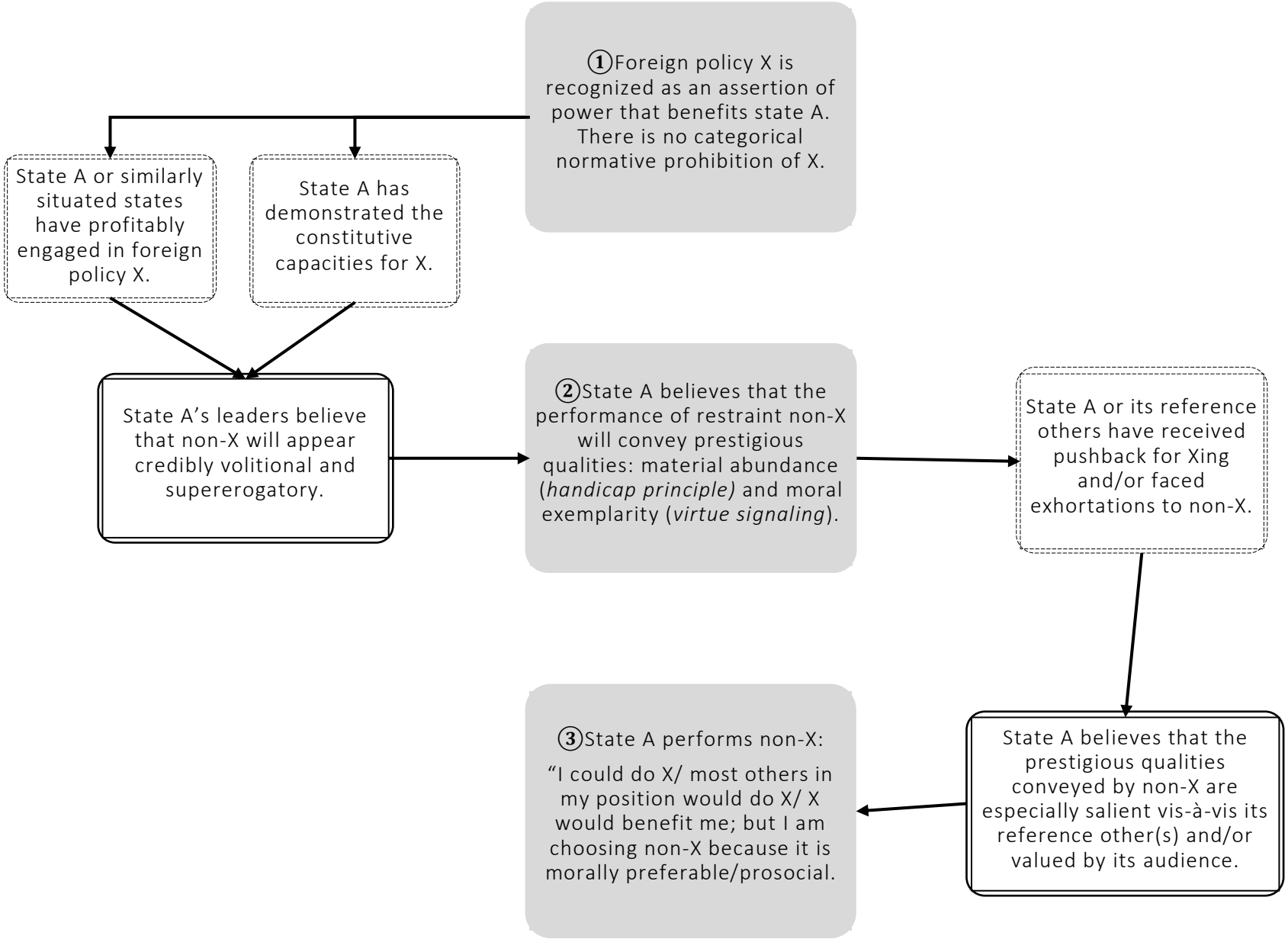
[130] As I use the term "causal mechanism," it refers to (a) "the pathway or process by which an effect [i.e., *foreign policy restraint*] is produced," (b) a "context dependent (tightly bounded or middle-range) explanation," that is, one which arises from the specific dynamics of social interaction. Gerring 2010, 1500–1. See also George and Bennett 2004, 132–3; Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 419; Jackson and Nexon 2013, 549.
[131] Jackson 2010, 102; Ringmar 2014, 18. Ultimately, then, it matters little whether these performances are "real" so long as leaders act as if they were. Adler 1997, 336–7; Pouliot 2007; Jacobs 2015, 43–4.
[132] Manning 1992, 19. Symbolic interactionism has notably influenced IR constructivism, which shares its premises of the reflexivity of social selves and the intersubjectivity of human life. Wendt 1999, 227, 329; Adler-Nissen 2017b; McCourt 2016.
[133] Blumer 1966, 537; Blumer 1986; Mead 2015, 167–79.
[134] Mor 2009, 226; Mead 2015, 151-63, 187, 257.
[135] Manning 1992, 47-48. Here, symbolic interactionism diverges from more thoroughly structuralist accounts in that "roles, status positions, [and] rank orders" do not *determine* social action, but "are important only as they enter into the process of interpretation and definition out of which joint actions are formed." Blumer 1966, 543. For criticisms of this approach as overly individualist, see Adler-Nissen 2017b, 29–32; Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 29; McCourt 2012, 373–8; McCourt 2011, 1600; Palan 2000, 589–93.
[136] Goffman 1955, 213, 222, 237-8; Goffman 1983, 2.

as paramount.[137] As discussed above, states value prestige for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons. While prestige may converge with other motives such as material security, these motives will also diverge: at times, actors willingly sacrifice material well-being for prestige.[138] This anti-materialist quality of prestige-seeking has led some scholars to regard prestige-seeking as irrational.[139] But I conceptualize prestige-seeking as a largely rational process, at least in the subjective (means-ends) sense. For instance, prestige-seeking states strategically select their audiences, targeting either high-status others who can validate their desire for standing or subordinate actors whose deference they seek. Rational actors also recognize that they are embedded in social webs of meaning and must therefore "play to the audience." Thus, my theory seeks to transcend the "polemical opposition of 'calculus' and 'culture'... to ask not *whether* people act strategically, but under what conditions and how they do so."[140]

"Holding back to rise above" links structural and interactional factors. When (1) prevailing social standards set the stage for supererogatory restraint, and (2) leaders believe that they are positioned to put on a credible performance, then (3) leaders look for opportunities to exceed audience members' expressed expectations of their restraint and/or to positively distinguish their state from an unrestrained reference other (see Figure 2.1). While these elements of the theory are most accurately represented as analytical layers which together constitute a causal mechanism, rather than as linear stages in a causal process, an assumption of linearity is useful for explicating the theory in the remainder of this section.

[137] The priority of the prestige motive over competing values such as security is an a priori assumption of my theory. On the theoretical role of fundamental motives in IR, see Lebow 2008, chaps. 2-3, esp. 158-160.
[138] Abrams 1998.
[139] For an overview, see Renshon 2017, 50–61.
[140] DiMaggio 1998, 701.

Figure 2.1: Holding Back to Rise Above.



(1) Setting the Stage for Performative Restraint

The drama of performative restraint plays out against the backdrop of social norms and standards constituted intersubjectively between actors and audiences. The social structure constrains social actors insofar as norms determine what actions are and are not prestigious. In many cases, prestige has been "decoupled from aggression" in the rules-based international order, with "war-initiation [now] almost certain to *reduce* a state's external standing."[141] Social structure permits performative restraint when actors can exceed observers' convergent expectations indexed to context-specific standards. This is only possible when the relevant standards admit exceptions or extenuating circumstances, that is, when they can accommodate supererogatory action.

Supererogatory standards arise in several contexts. Many principles studied as "norms" by IR scholars do not generate societal expectations of (near) universal compliance. Norm contestation is itself "normal" and regularly results from the application of general rules to specific situations.[142] Importantly, norms and supererogatory standards are distinguished by the actual level of compliance that they command and the corresponding expectations that they will govern behavior in a given interaction.[143] The form that the standards take—whether, for instance, they are represented by nonbinding accords or by hard law—is not determinative.[144] Even international law, often considered uniquely obligatory, commands compliance to various degrees depending upon the extent to which it aims to change state practice.[145] Compliance with laws that merely reinforce underlying norms, codifying widespread practices, will hardly appear supererogatory.[146] Yet letter-of-the-law compliance may appear supererogatory if non-compliance is common and/or if there have recently been salient defections from a legal regime.[147]

[141] Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006, 11. Observing similar trends, see Lebow 2010, 18–9, 171; Finnemore 2003; Mueller 2013.
[142] Stimmer 2019, 271; Wiener 2018, chap. 2; García Iommi 2020.
[143] Gibbs 1965, 591.
[144] Abbott and Snidal 2000; Lipson 2017; Roger 2020.
[145] Finnemore and Toope 2001; Reus-Smit 2004; Brunnée and Toope 2010, 55–87; Kratochwil 2014. Notably, drafters of international legal agreements may strategically exempt controversial issues or couch them in purposefully ambiguous terms, *increasing* the chance of subsequent contestation. Koremenos 2013b; Koremenos 2016.
[146] Downs, Rocke, and Barsoom 1996, 380; Price 2004, 114; Abbott and Snidal 2000, 430–1; Percy 2007.
[147] In other words, the mere fact that a legal prohibition exists and technically applies in the situation at hand does not mean that observers will expect an actor to abide by it. Kratochwil 2014, 47; Borgen 2009, 4; Reus-Smit 2011.

Often supererogatory standards are not explicitly written down but rather adumbrated by existing rules. One may extend the spirit of a rule past its explicit provisions and into a domain where others have not normally applied it. This is not possible, of course, with respect to a subset of ironclad norms, categorical prohibitions, or "taboos." While by their very nature rare, prohibitions approaching taboos might exist in international society—with respect to using chemical weapons against civilians or nuclear weapons against non-nuclear powers, for instance.[148] In theory, taboos do not admit exceptions or extenuating circumstances; they generate universally binding compliance obligations, which cannot be surpassed or exceeded. Compliance with a taboo—merely *not violating* it—can hardly be presented as supererogatory or volitional, given the intense social pressures associated with violation. Advertising heroic efforts to meet standards of normal behavior more likely invites mockery and scorn than inspires respect and awe.

These dynamics outline a window of opportunity for performative restraint. On one hand, a social standard must be sufficiently established and widely recognized to serve as a salient metric of social comparison. On the other hand, the standard cannot be *so* well established and taken for granted that it is expected to command (let alone actually commands) universal compliance. This window does not remain fixed. Performances of restraint may effectively raise the relevant standards as the audience updates its convergent expectations about actors' behavior.[149] Successful performances of restraint invite imitation and can spur escalating competitions of restraint. If states regularly repeat a performance, they diminish its value as a signal of social distinction. Widespread imitation of a performance will make it a less attractive site for subsequent prestige-seeking. Thus, to maintain dramatic tension, leaders will face pressures to "double down" in their performances, broadening and/or deepening the extent of their restraint over time.

(2) Considering Credibility

Social interaction resembles an "information game," with audiences evaluating performances in terms of the credibility of the signals they give off regarding actors' claimed capacities and characteristics.[150] Here credibility refers to a performance's

[148] Tannenwald 2007; Price 1997.
[149] Pouliot 2016a, 12; Hopf 2018; Bueger and Gadinger 2015; Schindler and Wille 2015.
[150] Goffman 1959, 8; Schelling 1960, 116; Goffman 1970, 96; Jervis 1976, 11-23, 135; Mor 2009, 226; Goddard 2018, 23.

coherence with an actor's projected background.[151] Goffman held that, "[a]t the very center of interaction life is the cognitive relation we have with those present before us."[152] This relationship "is relatively context-free, extending beyond any current social situation to all occasions when the two individuals meet."[153] Leaders attempt to take the perspective of their prospective audience to assess whether their performance of restraint will be accepted as suitably volitional and supererogatory, in light of their previously displayed material assets and moral qualities.

In material terms, several factors may undermine the presentation of restraint as credibly volitional. First, states may not have had the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for some power-policy X corresponding to a performance of restraint non-X. Without a track record of Xing successfully, it will be difficult for leaders to claim that they could X if they wanted to. Second, situational variables that impose greater costs for Xing may preclude straightforward inferences from an actor's previous Xings to its actual capacity to X in the situation at hand. The apparent presence of external constraints that prevent an actor from Xing will make the performance of non-X seem like a bluff. Third, conspicuous failures with respect to X may call into question subsequent performances of restraint non-X, unless and until the actor has recovered by Xing effectively. Failures with respect to X include indications that an actor has fallen behind in relative terms in an Xing competition—so-called "Sputnik moments"—in which case non-X will appear to cede the field to one's competitor.[154] To overcome doubts arising in these scenarios, leaders can more directly display the resources that render their restraint volitional—massing troops at the border prior to performative non-intervention, increasing the degree of nuclear latency prior to performative non-proliferation, and so on. Such attempts to "toe the line" are integral to many performances of restraint.

In moral terms, leaders also "must be careful not to lose their credibility as community members when manipulating social values and norms."[155] Consistency is critical here. "The individual's initial projection commits him to what he is

[151] Goffman referred to this concept using various other terms, including "consistency" and "expressive coherence." Goffman 1959, 10, 64; Goffman 1974 21-39, 124-55; Goffman 1983, 4-5.
[152] Goffman 1983, 4-5, emphasis added.
[153] Ibid., 12.
[154] Barnhart 2020, 2-10, 36-44.
[155] Schimmelfennig 2003, 220.

proposing to be and requires him to drop all pretenses of being other things."[156] And even if the actor is tempted to engage in hypocrisy—"forgo his cake and eat it too"—he thus places himself in a "precarious position" because "at any moment in their performance an event may occur to catch them out and badly contradict what they have openly avowed, bringing them immediate humiliation and sometimes permanent loss of reputation."[157] Even the most powerful states' credibility will suffer if they disclose a "double standard of morality."[158] And whether a state *assents* to the audience's moral perspective does not matter. Resentment that one has been branded irresponsible, selfish, evil, etc. implies (grudging) recognition that one cannot effectively present oneself as embodying the corresponding positive qualities.

Potentially complicating assessments of the credibility, material capabilities—military, economic, and scientific assets—are to some extent *fungible* across policy domains and issue areas. For instance, observers might infer from a state's general scientific excellence—its leading research institutes and cutting-edge technology firms—that it could surmount the technical barriers to nuclear proliferation. Or observers might infer from the raw size of a state's GDP, or its military budget, that it could intervene effectively in a neighboring state. While these inferences are abstractly plausible, they are largely irrelevant for time-limited interactions in which the *imminent* use of material capabilities drives the dramatic tension of performative restraint. The question of fungibility is more important when it comes to moral credibility, since salient norm violations can undermine a state's credibility to behave in a prosocial way in apparently unrelated areas.[159] Because restraint is a normative act, audiences will only recognize it if they believe that the actor shares their "moral point of view."[160] Prior studies suggest that the attribution of stigma serves as a limiting condition for my theory.[161] Stigma adheres to states that have been socially isolated as a result of their ascriptive

[156] Goffman 1956, 5.
[157] Ibid., 26, 38; see also Carson 2015.
[158] Linklater 2016, 3; Goddard 2018, 25; Finnemore 2009.
[159] On norm violations affecting states' general reputation, see Kelley 2017, chap. 2 (insufficient attention to combatting human trafficking); Guzman 2008, 104–6 (breaking international agreements); Erickson 2015 (participating in elicit arms trade); Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015 (initiating international conflict); cf. Mercer 2018 (offering an issue-specific theory of reputation).
[160] Kratochwil 1991, 16.
[161] Zarakol 2014; Zarakol 2010; Subotic and Zarakol 2013; Adler-Nissen 2014; Adler-Nissen 2017a; Suzuki 2017.

characteristics.[162] Leaders of stigmatized or socially marginalized states are unlikely to perceive performative restraint as a viable strategy for attaining prestige, exactly because others are unlikely to see them as credible moral actors.[163]

Crucially, credibility is not an objective condition; it is established and maintained intersubjectively. In order to anticipate whether a performance will appear credible to a prospective audience, an actor must adopt a critically self-reflexive orientation, becoming a "looking-glass self."[164] Viewing oneself through others' eyes brings into focus the "interaction constraints" that an actor must heed in order to "transform…[its] activities into performances."[165] Some doubt that individuals, especially in the impersonal context of world politics, can possess "real knowledge of the other and of his or her circumstances."[166] Yet taking others' perspective is not a merely metaphysical exercise; an actor assumes that "their treatment of him will express their conception of him."[167] Leaders heed signs that others have recognized their state's relevant background capabilities. They directly assess other leaders' statements and behavior during diplomatic interactions and can also review intelligence analyses of other leaders' perceptions.[168] Important signals might also be implicit, as when competition with an actor entails tacit recognition of the actor *as a competitor*. Efforts to inhibit a state's progress towards a goal implies that the those making such efforts believe that the state could otherwise obtain the goal. If a state can overcome efforts to contain or suppress its power, it will find itself well-positioned to perform restraint. Regardless, because there are social costs to failed performances,[169] leaders only perform restraint when they believe that it will appear credibly volitional and supererogatory. This is the key sense in which actors "play to the audience."

In a similar vein, actors remain attuned to audience reactions once they put on their performances. Applause—manifest in rhetorical "naming and praising"[170]

[162] Adler-Nissen 2014, 145.
[163] One potential exception is if an audience invites a marginalized actor to perform restraint, for instance, if several great powers negotiating with a "rogue state" help to frame its concessions as performative—and therefore prideful, rather than shameful—restraint.
[164] Cooley 1902, 179; Goffman 1971, 70; Goffman 1970, 13; Junge 2006, 292.
[165] Goffman 1959, 60.
[166] Mercer 1995, 248; Palan 2000, 589–93.
[167] Goffman 1956, 475.
[168] Hall and Yarhi-Milo 2012; Yarhi-Milo 2014; May 2014.
[169] Schimmelfennig 2002, 425.
[170] Petrova 2019.

or the conferral of symbolic markers of status and public displays of deference[171]—will encourage leaders to encore their performances. Actors cannot count on applause, however. They can never completely ensure that audience members will recognize their restraint as credibly volitional and supererogatory.[172] The audience's "recognition is both tentative and revocable… This attests to the constitutive vulnerability of international actors… 'to the unpredictable reactions and responses of others.'"[173] And the risk of non-recognition increases in the context of prestige *seeking* because this necessarily involves violating (because exceeding) the "implicit performance expectations" others currently have of one's behavior.[174] An extensive literature in IR identifies the withholding of recognition and the denial of prestige as triggers of violent behavior.[175] In a seminal study, Johann Galtung posited that states' perceptions that they have been denied due status seed a psychological state of frustration—called "rank disequilibrium" or "status inconsistency"—which in turn motivates aggression.[176] More recent studies have maintained that states' "status concerns" become most salient after prolonged status denial.[177] Others have linked the denial of prestige and status to anger,[178] resentment,[179] and shame.[180] Because these emotions lead states to lash out against their antagonists, they are antithetical to restraint.

In fact, the build-up of frustration, anger, and resentment augers not only the end of performative restraint, but the end of prestige seeking.[181] Lashing out against an audience represents a turn to coercion, while prestige must be freely given.[182] And cases of sustained non-recognition—of the sort that would lead an individual to lash out in frustration, abandoning the pursuit of prestige—should remain relatively rare, their salience notwithstanding. Recall that the individuals

[171] Duque 2018, 582.
[172] Goffman 1970, 141; Bourdieu 1990, 136; Alexander 2006, 73.
[173] Kavalski 2013, 259.
[174] Ridgeway 2001, 325; Berger, Ridgeway, and Zelditch 2002; (in IR) Pouliot 2016b, 194. Indeed, this is the premise underlying power transition theory. See Murray 2019, 3–5.
[175] For instance, see the contributions in Lindemann and Ringmar 2016.
[176] Galtung 1964, 98–9; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; cf. Tingley 2017.
[177] Ward 2017a, 39–42; Renshon 2017, chap. 2.
[178] Barnhart 2020, 10, 36–44; Masterson 2022.
[179] Murray 2019, 16, 46.
[180] Steele 2008, chap. 5.
[181] Many studies on status frustration and its effects are helpfully explicit that they are *not* seeking to explain status- or prestige-seeking in general. See, e.g., Ward 2017a, 5; Barnhart 2020, 10.
[182] Gil-White and Henrich 2001.

playing the roles of actor and audience member have complementary incentives to help sustain meaningful interaction.[183] It is not only that audience members have incentives to refrain from overly spiteful or cynical appraisals of others' performances lest they undermine the social and semantic foundations of their *own* self-presentation. Actors also have incentives to adapt their performances once it becomes clear they have not produced the desired effect, that is, *before* a prolonged period of non-recognition results in the build-up of resentment or anger.[184] The iterative nature of social interaction permits incremental adjustments by trial-and-error that increase the odds of mutual understanding.[185]

(3) Prompting Performative Restraint

Much of social life is routine and habitual. Besides, states' leaders face competing foreign policy imperatives and cannot constantly analyze the potential opportunities to perform restraint that arise from social interaction. However, leaders receive cues or prompts to perform restraint from two distinct sources: audience members and reference others.

First, members of the audience may seek to elicit a performance of restraint. When a state displays its power—perhaps through an act that is only incidentally expressive—audience members may respond with disapproval: rhetorical criticism, shaming, shunning, or defiance. Disapproval is especially effective when it challenges a relevant aspect of the actor's identity, since the need for "ontological security" imposes psychic costs upon uses of force that cannot be made consistent with an actor's self-concept.[186] In any case, negative reactions telegraph to a state that observers recognize its power capabilities as a material fact, but object to the way it has deployed them. Aiming to avoid the social costs of shame and stigma, leaders will refrain from the behavior that has brought these social ills upon them.[187] Not content to merely cut their losses, leaders may also attempt to recover

[183] Goffman 1956, 5; Goffman 1983, 16; Jervis 1976, 135.
[184] In contrast to social identity, which may evolve but which individuals cannot discard at will, the social "front" sustained by a performance has only instrumental attachment to the individual, who will seek to abandon or adapt an unsuccessful front to the extent interactants will allow. See Goffman 1959, 13-9.
[185] Ibid., 10-4.
[186] Bially Mattern 2001; Mattern 2005. For examples relevant for restraint, see Steele 2008, chap. 4; Steele 2005 (Britain's non-intervention during U.S. Civil War); Cope, Creamer, and Versteeg 2019; Simmons 2010; Hafner-Burton, LeVeck, and Victor 2015 (transitioning democracies' compliance with international human rights law).
[187] Adler-Nissen 2014; Hafner-Burton 2008.

or boost their prestige through performative restraint. For when audience members clarify their expectations of an actor's behavior, this does not only "entrap" the actor into compliance,[188] but also sets the stage for it to dramatically exceed those expectations.[189]

Second, leaders also remain attuned to cues which other states—their social competitors or reference others—give off through their own conduct. Leaders may contrive performances of restraint (through "toeing the line," doubling down on international commitments, etc.) when they perceive reference others as having either lost prestige through insufficient restraint or gained prestige through exemplary restraint. Observing the response elicited by reference others, leaders consider the likely consequences of their own restraint. This response shapes leaders' beliefs about whether their prospective audience perceives performative restraint to signal material capabilities and moral character, and about the extent to which the audience values these as sources of prestige. Opportunistic actors can take advantage of a reference other's lack of restraint to positively distinguish themselves. Conversely, if their competitor has performed restraint to much acclaim, they have an incentive to follow suit.

These social cues are not wholly determinative. Leaders of course have individual biographies, idiosyncrasies, priorities, and preferences; prior research suggests that political preferences and worldviews may affect whether leaders favor restraint as a prestige-seeking strategy.[190] For instance, liberal cosmopolitans may tend to ground their states' prestige in prosocial sources like restraint, while right-wing nationalists may tend to associate national standing with the assertion of power.[191] (It is not a coincidence that nationalist leaders often disclose a deep sense of national disadvantage and vulnerability, as reflected in Donald Trump claiming that the United States had been "taken advantage of," and Americans treated as

[188] Schimmelfennig 2003.
[189] In some instances, states confronted with social pressure to conform to a certain standard "do not… simply act as low-key rule followers," but rather "go beyond the minimal requirements, fulfill their obligations ahead of deadlines, [and] become vocal champions of [] new norm[s]…" Petrova 2016, 387.
[190] Importantly, this is distinct form the contention that some types of leaders value prestige in general more than others do. Cf. Hymans 2006 (attributing the prestige motive to 'oppositional nationalist' leaders); Yarhi-Milo 2018 (developing a dispositional account of which leaders fight for reputation); Brutger and Kertzer 2018 (also finding systemic variation in leaders' concern for reputation).
[191] Bayram 2017; Weeks 2012; Herrmann 2017; Hafner-Burton et al. 2014; Hafner-Burton, Leveck, and Victor 2017; Broude 2013.

"suckers," on the world stage.)[192] Individual-level differences become particularly significant where social structure is thin, that is, where both restraint and assertion appear as viable prestige-seeking strategies.[193] Still, individual preferences rank below strategic considerations for my theory. If leaders believe that a standard of restraint systematically advantages (one of) their competitors, they will hesitate to boost its salience and may instead challenge its legitimacy, even if they personally agree with it.[194] Conversely, leaders will cynically champion moral standards whose legitimacy they privately denigrate to project a good image.[195] Finally, it is important to note that, even if leaders' preferences with respect to prestige and restraint differ systematically, the domestic processes that select and elevate different types of leaders remain exogenous to my theory. For the reasons discussed above, performances of restraint will rarely fail so spectacularly as to become salient in domestic politics, much less shape it.[196] When elections or other selection-processes install new leaders, they will face many of the same interactional constraints and opportunities as their predecessors.

CASES AND METHODOLOGY

In turning to historical cases in the chapters that follow, I aim to demonstrate not only that "holding back to rise above" applies in a wide range of circumstances, but that this mechanism has explanatory purchase in situations which confound other accounts of foreign policy. These goals commend an "uncommon foundations" strategy for case selection, whereby "identifying causal mechanisms in widely different cases… give[s] us greater analytic confidence" about the theory, especially its generalizability.[197] A wide range of cases helps to "elucidate the variety of ways that causal factors and the complexes into which they are arranged play out in

[192] Stathi and Guerra 2021.
[193] Recall that, if the alternative to restraint utterly fails to convey prestige—if it is stigmatized—then restraint will also fail to convey prestige (because it will be mandatory). Thus, when states face the opportunity to perform restraint, the exact opposite course of action, assertion, typically remains an option, and at times a prestigious one.
[194] Consider, for instance, Britain's resistance to the Monroe Doctrine, which challenged its authority to perform restraint in the Western Hemisphere, despite the resonance of the Doctrine with British principles of international law. Goddard 2018, chap. 3.
[195] Ringmar 2012, 19; also Kustermans 2019, 406 (more broadly, on the potential for insincere emotional displays during performances).
[196] Cf. Ward 2017, chap. 2. Ward's "second image reversed" theory assumes that the sustained denial of status becomes politically salient because it animates a distinct domestic group—nationalists.
[197] Musgrave and Nexon 2018, 603; Ward 2017a, 66.

practice…"[198]

The cases that follow span the United States' non-intervention in Latin America in the early twentieth century, focusing on the Good Neighbor Policy (1934-40); Germany's non-participation in multilateral interventions after the Cold War (1991-2005), focusing on the decision not to participate in the US "coalition of the willing" for the invasion of Iraq in 2003; India's nuclear non-proliferation (1964-98), focusing on its decision to exercise nuclear restraint between 1964 and 1974; and China's restraint of its emissions in the context of climate change mitigation (1992-2015), focusing on its commitments leading up to the 2015 Paris Agreement. While each chapter focuses on a specific foreign policy decision or set of decisions that precipitated a shift from national assertion to performative restraint, the chapters also provide broader context for these shifts, tracing how leaders' beliefs about prestige and restraint played out over time.

These cases cover policy domains where the literature on international prestige has extensively studied forms of assertion (e.g., intervention, proliferation, carbon-fueled economic growth) while neglecting the corresponding types of restraint. And aside from varying widely in space and time, the cases differ in terms of factors that matter for alternative explanations of states' foreign policy, including their levels of material power, positions in the international system and vis-à-vis their audiences, and regime types. Each case discloses one or more well-established explanation other than prestige-seeking, corresponding to various "countervailing conditions" for my theory related to strategic or social considerations that seemingly militate against restraint.[199] For these reasons, they represent appropriately "hard cases" for testing my theory.[200]

Alternative Explanations

To assess my theory against competing explanations, I rely upon within-case analysis using process tracing. This method has two main components: "(1) inferring the *existence* of an unobserved event or process and (2) inferring a *causal connection* between one specific event or process and another."[201] Prior to

[198] Jackson 2010, 121.
[199] Rapport 2015, 434–7.
[200] George and Bennett 2004, chap. 3; Levy 2008, 12–4.
[201] Mahoney 2012, 586–7 (emphasis original). On the blending of interpretivist and positivist commitments—or of understanding- and explaining-type research—see Bennett and Elman 2008; Sil and Katzenstein 2010; Bevir and Hall 2020.

analyzing a case, hypotheses are derived about the observable implications of contending theories' main claims and probative values are assigned to observational evidence related to the hypotheses.[202] I analyze these hypotheses in light both primary and secondary sources where the latter have recovered evidence of leaders' beliefs or drawn supportable inferences about them.

Good process tracing produces a "holistic" but unique "causal story," which avoids "lazy mechanism-based storytelling" by paying equal attention to the implications of all contending accounts and their respective mechanisms.[203] Thus, I now turn to discussing three alternative explanatory logics that have wide currency in the literature: the logic of material consequences, the logic of social appropriateness, and the logic of parochial interests.[204] These alternative explanatory logics differ with respect to which actors' interests are causally relevant, what those interests are, and how they relate to foreign policy outcomes. Each proposes distinct mechanisms for explaining foreign policy restraint.

Table 2.1. Explanatory Mechanisms for Foreign Policy Restraint.

Logic of Performativity (Prestige-Seeking)	• *Holding Back to* ***Rise Above***
Logic of Material Consequences	• *Holding Back to* ***Cover Up*** • *Holding Back to* ***Hunker Down***
Logic of Social Appropriateness	• *Holding Back out of* ***Habit*** • *Holding Back to* ***Blend In***
Logic of Parochial Interests	• *Holding Back to* ***Earn Credit*** • *Holding Back to* ***Guard Turf***

The Logic of Material Consequences

The logic of material consequences posits that political elites pursue their states' material interests—wealth and, above all, security—according to a rational decision-making process modeled on cost-benefit calculus. Several nuances can be introduced into this framework, including the amount of risk a state will contemplate and the extent to which the calculus incorporates second-order material effects of social assets (prestige) and liabilities (shame). A common

[202] Musgrave and Nexon 2018, 605.
[203] Hedström and Ylikoski 2010, 58, 64; Bennett and Checkel 2015, 23–4; Jacobs 2015, 88.
[204] These are classic categories in foreign policy analysis. See Stuart 2008. For a similar typology of potential explanations for restraint, see Adler 2010, 213–6.

explanation of restraint essentially equates it with prudence: states only engage in acquisitive or assertive behaviors when the marginal material benefit of doing so exceeds the marginal material cost.[205] In short, states are taken to refrain from policies that do not deliver a net material benefit. This expectation may be relaxed when states act within institutions that encourage reciprocity, the voluntary incurring of costs today to reap benefits tomorrow.[206] At times, institutions may sustain relatively durable equilibria in which restraint becomes the most materially profitable strategy for all interactants. In contrast, *performative* restraint need not occur in the context of formal institutions or reciprocal relationships—indeed, these contexts may erode the expressive value of restraint by diminishing its distinctiveness.

The logic of material consequences yields two primary mechanisms for restraint. The first, "holding back to cover up," corresponds to the view that leaders recognize their lack of capacity in a given domain but cynically *claim* to possess a capacity because such claims are materially costless but strategically valuable (e.g., for deterrence). In contrast, my theory recognizes significant costs to wanton misrepresentation which degrades an actor's credibility as an interaction partner in the future; generally, therefore, leaders will believe themselves capable of the act of assertion from which they claim to refrain in performing restraint. The second mechanism in this category, "holding back to hunker down," encapsulates the more conservative logic that states shed whatever costly commitments or policies are not necessary to ensure their security. States may hunker down after costly commitments stop paying dividends and/or begin to consume resources that could be diverted to more profitable projects. For both mechanisms, fluctuations in leaders' policy preferences should closely track shifting environmental factors that affect cost-benefit considerations.

The Logic of Social Appropriateness

The logic of social appropriateness underlies constructivist mechanisms of preference change such as socialization and norm internalization. Significant variation exists within this perspective. Scholars have distinguished three types of socialization—Type 0, based on the "rational calculation of the group member in

[205] On "prudence as a form of restraint," see Steele 2007, 279.
[206] Lipson 2017, 499, 528–30.

response to incentives—coercive or not;" Type I, based on "learning a role—acquiring the knowledge that enables action in accordance with group expectations;" and Type II, when an "individual accepts group norms as the right thing to do," adopting the "interests or possibly the identity of the community" on the level of "taken-for-grantedness."[207] The performance of moral standards, as discussed above, collapses the first two levels of this typology. Actors' strategic use of rules reflects a process of "acculturation," which occurs when "social pressure leads to 'outward conformity with a social convention without private acceptance.'"[208] But the logic of performance is distinct from Type II socialization, which entails norm internalization. Rejecting instrumentalism, it takes states to refrain from acts that would violate their values and sincerely held moral principles or threaten their identities. Actors that have internalized norms find violative behaviors instinctively undesirable—in extreme cases, even "unthinkable"–and exempt them from cost-benefit analyses. Actors may come to internalize norms through various mechanisms such as habituation, mimicking, and persuasion.[209] Habituation can be relatively easily ruled out in cases of conspicuous restraint that actors themselves frame as unexpected and exceptional. Mimicking and persuasion may obtain but need to be linked to the influence of specific socializing agents, whether non-state civil society actors,[210] institutions,[211] security communities,[212] or powerful states in the international order.[213]

Broadly, this logic yields two mechanisms for restraint. First, "holding back out of habit" takes states to refrain from a (materially) beneficial action because its leaders adhere to a non-instrumental belief in its inappropriateness, which they have internalized from international or domestic norms. "Holding back" becomes naturalized and may cease to register for individuals as an active process. At minimum, it becomes the default option such that acting otherwise does not receive serious consideration. Habitual restraint should also be relatively consistent and enduring; this mechanism is undermined if actors are seen to behave inconsistently

[207] Checkel 2017, 597; Checkel 2005.
[208] Stimmer 2019, 276; Schimmelfennig 2001, 63; Schimmelfennig 2003, 206; Krebs and Jackson 2007, 36.
[209] Johnston 2008; Hopf 2002.
[210] Price 1998.
[211] Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink 1998, 902.
[212] Adler and Barnett 1998.
[213] Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990, 289–90.

with regard to their principles or to abandon them relatively quickly in the face of changing material circumstances.[214] This differs from "holding back to rise above" because, according to the logic of performance, states remain mere "merchants of morality," willing to abandon their principles when no longer profitable. [215]

Second, the logic of social appropriateness also yields the mechanism of "holding back to blend in," which captures the social, non-material, consequences of violating restraint norms. States typically avoid social isolation, especially in organized group settings such as international negotiations.[216] This mechanism can go hand in hand with "holding back to rise above" in explaining an evolving pattern of conduct, or it may pose as an alternative explanation for the same conduct.[217] In either case, "holding back to blend in" reduces restraint to compliance with expected standards of behavior, resulting from a natural disposition to avoid opprobrium. Unlike with "holding back to rise above," actors will not invest in presenting their restraint as relatively exceptional or supererogatory. Moreover, the logic of performativity implies that others' acts of assertion render a state's subsequent performance of restraint more distinctive and therefore attractive. But the "blending in" mechanism has the opposite implication: When states violate standards of restraint, they chip away at perceived prohibitions and eventually lower the social costs for others to follow suit.

The Logic of Parochial Interests

A third and final category of alternative explanations derives from logics of parochial interests. These explanations hold that leaders' beliefs and preferences regarding performative restraint stem from their personal interests rather than from their pursuit of (what they consider to be) the national interest.[218] My theory assumes that elites act on relatively similar interpretations of their states' past behavior and audiences' past reactions because such interpretations are shaped by structural and interactional mechanisms that affect them commonly. But such

[214] Goodman and Jinks 2013b; Price 2008.
[215] Goffman 1959, 251.
[216] Mantilla 2020; Hathaway and Shapiro 2011.
[217] As discussed above, when shame avoidance is a strategic choice, "holding back to blend in" may serve as a precursor to "holding back to rise above." See Petrova 2016.
[218] Broadly relevant here is the literature on leaders' "national identity conceptions," the fundamental citation for which is Holsti 1970. On the more recent "behavioral revolution" in IR, associating foreign policy outcomes with individual-level characteristics, see Hafner-Burton, Alex Hughes, and Victor 2013; Hafner-Burton et al. 2017; Kertzer and Tingley 2018.

interpretations might instead derive from a domestic political culture which frames proper policies in light of a state's history and values, making leaders relatively insensitive to interactional pressures.[219] Conversely, rather than taking domestic political culture as monolithic, we might locate divergent propensities for restraint in political parties and movements,[220] or in individuals' sub-national political positions and bureaucratic interests.[221] Logics of parochial interests would therefore expect the specific elite composition of policy-making bodies, and the distribution of authority amongst them, to determine states' foreign policy restraint.[222]

The first mechanism to arise from this logic is based on a straightforward interest-seeking model of elite behavior. "Holding back to earn credit" posits that political elites pursue policies of restraint when they expect to benefit personally. Elites should pay keen attention to what is popular *with their key domestic stakeholders*, whether mass publics (voters) or other elites. When the expectations and demands of domestic and international stakeholders diverge, the former should take precedence. Such divergences are analytically key because leaders may also expect to reap domestic political rewards from boosting their states' prestige, in which case "holding back to earn credit" (domestically) momentarily will come to complement "holding back to rise above" (internationally).[223]

The second mechanism in this category moves from the personal to the organizational. Leaders' ideas, beliefs, and preferences may not always translate straightforwardly into policy outcomes. "Holding back to guard turf" attributes restraint to bureaucratic turf battles that produce non-strategic, non-purposive,

[219] Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996. A common finding is that democratic states are more likely to exercise restraint (i.e., less likely to wage war on each other, or to break international agreements), at least in part because of the culture of rule-of-law liberalism. See Owen 1994 (liberal institutions and democratic peace); Koremenos 2013a, 74 (institutionalism and international law compliance); Hafner-Burton, Victor, and Lupu 2012, 69–72 (linking legal compliance to domestic institutions).
[220] Trachtman 2011; Solingen 2009.
[221] See Allison and Zelikow 1999, chaps 2–3; Welch 1992; LeVeck et al. 2014.
[222] Consistent with my theory, the selection of elites at the domestic level may affect states' performances in another way. A change of leadership may affect how the state is perceived by its audience, especially the amount of moral credibility it is perceived to possess. In turn, the new leaders may be well positioned to preform restraint. Here, performances flow not from the leaders' preferences per se, but from their intersubjective considerations. Discussing leaders' influence on states' reputation formation, see Renshon, Dafoe, and Huth 2018.
[223] For instance, "[l]eaders… may benefit as… their domestic constituencies coalesce behind their willingness to flex their muscles against more powerful or ideologically opposed nations." Moore 2003, 893.

outcomes. Diplomats may oppose intervention to undercut the military, the same reason for which scientists may fight to preserve a "civilian" nuclear program. In contrast, my theory expects that policies with clear implications for national prestige will tend to be politically sensitive and to command the attention of top leaders. Repeated failures to translate their relevant preferences into policy will prompt leaders to centralize decision-making authority and avoid delegation, circumventing bureaucracy as much as possible.

Process Tracing Tests

In the cases that follow I deploy three typical process-tracing tests: (1) a "straw in the wind" test, where passing is slightly suggestive of the correctness of the hypothesis; (2) a "hoop" test, where passing marginally increases our confidence in a hypothesis but failing severely diminishes it; and (3) a "smoking gun" test, where passing provides strong confirmatory evidence for the hypothesis, but a lack of a smoking gun does not constitute disconfirming evidence.[224] Table 2.2 delineates the main observable implications of my account of performative restraint and of the alternative explanatory logics, and assigns probative value to evidence that these implications bear out within the cases. (The inferential value of contrary evidence is provided in parentheses).

The first imperative is to establish the externally observable elements of restraint as a performance (2.2.1). The existence of relatively conspicuous public statements that explicitly declare a policy of voluntary and costly self-limitation is a "hoop test" for my theory—performative restraint cannot be said to exist in their absence. Given the strategic nature of performances, we can perform this test "irrespective of any judgment concerning the underlying sincerity of the claim" to self-limitation.[225] This test also undermines the mechanisms associated with the logic of social appropriateness because one does not trumpet normal, habitual behavior. Most other mechanisms remain unaffected, however, since public proclamations are relatively costless in material terms and may have a variety of

[224] Another common test is the "doubly decisive" test, which both confirms a hypothesis and eliminates all other potential explanations. I do not include this test given its implication of a fully deterministic world in which observers can determine with complete confidence that one or another complex social hypothesis is true/false. I use process tracing as a confidence-updating methodology. Collier 2011; Mahoney 2012.
[225] Bower 2015, 355.

TABLE 2.2. Primary Observable Implications.

	[I] LOGIC OF PERFORMATIVITY	[II] LOGIC OF MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES	[III] LOGIC OF SOCIAL APPROPRIATENESS	[IV] LOGIC OF PAROCHIAL INTERESTS
1. The state's leaders publicly claim to be refraining from a policy that they could pursue. The leaders frame their decision as volitional and supererogatory.	Supportive (Eliminates [I])	Slightly damaging (Indeterminate)	Very damaging (Slightly supportive)	Irrelevant
2. The state has previously demonstrated the capability to engage in the assertive or acquisitive act(s) from which its leaders claim to be refraining.	Supportive (Slightly damaging)	Very damaging (Slightly supportive)	Very damaging (Slightly supportive)	Very damaging (Slightly supportive)
3. Leaders' credible (e.g., private) assessments indicate that restraint incurs material costs over viable alternative policies, which they justify in terms of prestige.	Confirms [I] (Slightly damaging)	Eliminates [II] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [III] (No effect)	Eliminates [IV] (Slightly supportive)
4. Leaders resist constraints (treaties, alliances, public commitments, etc.) that foreclose assertive/acquisitive policy options and undermine the contingent nature of their restraint.	Supportive (Slightly damaging)	Supportive (Slightly damaging)	Eliminates [III] Supportive	Supportive (Damaging)
5. Reference others' lack of restraint increases leaders' support for doubling down on restraint and framing it in relative moral terms.	Greatly supports [I] (Eliminates [I])	Eliminates [II] (Very supportive)	Eliminates [III] (No effect)	Irrelevant
6. States initially respond to perceived skepticism of their restraint by (a) *toeing the line*, if voluntary aspect is in doubt; (b) *crying foul*, if principled aspect is in doubt.	Confirms [I] (Eliminates [I])	Eliminates [II] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [III] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [IV] (Slightly supportive)
7. Leaders' support for policies of restraint remains highly sensitive to perceived disrespect or humiliation.	Supportive (Eliminates [I])	Damaging (Indeterminate)	Eliminates [III] (Very supportive)	Very damaging (Indeterminate)
8. Leaders re-calibrate their restraint in response to changing material cost-benefit calculus, abandoning their performance if the external security environment worsens.	Eliminates [I] (Slightly supportive)	Confirms [II] (Eliminates [II])	Eliminates [III] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [IV] (Slightly supportive)
9. Leaders discuss the morality of restraint in absolute/categorical moral terms; in private, principled arguments take precedence over instrumental ones; assertive policies receive minimal consideration.	Eliminates [I]. (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [II] (Slightly supportive)	Confirms [III] (Eliminates [III])	Eliminates [IV] (Slightly supportive)
10. Restraint has narrow partisan support at domestic level and the policy is changed after shift in political power (e.g., election, bureaucratic reorganization).	Eliminates [I] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [II] (Slightly supportive)	Eliminates [III] (Slightly supportive)	Confirms [IV] (Eliminates [IV])

parochial justifications. A chief concern will be that these statements merely represent "cheap talk," which states intend as a prosocial smokescreen for self-interested behavior. We cannot dismiss the possibility that states' invocations of standards of restraint represents cynical sloganeering. Evaluating the sincerity of such statements is notoriously difficult, but one way to infer that leaders are genuinely confident about possessing an underlying capability is if they have already demonstrated it (2.2.2). This constitutes a "straw in the wind" for my theory, but the existence of a credible prior demonstration is very damaging for several other mechanisms. Specifically, it severely undermines the "holding back to cover up," "blend in," and "guard turf" alternatives

After establishing that the bare bones of a performance of restraint exist within the case, we must turn our attention to tracing the causal process linking leaders beliefs to this observed policy.[226] This highlights the difficulties inherent in collecting evidence of leaders' beliefs and intentions from their "verbal expressions of their ideas," which constitute a "biased indicator."[227] The familiar method for mitigating bias is to rely upon multiple data sources, reflecting multiple perspectives, and drawing upon communication in settings where participants have reduced incentives to manipulate or dissemble. For instance, governments have strategic incentives to maintain accurate diagnostics of their military and scientific capabilities and to produce realistic foreign policy analysis about how they are perceived by others. If a confidential or otherwise credible source confirms that restraint incurs costs over viable alternative policies, and justifies these costs with reference to expected prestige dividends, we have a test approaching a "smoking gun" for my theory (2.2.3). This test also proves seriously damaging to our confidence in all alternative explanations. Yet if no such sources exist, this provides a relatively weak blow against my theory, for it may be that "leaders rarely talk about status as scholars define it."[228] Not only are reflections on one's social standing and moral credibility extremely sensitive, but they may remain tacit—unarticulated among decision-makers embedded within common social contexts.[229]

Surmounting these obstacles requires recognizing that "ideational mechanisms might leave behind observable clues at higher levels of aggregation: in

[226] Jacobs 2015, 45.
[227] Ibid.; Krebs and Jackson 2007.
[228] Macdonald and Parent 2021, 367.
[229] Jackson 2010, 60; Flyvbjerg 2001, 21.

international interactions and communication, in organizational dynamics, and in the substance of the outcomes chosen."[230] For instance, one of the most distinctive implications of my theory is that states will seek to trumpet their voluntary restraint while rejecting, often bitterly, any external accountability that would eliminate their discursive window for foreign policy discretion. Put simply, prestige-seeking states must deny that their restraint is obligatory (2.2.4). This pattern of behavior contrasts starkly with the implications of social appropriateness mechanisms. More subtly, it also undermines consequentialist arguments, which would expect states under social pressure to sacrifice policy latitude on paper if they can evade their commitments as needed down the line (i.e., insincere ratification). I expect states to jealously guard the contingency of their restraint *even in principle*. Evidence of a states opposing loose commitments or toothless treaties that would codify their existing behavior is another straw in the wind in favor of "holding back to rise above."

Other key implications follow from the relational nature of leaders' beliefs. After all, while we "cannot observe directly what people think," we *can* "observe what they say and how they respond to claims and counter-claims."[231] Thus, I pay close attention to how a state responds when other states, especially its key reference others, violate standards of restraint (2.2.5). The logic of material consequences and the logic of social appropriateness both expect salient violations of these standards to *decrease* a state's preference for following them in the future, all else being equal: the former, because states will fear being taken advantage of by rivals free riding off of their forbearance; the latter, because repeated violations of a standard undermine its normative compliance pull. In contrast, if a state is "holding back to rise above" then its rival's lack of restraint *increases* its preference for performing restraint. Especially if a state frames its subsequent performance in explicitly relative terms, and assuming it could counterfactually imitate its rival's assertion, this may amount to "smoking gun" evidence for my theory.

Divergent implications also follow when states' performances of restraint encounter skepticism (2.2.6). I expect states' restraint to hinge on the recognition and rewards of their audience(s). If audience members dismiss the capabilities supposedly underlying a state's restraint, that state will "toe the line," attempting

[230] Jacobs 2015, 48; Schimmelfennig 2003, 227.
[231] Jackson and Nexon 2007, 42.

to dramatize its potential to cross a salient policy threshold. This response puzzles material consequentialism because it wastefully deploys resources without recouping a clear benefit. And it eliminates the "holding back out of habit" and "holding back to blend in" mechanisms outright because the state has emphasized the *contingency* of its commitment to restraint. Alternatively, if a state's moral credibility is challenged, its leaders will "cry foul," seeking to defeat the message by casting aspersions on the messenger. When these responses occur together, and in concert with (2.2.1) and (2.2.2.)/(2.2.3), they constitute a particularly potent test, confirming the logic of performativity and eliminating alternatives. A less demanding or decisive "hoop test" occurs when states, perceiving themselves to have suffered repeated disrespect or humiliations, believe restraint no longer serves as an effective path to prestige and therefore abandon it as a policy (2.2.7). In that case, we should observe "verbal complaints by decision makers about the way they (or their states and nations) are treated by foreign officials."[232]

Three tests assess the alternative explanations directly. First, I look for evidence that states adopt or abandon policies of restraint in light of changing cost-benefit calculus, either explicitly invoking material factors such as the security environment or responding to changes in them (2.2.8). Second, I consider whether states frame their restraint in absolute, categorical, moral terms—even in private—and whether leaders invoke such framings to justify decisions to persevere with restraint despite worsening material incentives (2.2.9). Third, I parse the support that policies of restraint command at the domestic level and consider any evidence that shifts in these policies follow from domestic shifts in political power, whether electoral or bureaucratic (2.2.10). While each of the alternative mechanisms finds some evidentiary support in the chapters that follow, each also encounters major explanatory shortcomings, and none performs better than "holding back to rise above."

[232] Wolf 2011, 113.

CHAPTER 3

PRESTIGE AND NON-INTERVENTION (I): THE UNITED STATES' GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY, 1933 – 1940

In Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first inaugural address, delivered during the depths of Depression in 1933, foreign policy occupied a single sentence, in which FDR committed to pursuing "the policy of the Good Neighbor."[1] The speech made no reference to Latin America, where the United States had undertaken seventeen military interventions over the preceding three decades. And yet Roosevelt's presidency transformed US policy in that region. His administration withdrew all remaining US troops from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, forswore further intervention in Latin American political and economic affairs, surrendered Washington's special treaty rights with Cuba and Panama, and declined to retaliate when hemispheric governments expropriated US citizens' property. The "Good Neighbor Policy" that justified such restraint had as its explicit goal the enhancement of US prestige.

Since its victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States had invoked the century-old Monroe Doctrine to arrogate for itself the responsibility of upholding political and economic stability throughout the Americas.[2] This policy clearly served US security and economic interests, but it also reflected an abiding concern for national prestige.[3] In material terms, Latin American elites spoke of the United States, with a mix of awe and anger, as a "fabulous policeman" and a "colossus whose financial might has no equal in history."[4] Morally, Washington framed its policies as *anti*-imperialism: beneficent interventions that protected

[1] FDR's use of the phrase was not original. On its provenance, see Loveman 2010, 115.
[2] Hart 1916, 374; and Perkins 1952 (on this conception of the Monroe Doctrine); Pratt 1964, 25–30, 128–9; Schoultz 1998, 199 (providing concise historical overviews of US expansionism); Healy 1970, 23–7, 99 (evaluating the US 'imperialist urge' beginning in the 1890s).
[3] Ninkovich 2001, 30, 36–47. Anti-imperialists also appealed to US prestige and exceptionalism, arguing that following the European precedent would undermine the nation's unique identity. See Johnson 1995, 8, 16, 30; Tyrrell and Sexton 2015; Jones 2013.
[4] Quotes from delegates to the 1928 Havana Conference, in Dozer 1961, 7. On the asymmetry in material power, see Long 2015, 2.

Latin American states from the predations of less restrained European powers.[5] The putative symbol of American prestige became the Special Service Squadron, which "patrol[ed] the American empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific coastline of Central America, showing the flag and supplying forceful support to the efforts of American diplomats to keep the peace."[6] At the same time, Latin American elites—especially in Argentina and Mexico—sought to elicit greater restraint from the US by reframing the Monroe Doctrine as a multilateral, hemispheric principle of non-intervention.[7]

By the mid-1920s, it had become clear that interventionism was, in the words of Secretary of State Charles Evan Hughes, "proving gravely prejudicial to [US] prestige."[8] For instance, at the Sixth Inter-American Conference, held in Havana in 1928, the US delegation faced stinging rebukes from Mexico, Argentina, and other states over its ongoing intervention in Nicaragua.[9] The situation in Nicaragua proved especially embarrassing because an insurgency led by Augusto Sandino had exacted a bloody toll on the marines charged with enforcing a US-backed political settlement.[10] Critics in Latin America and Europe compared US tactics in Nicaragua and elsewhere in the Caribbean to those of Belgium in Congo and Japan in Manchuria.[11] Nicaragua also set the stage for a proxy conflict between the United States and Mexico, which supported opposing political factions, evidencing US failure to secure deference from a supposedly subordinate state.[12] Thus, the "Nicaraguan adventure not only spawned widespread hemispheric condemnation but severely tested American prestige in the Pan American system."[13]

[5] Williams 1988 ('imperial anticolonialism'); Langer 1972 ('clash of imperialisms'); Hitchman 1968 (regarding US colonial administration). The extent to which the US demonstrated (relative) restraint is subject to debate. Cf. McKercher 1991, 580 (US foreign policy "showed little restraint").
[6] Langley 1983, 178–9.
[7] Knight 2008, 23–52; Chavez 2021, 291; Grandin 2006, 1053; Scarfi 2013.
[8] Quoted in Grieb 1969, 425. On Hughes's perspective, see Williams 1954, 16; Meiser 2015, 195-205; De Conde 1951, 57-8. This assessment was shared by the State Department more broadly by 1928: Leonard et al. 2012, 395. A wide range of studies treat as settled fact that interventionism hurt US prestige in Latin America. For instance, see Davis 1931; Wood 1961, 4–7; Pratt 1964, 313; Adler 1965, 97; Curry 1979, 8; Gellman 1979, 4; Ninkovich 2001, 150.
[9] Crawley 2007, 11; Dozer 1961, 4–7; Buell 1928.
[10] By 1931, Sandino's insurgency forced US Secretary of State Henry Stimson to announce that the United States could no longer protect US lives in property in Nicaragua, which threatened the credibility of US military action throughout the region. Crawley 2007, 58; Langley 1983, 215; Buell 1931, 126; Munro 1974, 372–3.
[11] Bernard 1928, 363; Blassingame 1969, 41; Loveman 2010, 198; Meiser 2015, 242–4. For Latin American criticism in particular, see Adler 1965, 93.
[12] Pastor and Castañeda 2011, chap. 4; Johnson 1995, 12; Friedman and Long 2015, 135.
[13] Langley 1980, 128.

Eager to forestall any further erosion of US standing, the Republican administration of Herbert Hoover (1928-32)[14] imposed a moratorium on gunboat diplomacy and began to liquidate US interventions, including in Nicaragua.[15] Many scholars therefore have credited Hoover with laying the foundations for the Good Neighbor Policy.[16] However, Hoover refused to repudiate, even in principle, the policies such as armed intervention or diplomatic non-recognition that Latin Americans found most odious.[17] And he insisted on preserving the United States' unequal prerogatives under bilateral treaties and regional agreements.[18] In contrast, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy embraced much more thoroughgoing restraint in order to establish the United States, ideally, as a "beneficent, philanthropic, understanding, yet humble sister nation in the hemispheric family of free and equally idealistic republics."[19]

The dynamic of "holding back to rise above" is clear in the outline of the Good Neighbor Policy. The Roosevelt Administration agreed to forswear the use of force and forms of overt intervention in exchange for Latin Americans granting Washington the moral authority necessary to achieve its aims through persuasion.[20] US restraint hardly represented chastened acquiescence to its neighbors' demands for equal treatment. In contrast to other great powers' foot-dragging response to the emergent, post-WWI norm of anti-imperialism, the United States under FDR sought to *champion* this cause.[21] Through rhetoric, dramatic diplomacy, and concrete changes to longstanding policies, the Roosevelt Administration converted policies of restraint into a performance of US might and magnanimity. This interpretation of the Good Neighbor Policy adopts a middle ground between those that see it as a "clever, sophisticated attempt to tighten up and extend US dominance in the Western Hemisphere" and those that take it "at face value as an idealistic yet realistic effort by a powerful nation to treat its weaker neighbors with

[14] As Hoover wrote in his memoir: "I was convinced that unless we displayed an entirely different attitude we should never dispel the suspicions and fears of the 'Colossus of the North' nor win the respect of those nations" [in Latin America]. Quoted in Chavez 2021, 302.
[15] Wood 1961, 7; Pratt 1964, 320; Curry 1979, 253; Pike 1995, 167; McPherson 2014.
[16] De Conde 1951; Ferrell 1957; Perkins 1952. On Hoover's use of the term, see Adler 1965, 107.
[17] Curry 1979, 3, 254–5; Wood 1961, 132; Munro 1974, 372; Scarfi 2016, 215.
[18] Johnson 1995, 283.
[19] Haines 1977, 380.
[20] Beck 1939, 112; Dozer 1961, 109; Wood 1961, 310; Haines 1977, 373; Gellman 1979, 73; Langley 1980, 162.
[21] On this normative shift in which imperialism, blamed for WWI, "fell out of fashion" among US and European elites, see Ninkovich 2001, 143, 215; Finnemore 2003.

understanding, tolerance, and restraint."[22] For while the policy did aim to extend US *influence*, it did so by jettisoning the rhetorical and political assertion of US *dominance*.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss the origins of the Good Neighbor Policy in Washington's efforts to shed costly, counterproductive, interventionism and to find an alternative means of exerting influence in Latin America. Second, I turn to the next phase of the policy's development, as the Roosevelt Administration determined to "make a noble virtue out of necessity and herald [restraint]... with drums and banners."[23] This included a shift from a narrow commitment of (military) non-intervention to a more thoroughgoing embrace of (political) non-interference, a shift designed to impress Latin American elites. Third, I discuss the payoffs of these policies of performative restraint for strengthening the US-led Pan-American order leading up to WWII. Finally, I evaluate the case for evidence of various mechanisms of restraint, finding strong support for "holding back to rise above" and significant reasons to doubt alternative explanations.

THE GOOD NEIGHBOR GETS ITS BEARINGS

Franklin Roosevelt was in many ways a surprising champion of US restraint in Latin America. Campaigning as the Democrats' nominee for Vice President in 1920, he had bragged about "running a couple of these little Republics" and writing Haiti's constitution while serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.[24] His cavalier comments had elicited considerable criticism.[25] Whether due to political calculus or personal conviction, Roosevelt's public views changed considerably during the 1920s.[26] By 1928, eyeing his own run for the presidency, Roosevelt penned an article in *Foreign Affairs* charging the Republican Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover Administrations with insufficient restraint in Latin America.[27] American influence

[22] Raymont 2018, chap. 2. Leading historiographical treatments include Pike 1995; Dozer 1961; Gellman 1979. For positions similar to the one I take here, see Smith 2005, 92–7; Herring 2008, 497.
[23] Beck 1939, 112.
[24] Pike 1995, 131.
[25] Renda 2001, 89.
[26] The motives for Roosevelt's anti-imperialist conversion evolution remain debated. For evidence of political motives, see Pike 1995, 134-6; Langley 1980, 137. For evidence of principled ones, see McKercher 1991, 595; Tyrrell and Sexton 2015, chap. 12; Louis 1978.
[27] Adler 1965, 108-9.

depended, FDR wrote, upon "settling disputes peacefully, helping siter nations, and gaining the world's respect and good will."[28] While insisting that US occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic had accomplished material improvements in public welfare, FDR recognized that "[t]he other republics of the Americas do not thank us, on the contrary they disapprove our intervention almost unanimously... The net result of these instances... is that never before in our history have we had fewer friends in the Western Hemisphere than we have today."[29] He went on to propose an alternative vision of US leadership, which bears quoting at length:

> The time has come when we must accept not only certain facts but many new principles of a higher law, a newer and better standard in international relations... Single-handed intervention by us in the internal affairs of other nations must end; with the cooperation of others we shall have more order in this hemisphere and less dislike.
>
> [...]
>
> Up until [1920] most of our history shows us to have been a nation leading others in the slow upward steps to better international understanding and peaceful settlement of disagreements... If the leadership is right—or, more truly, if the spirit behind it is great—the United States can regain the world's trust and friendship and become again of service... [We] can for all time renounce the practice of arbitrary intervention in the home affairs of our neighbors.[30]

FDR broadcast not only a policy preference for non-intervention, but a belief that, if such a policy were adopted, Washington would regain Latin Americans' respect and deference. As one scholar puts it, emphasizing the economic aspect of US influence, FDR "expected Latin Americans to indicate their appreciation for favors extended by keeping the door open to American capitalists, at least to those good-mannered capitalists willing to conduct themselves according to... [an ethic of] Yankee gentlemanliness..."[31] Roosevelt himself put his paternalism more bluntly, saying of Latin Americans: "You have to treat them like children."[32] The presumption of a clear hemispheric hierarchy resolves some of the apparently

[28] Roosevelt 1928, 574.
[29] Ibid., 584.
[30] Ibid., 584-6.
[31] Pike 1995, 164-5.
[32] Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 230.

quixotic aspects of good neighborliness, namely, the pursuit of reciprocity that was unequal and of subordination that was consensual.[33]

Beyond Roosevelt, three figures wielded primary influence over formulating what would become the Good Neighbor Policy: Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State throughout Roosevelt's terms; Sumner Welles, who served in a variety of top State Department positions related to Latin America; and Josephus Daniels, the ambassador to Mexico. Hull had represented Tennessee as a Democrat in the US Senate, had little diplomatic experience, and initially viewed Latin America policy primarily through the lens of trade.[34] Outsized influence therefore fell to Welles, who also benefitted from a close personal friendship with FDR. In a memo to the President-elect, Welles laid out a policy blueprint predicated upon "the identification of [US] interests both political and moral, on a basis of absolute equality with the interests of its sister republics of the continent, and… the rapid removal of the grounds for their distrust…"[35] Roosevelt proceeded to appoint Welles as Ambassador to Cuba, then as Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, and finally as Undersecretary of State. Hull and Welles clashed repeatedly, as did both with Ambassador Daniels. Daniels's influence also derived from his close relationship with the President—FDR had served under Daniels in Wilson's Department of the Navy—and from his post in Mexico City the Ambassador advocated a relatively restrained approach to US policy.

In the Administration's first months, the Great Depression lent urgency to rehabilitating US standing in Latin America. For "when the stock market crashed under Hoover, the last vestiges of US prestige collapsed with it."[36] Multiple factors further cut against continued interventionism. The budget crunch in Washington created pressure to find "rationales to justify discarding interventionist policies that cost too much."[37] In order to secure passage of ambitious New Deal legislation, Roosevelt required the support of liberal senators who were committed to US restraint in Latin America.[38] And yet these initial months, from the spring of 1933

[33] Stuckey 2013, 133, 169; Pérez Jr. 1982, 193.
[34] Rhodes 2001, 113; Allen 1953.
[35] Welles quoted in McJimsey 2003, 3. See also Griffin 1954 (providing context on Welles's early efforts to conceptualize a transformation of US policy in Latin America).
[36] Raymont 2018, chap. 2; Friedman 2018. For studies that explicitly link the Good Neighbor Policy to Roosevelt's New Deal, see McKercher 1991, 590; and Gardner 1971.
[37] Pike 1995, 165.
[38] Johnson 1995, 285; Beisner 1968; Blasier 1985, chap. 7. But, suggesting the peace progressives had marginal influence within the New Deal coalition, see DeBenedetti 1978, 202–

to the summer of 1934, did not see anything like a wholesale retreat from earlier policies.

This was most striking in Cuba, where Washington's influence was especially pronounced due to the island's geographical propinquity and its dependence on US investments in the sugar industry. Since 1903, the Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution, imposed by the United States as a condition of its withdrawal after the Spanish-American War,[39] had granted Washington special rights—the Americans preferred to frame them as obligations—to uphold political and economic order in Cuba.[40] US officials, backed by the marines, assumed primary authority in Havana in 1906-9, 1912, and 1917-22.[41] In 1924, amidst severe economic turmoil stemming from a post-WWI global sugar glut, the Cuban presidential election had elevated Gerardo Machado, who led a centrist coalition and enjoyed strong support from the US business community.[42] Yet Machado soon cracked down on opposition politicians, labor leaders, and the press.[43] In 1927, after various constitutional machinations, he ran for and won an extended term until 1935 under highly suspect conditions.[44] These moves fueled an increasingly organized and violent opposition,[45] but Machado refused to resign even after appeals from the Hoover Administration.[46] Thus, the incoming Roosevelt Administration faced calls from "investors, exporters, interventionist Congressmen, liberal reform organizations, and the exiled opponents of Machado for greater United States involvement in Cuban affairs."[47]

Beginning his ambassadorship in Havana under these circumstances, Sumner Welles quickly became entangled in Cuba's fraught domestic politics.[48] After a general strike crippled the island's economy in early August 1933, Welles

16.
[39] Cummins 1967.
[40] For an overview of the US imperial relationship with Cuba, see Pérez 2008.
[41] Segrera 2017, 1–12; Perez 1986.
[42] Benjamin 1975, 67; Benjamin 1977b, 51; Benjamin 1992, 81–2.
[43] Porter 1933, 29; Chomsky 2015, 23–4.
[44] Benjamin 1977b, 52.
[45] Ibid., 70; Porter 1933, 23–4.
[46] Hoover's ambassador in Havana, Harry Frank Guggenheim, tried to pressure Machado to resign but failed to do so as Machado doubted US appetite for direct intervention. After FDR's election, Guggenheim warned the incoming administration that Machado needed to be removed or else "chaos would result, the sort of chaos that might easily require the United States to intervene in a military way." Quoted in Pérez 1976, 68.
[47] Benjamin 1977a, 57.
[48] Gellman 1979, 18.

sensed that Machado had irretrievably lost control and applied unsubtle pressure on him to resign by invoking the United States' "obligations" to preserve order under the Platt Amendment.[49] Welles reported to Hull that "the situation demands forceful and positive action by the Government of the United States in order that our prestige both here and in the rest of the Continent may not be seriously prejudiced."[50] Initially without the full knowledge or approval of either Hull or Roosevelt, Welles raised the specter of US intervention in order to induce Machado's voluntary exit.[51] When Machado bristled at the US Ambassador's heavy-handed approach, Welles approached the Cuban Secretary of War, General Alberto Herrera, and implied US backing for a coup.[52] The army turned on Machado on 12 August in what many interpreted as "a reaction to the apparent imminence of U.S. intervention."[53] Put bluntly, Welles "overthrew President Machado... with the threat, but not the use, of US force..."[54] The new Cuban President, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, had previously served as ambassador to Washington and afforded Welles phenomenal influence. Welles reported to Washington that "I am now daily being requested for decisions on all matters affecting the Government of Cuba... [ranging] from questions of domestic policy and matters affecting the discipline of the Army to questions involving appointments in all branches of government."[55]

With the economic crisis raging unabated, and lacking political legitimacy, Céspedes was deposed after less than a month, losing power in the so-called "Sergeant's Revolt" led by future dictator Fulgencio Batista.[56] Twice as this revolt unfolded, Welles urgently requested the landing of marines to back Céspedes. The Ambassador argued that military intervention was necessary to preserve US lives and property, legitimate under the Platt Amendment, and consistent with three decades of US policy.[57]

Welles's requests for intervention presented the first serious test of FDR's Latin America policy, and the President proved his determination to avoid further

[49] Welles's telegram to Secretary Hull, in McJimsey 2003, 194–9.
[50] Welles's telegram to Hull, in Ibid., 206–15.
[51] See Thompson 1935, 258; Aguilar 1972, 34–40; Pérez 1976, 69.
[52] Pérez Jr. 1976, 71.
[53] Ibid., 73. This source also reports that Welles told Herrera on 25 July that he had the authority to land marines if Machado was not removed in short order. See also Pérez Jr. 1986, 313-20.
[54] Dur and Gilcrease 2002, 255–6.
[55] Quoted Dominguez 1978, 58; see also Argote-Freyre 2006, 75.
[56] Pérez Jr. 1976, 86-7.
[57] Welles quoted in McJimsey 2003, 281; see also Gellman 1979, 20.

damaging the United States' image in the region.

> For the first time in American history, Roosevelt consulted with Latin American leaders (from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico) before making a foreign policy decision. It was clear that Latin American countries would not approve of an American military intervention in Cuba—Argentina and Mexico said as much—and good relations with Latin America was a top priority for Roosevelt. Hull later wrote that he was influenced by the "disastrous reaction that would follow throughout Latin America if we agreed to his [Welles's] request."[58]

Breaking with Welles, Hull believed that intervention would "produce a hostile reaction throughout the hemisphere and sabotage the forthcoming Pan American Conference" in Montevideo.[59] If Hull traveled to Montevideo "on the heels of a Yankee reversion to gunboat diplomacy, he might find Latin Americans united as never before against the Colossus and ready to dismiss the whole Good Neighbor Policy as empty rhetoric…"[60] Ambassador Daniels echoed these concerns from Mexico City:

> Many [Latin Americans] believe we have avid eyes on Havana and would rejoice at a reasonable excuse to annex it. *They recognize that "the Colossus of the North" could annex Mexico, Cuba and Central America by its superior strength*. Some of them cannot understand how any man or nation can fail to grab if they have the power. This class thinks we are only awaiting a good opportunity to take weak countries which our financiers could better exploit by the aid of the Marine occupation… Their sensitivity is heightened by a knowledge of their weakness.[61]

Daniels further argued, reinforcing FDR's impulse for restraint, that "[o]ur country has all to lose, both in the cost of intervention and the loss of those growing friendly relations which mean so much to our country both in sentiment and in increased commerce."[62] Roosevelt was convinced that intervention in Cuba risked "a storm of criticism from pacifists at home and Latins abroad and [would] distract energy and

[58] Meiser 2015, 249.
[59] Rhodes 2001, 115. See also Welles quoted in McJimsey 2003, 286-7.
[60] Pike 1995, 172; Langley 1980, 145; Cronon 1959, 550.
[61] Daniels's letter to Roosevelt, in McJimsey 2003, 293.
[62] Ibid.

attention from pressing domestic needs."[63] Welles managed to secure only the "wide distribution" of warships in Cuban ports, which he expected would have a "moral effect" in helping him bring the new government to heel.[64] This was far from a totally hands-off approach, but it was a remarkable break with recent precedent. "[R]ationalizations for the use of force, which had formerly been socially acceptable…[had] lost much of their former persuasiveness" among the most important US policymakers.[65]

The crisis continued as the Sergeant's Revolt installed a reformist president who openly opposed US influence in Cuba, Ramón Grau San Martín.[66] Grau's government struggled to establish order in Havana, let alone over all of Cuba. Factional violence spilled into the streets, resulting in the death of an American citizen from a stray bullet. "In an earlier era such an event might have brought marines, but this time the death was officially ignored…"[67] By autumn 1933 the use of force was no longer under serious consideration in Washington. Instead, Welles counseled withholding recognition of Grau's government on the bases that it did not command popular support and was failing to uphold public order. Roosevelt agreed that some pressure was necessary to bring about a Cuban government that could end the instability.[68] In a statement drafted with Welles's input, Roosevelt declared that "[w]e have been keenly desirous during all this period of showing by deed our intention of playing the part of a good neighbor to the Cuban people," but that progress on bilateral trade or treaty issues would be impossible "until there exists in Cuba a provisional government which through the popular support which it obtains and which through the general cooperation which it enjoys, shows evidence of genuine stability."[69] This declaration was clearly designed to precipitate a coup. As Grau bitterly recognized, non-recognition was merely "a new type of intervention—intervention by inertia."[70] On 15 January, Grau's "One Hundred Days" government fell to plotters once again led by Batista, who this time elevated to the presidency a candidate sure to be well-received by Washington. Indeed, Roosevelt's

[63] Quoted in Meiser 2015, 249.
[64] Welles quoted in McJimsey 2003, 282. Warships remained in Cuban waters until 1934.
[65] Wood 1961, 4.
[66] Buell et al. 1935, 13–4.
[67] Gellman 1979, 20.
[68] Dallek 1995, 65.
[69] Roosevelt in McJimsey 2003, 364, 368.
[70] Quoted in Dallek 1995, 64. See also Dominguez 1978, 59; Benjamin 1992, 90–107.

Administration recognized this new government after just five days and before any formal review of whether it met the previously cited criteria of legitimacy and competency.[71] Subsequent aid was considerable, including a $4 million economic assistance loan and tariff reductions on Cuban sugar.[72] And in 1934, the United States negotiated a new treaty with Cuba that abrogated the Platt Amendment, a development which the US Congress officially marked as part of a new "program of nonaggression" in Latin America.[73]

The revocation of the Platt Amendment was a "symbolically important action" that "paid immediate dividends throughout Latin America. It was a clear renunciation of interventionism and raised the moral standing of the United States in the Western Hemisphere."[74] Yet as many commentators rightfully point out, Welles and Roosevelt *had* intervened in Cuba.[75] The opening act of the Good Neighbor Policy may seem to represent a "Talleyrand-like course of tricksterism" in which the United States "surrendered powers that had become obsolete while retaining those it considered still vital to national interests."[76] Yet while Welles's principled support for restraint, in particular, had not survived contact with reality, other members of the Administration, including FDR, had "evolved" a key principle: "The United States would not land troops to resolve the domestic affairs of Latin American nations."[77] The fact that this "decision won praise for the Roosevelt administration in the Americas" reinforced its appeal.[78] Even Welles, who was recalled to Washington and promoted to Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, came to see the outcome of the Cuba debacle as evidence that non-intervention enhanced US prestige.[79] In the following years, these beliefs led the Administration to perform restraint in conspicuous and unprecedented ways, including through formal commitments to non-intervention and a broadened conception of non-interference in Latin American domestic affairs even when previously sacrosanct interests were threatened.

[71] Ibid., 86.
[72] Adler 1965, 106.
[73] Document in McJimsey 2003, 415-6.
[74] Meiser 2005, 250; Wood 1961, 112; Dallek 1995, 86-7.
[75] Rhodes 2001, 115.
[76] Pike 1995, 173; Gellman 1979, 38–9.
[77] Gellman 1979, 21.
[78] Ibid. Roosevelt also received extensive domestic praise. See McJimsey 2003, 256; Gellman 1973, 62.
[79] Cronon 1959, 550.

GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS AS NON-INTERVENTION

For Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the Sixth Pan-American Conference scheduled for 3-26 December 1933, in Montevideo, Uruguay, had been a key reason to exercise restraint in Cuba. Hull was keenly aware that the last two Pan-American Conferences—in Santiago de Chile (1923) and Havana (1928)—had resulted in abject diplomatic failures for the United States, providing a venue for Latin American states to jointly protest US interventionism and oppose US hemispheric initiatives.[80] Official State Department guidance advised the US delegation not "to assume a role of leadership in the Conference" or to support anything but "those proposals which would appear to be of common interest and which merit the unanimous approval of the American Republics."[81] This dim outlook appeared warranted when the Secretary of State, disembarking in Montevideo, confronted signs declaring "Down with Hull!"[82]

From Washington's perspective two factors salvaged the conference: Hull's savvy diplomacy and the fact that the US was, for the first time, willing to formally—if partially—repudiate armed intervention.[83] In an initial masterstroke, Hull inverted normal diplomatic protocol by proactively visiting the delegations of small Latin American republics to show his respect. Then, in a major speech to the conference, he affirmed that "[t]he people of my country strongly feel that the so-called right of conquest must be forever banished from this hemisphere and, most of all, they shun and reject that so-called right themselves."[84] The "definite" policy of the United States, Hull declared, was to be "as much opposed as any other government to interference with the freedom, the sovereignty, or other internal affairs or processes of the governments of other nations."[85] He also empathized with Latin American criticism of past US policies.[86] And in a dramatic moment, facing down criticism from the Haitian and Nicaraguan delegations, Hull maintained that "no government need fear any intervention on the part of the United States under the Roosevelt Administration."[87] As one contemporary

[80] Lorca 2014, 350.
[81] Hull [1933] 1950, 45.
[82] Rhodes 2001, 116.
[83] Inman 1965, 133–58. This sort of multilateral non-intervention pledge was at the time unprecedented. For historical context, see Jamnejad and Wood 2009, 349–50.
[84] Hull 1935, 35.
[85] Ibid., 37.
[86] Johnson 1995, 285.
[87] Quoted in Gellman 1979, 24.

commentator put it, "the action of…Hull, in lifting the barriers against free and open discussion of all political and economic questions was instrumental in lessening the distrust of Latin American countries."[88]

Further distinguishing his performance, the Secretary offered more than words. Shocking the other delegates, he offered US support for the Declaration on the Rights and Duties of States sponsored by Argentina, which included the provision that "[n]o state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another."[89] Hull recognized that opposing the Declaration would invite condemnation, especially from Argentina, which sought to inflame a "disagreement as to which was the better, more virtuous, more cultured country, and which was most clearly destined for ultimate greatness and New World paramountcy."[90] US support for the Declaration was more symbolic than substantive: Washington specifically reserved the rights to protect US lives and property, which it believed were enshrined in international law.[91] But by backing the principle of non-intervention, the United States believed that it could prove "a powerful country could play this role [of hemispheric leader] with even-handed fairness when dealing with the relatively powerless."[92] This gesture set the stage for the United States to take a "definite lead" in the integration of hemispheric diplomacy.[93] Thus, adopting a policy of non-intervention "did not mean… that the United States also gave up all means of influencing Latin American governments in all spheres of policy."[94] It was rather that military intervention could be divorced from the "undivestible" sources of US influence, namely, its "radiation" and "prestige."[95] Even if one sees Hull's actions as a sleight of hand—trading costly intervention for influence through other means—US and Latin American commentators alike believed it to have paid off, as US standing rose markedly following the conference.[96]

Noting these positive effects of restraint for US prestige, Roosevelt doubled

[88] Beck 1939, 115.
[89] Inman 1965, 157; Damrosch 1989, 7–11; Lorca 2014, 305–58.
[90] Pike 1995, 238. On Argentina's bid for hemispheric influence, see Scarfi 2016, 198; Morgenfeld 2011.
[91] Haring 1936, 76. This was the longstanding US policy. See Gellman 1979, 5-7; Pratt 1964, 321; Adler 1965, 105-6.
[92] Haring 1936, 78; Pike 1995, 224.
[93] Beck 1939, 115.
[94] Wood 1961, 136.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Reporting the Latin American delegations' positive reactions, see Kula 1976, 104–5; Cox 1934, 44; Johnson 1995, 287; Dozer 1961, 46.

down on the Good Neighbor Policy. In a major foreign policy address at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, on 28 December 1933, FDR explained that Washington would no longer arrogate for itself the role of enforcing political stability. "If and when the failure of orderly processes affects the other nations of the continent… it becomes the *joint concern* of the whole continent in which we are all neighbors. It is the comprehension of that doctrine… that has made the conference now concluding… in Montevideo such a splendid success."[97] Shortly after this speech, Roosevelt embarked on a trip to the Virgin Islands, Haiti, and Panama, making him the first president to visit a Latin American nation while in office. FDR further capitalized on the international news coverage of his trip by announcing an early withdrawal of US troops from Haiti.[98] With the end of the Haiti occupation in 1934, Latin America was free of US forces for the first time in three decades.[99] In 1936, the Hull-Alfaro Treaty between the United States and Panama ended the United States' last formal protectorate role over a Latin American country (though it retained control over the canal zone). In a recognizable theatrical move, FDR rededicated the Panama Canal—the symbol of US power and unilateralism in Central America—to "all Nations in the needs of peaceful commerce."[100]

As these policies elicited a positive reaction throughout the hemisphere, American policymakers perceived a significant increase in US prestige. Gradually, "responsible opinion in Latin America was largely won over to the United States and was disposed to cooperate" with it; moreover, this "changed inter-American relationship [was] largely the result of the United States policy of self-restraint…"[101] South American newspapers even began to welcome US influence as a new form of "legitimate imperialism."[102] Latin American states began to invite Washington to help mediate regional disputes.[103] States that had long claimed to resent US meddling in their affairs now showed deference to the United States on even purely

[97] Roosevelt 1933a.
[98] Gruening 1934; Munro 1969.
[99] This excludes the Panama Canal Zone, which the US retained as sovereign territory.
[100] Chavez 2021, 309.
[101] Dozer 1961, 37, 35.
[102] Quoted in Ibid., 13-4.
[103] In 1936, Chile and Argentina requested US assistance in mediating the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay. In 1937, when a territorial dispute threatened war between Nicaragua and Honduras, Washington declined requests by both sides to intervene directly and instead supported joint arbitration of the conflict with Venezuela and Costa Rica.

South American political issues.[104] This was a concrete indication that the "leadership of the United States had been enhanced by its repudiation of unilateral action in its policy towards its neighbors in the Western hemisphere…"[105] As the periodical *Noticias Gráficas* of Buenos Aires effused on 7 November 1936, the United States had become a "model for other nations of the continent." Or as the *Diario de Centro América* put it on 8 September, "the former threatening shadow of the White House has been changed into the friendly beam of a lighthouse which points out not only to the United States but also to the other countries of America and of the world the directions of new policy."[106]

Restraint also redounded to the FDR's personal and political benefit: "His standing throughout the Americas had risen sharply during his first term."[107] The Good Neighbor Policy enjoyed significant bipartisan support and Roosevelt touted its success in his 1936 message to Congress as well as his re-election campaign that year.[108] His landslide victory coincided with the successfully mediated end of the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay, Latin America's last remaining conflict. Shortly thereafter, Roosevelt proposed an Inter-American Conference on the Maintenance of Peace.[109] He personally traveled to the conference, held in Buenos Aires during December 1936, and was met with cheering crowds upon disembarking in Argentina. Notably surpassing their commitment in 1933, FDR and Hull had determined to give unqualified US support for an Additional Protocol Relative to Nonintervention, which declared "inadmissible the intervention of any [hemispheric state], directly or indirectly, and for whatever reason, in the internal or external affairs of any other of the Parties."[110] This represented the culmination of the US policy of non-intervention and it elicited glowing remarks from the assembled delegates.[111] "The Nicaraguan representative, who had personally witnessed direct American military intervention, spoke for many of his colleagues at the meeting when he proclaimed: 'Franklin D. Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, Sumner

[104] Braeman 1982, 354; Haring 1936, 80–3; Wood 1966, 4–12.
[105] Dozer 1961, 38.
[106] Quoted in Ibid., 27.
[107] Gellman 1979, 62.
[108] Roosevelt's message to Congress declared that "[t]his policy of the good neighbor among the Americas is no longer a hope, no longer an objective remaining to be accomplished. It is a fact, active, present, pertinent and effective." Quoted in Stuckey 2013, 174. On the political popularity of the policy, see Wood 1961, 317; Gellman 1979, 59.
[109] On the Chaco conflict and the US role in mediating it, see Rout 2013.
[110] Additional Protocol Relative to Non-Intervention 1937; Gilderhus 2000, 78.
[111] See, e.g., Gólcher 1996, 93.

Welles: a magnificent triumvirate, to whom all America… should offer a note of admiration and respect.'"[112]

The momentum behind US restraint owed, in part, to the increasing salience of reference others *beyond* the hemisphere. FDR saw the Buenos Aires conference as an opportunity to enhance US prestige not only regionally but globally, promoting inter-American cooperation as a model for Europe amidst gathering geopolitical storm clouds.[113] Addressing the assembled delegates, he declared that any powers intervening in the New World "will find a Hemisphere wholly prepared to consult together for mutual safety and our mutual good."[114] In fact, the celebrity with which the American delegation was treated did not translate into complete acceptance of its proposals on the question of mutual defense. The Argentine delegation, "largely for reasons of national pride, rejected [the US] proposal to establish a permanent consultative body to deal with threats to peace in the western hemisphere." [115] Instead, Hull's personal diplomacy secured passage of a "Declaration of Solidarity" that endorsed cooperation and consultation in the face of threats originating outside the hemisphere. This measure lacked binding mechanisms, but it nonetheless marked a major change in US policy, amounting to the "continentalization" of the Monroe Doctrine. [116] Rather than demand the prerogative of policing the hemisphere, Washington was now enlisting the other states in a cooperative enterprise of preserving the US-led hemispheric order.

FROM NON-INTERVENTION TO NON-INTERFERENCE

By the end of Roosevelt's first term, the Good Neighbor Policy had taken on a much more concrete form, with the "'hands-off' idea" as its "cornerstone."[117] Ambiguity remained, however, as to the extent of restraint that the policy required in practice. Beginning with the Cuba crisis, Montevideo pledge, and Haiti withdrawal, restraint had been conceptualized as essentially the repudiation of armed intervention. Yet "if the policy of nonintervention and the pledge of Montevideo were to be maintained inviolate, it was essential that interference, which created

[112] Quoted in Gellman 1979, 68.
[113] Dallek 1995, 132.
[114] Quoted in Adler 1965, 113; see also Gilderhus 2000, 78.
[115] Rhodes 2001, 122.
[116] Cabranes 1967, 1115; Adler 1965, 114; Scarfi 2016, 189.
[117] Blake and Barck 1960, 626; Chavez 2021, 291.

responsibility for political developments, should cease."[118] The pledges of non-intervention at Montevideo and Buenos Aires empowered proponents of restraint within the Administration and Congress to press their case.[119] As acknowledgment of the prestige benefits of restraint spread, support increased for a more thoroughgoing version: not merely non-intervention, but non-*interference*, which "meant refusal to 'influence in any way the course of domestic political affairs' of any member of the family of New World nations."[120]

One of the first policies to run afoul of this expanded principle was the selective non-recognition of Latin American governments, which the United States' neighbors had long resented as an imperialistic infringement upon their sovereignty.[121] After the crisis in Cuba, FDR formally returned the United States to a less exacting standard of "de-factoism," recognizing any government that exerted effective control over its territory. The Administration saw this policy as an outgrowth of non-intervention because it obviated any perceived obligations on the part of the US to uphold a particular regime or political order. Naturally, "de-factoism" also led to the emergence of "powerful dictatorially inclined leaders," in the words of US Minister to El Salvador Frank Corrigan.[122] Writing to Hull in Washington, Corrigan conveyed skepticism about the viability of a truly "hands-off" policy: "Failure of a Mission to use its influence constructively may become a sin of omission with consequences fully as grievous as the former sins of commission." Requesting guidance from Washington on whether he should act to oppose an anticipated coup, Corrigan noted that liberal elements which had been "bitter opponents of intervention" now felt that "a liberal government, like that of the United States with its immense power and moral influence, should lend its aid and cooperation in every peaceful way to retain progress and ideals and aid the evolution of these countries toward real democratic republican government…"[123] In another missive the next year, Corrigan stated that though he was "heartily in accord with the policy of non-interference in Salvadoran affairs," he felt that

[118] Wood 1961, 138.
[119] Langley 1980, 153.
[120] Adler 1965, 111.
[121] Dennis 1931, 208; Johnson 1995, 121.
[122] Generally, see Van den Berk 2017, chap. 4; Schoultz 2018, chap. 5; Langley 1980, 149–50. On specific countries, see Pérez Jr. 1982 (Batista regime in Cuba); Roorda 1998 (Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic); Crawley 2007 (Somoza regime in Nicaragua).
[123] Corrigan [1936] 1954a, 126–7.

abandoning his Mission's "moral influence" over the country's turbulent domestic politics would diminish US "prestige" based upon Washington's "good will and fair dealing."[124] Corrigan was, in effect, seeking permission to exercise a more mild version of the influence that his predecessors had wielded for three decades, and which Welles had deployed just three years earlier. Yet he was consistently rebuffed. Welles, by then Deputy Secretary of State, responded on behalf of the Department only that Corrigan should "consistently decline to comment on the developing situation without in any way impairing the prestige of your mission."[125]

A similar debate prompted even more handwringing in Nicaragua because of the extensive legacy of US interference there.[126] After US marines withdrew in 1933, their absence created an opening for the emergence of a strongman, Anastasio Somoza, who was well known to Washington after having served as head of the US-trained National Guard.[127] Soon after the US withdrawal, Somoza orchestrated the assassination of Agusto Sandino, hero of the anti-American insurgency who retained an independent center of political support and was an ally of Nicaragua's President, Juan Sacasa.[128] This brazen move cleared the way for Somoza to subsequently oust Sacasa. The "Department of State had to withstand an avalanche of requests for interference," including from Sacasa himself, who pleaded for "friendly moral assistance" and "some expression of the friendly interest of the United States in seeing Nicaragua work out her problems satisfactorily."[129] As early as 1934, it had become clear to the US Minister in Managua, Arthur Lane, that Somoza would force out Sacasa ahead of the 1936 elections unless Nicaragua's president received US support. In correspondence with Washington, Lane—like Corrigan—discussed the tensions inherent in his instructions:

> There has been at times some question in my mind as to how the "Hands Off" and "Good Neighbor" policies should or may be reconciled. I feel... that we should not interfere in Nicaraguan internal affairs; should we feel, however, that a word from us might serve to maintain the peace of the country and consequently avoid bloodshed and disorder, we should not

[124] Corrigan [1937] 1954b, 524.
[125] Welles [1937] 1954, 525.
[126] Providing an overview, see Bermann 1986.
[127] Crawley 2007, 4-8.
[128] Bermann 1986, 223-40.
[129] Wood 1961, 149, 142-9.

> refrain from assuming the responsibility of the "Good Neighbor" by expressing our views, preferably as the personal views of our diplomatic representative.[130]

Lane's requests for permission to prop up Sacasa ultimately prompted Welles and Hull to issue "unprecedented" new guidance for US missions in Central America. Ministers were instructed to "conduct themselves... in exactly the same manner they would if they were accredited to one of the large republics of South America or with any non-American power; that is to say, they should abstain from offering advice on any domestic question, and if requested to give any such advice they should decline to do so."[131] The instruction, signed by Secretary Hull, stated in conclusion that the State Department thus was

> in the fullest sense, applying the Good Neighbor policy to Central America. This government is desirous of carrying on with the Central American republics a policy of constructive and effective friendship, based upon mutual respect for each other's rights and interests. It would obviously be incompatible with this policy to become involved in the domestic concerns of any of the Central American republics.[132]

In Nicaragua, these principles informed the State Department's decision to withhold any mediation unless it was requested by all parties, including Somoza. This policy effectively doomed Sacasa, who resigned under duress on 6 June 1937 and fled for El Salvador, leaving Nicaragua under the control of Somoza's National Guard.[133]

Non-interference no doubt facilitated the ascendence of dictators throughout Latin America, many of whom turned out to be relatively pro-American. The extent to which the State Department anticipated this development remains subject to debate. What is clear from the documentary record is that, by 1936-7, the Good Neighbor Policy had taken on a logic of its own for top US policymakers, who recognized the salutary effects for US standing achieved through restraint and were therefore careful to avoid any potentially entangling political interference that

[130] Lane [1934] 1952, 554. On Lane's doubts about Somoza, see Black 1988, 62.
[131] Van den Berk 2017, 116. For a similar exchange with the US Minister in Honduras, see Hull [1936] 1954.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Crawley 2007, 115.

might compromise the policy. Nicaragua in 1936 would not be a repeat of Nicaragua in 1926, when the US had become entangled in a drawn-out military conflict.[134] Instances of non-interference in Central American affairs may not have been individually conspicuous, but they had a cumulative effect on Latin American perceptions of US respect for their sovereignty.[135] And opportunities would soon present themselves for the US to demonstrate restraint in highly conspicuous, bilateral, disputes.

The Mexico Oil Crisis: "Patience, Forbearance, and Indulgence"

In 1938, "American self-restraint was severely tested" when Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized the oil industry.[136] The Mexican government expropriated what the Brookings Institute estimated to be more than $200 million of American property.[137] The resulting crisis "looms large as the apogee of Mexican resource nationalism and America's 'Good Neighbor' policy."[138] Despite many factors which might have militated for intervention, no one at the senior levels of the Roosevelt Administration urged this step.[139] Determined to further enhance the prestige they had accrued as a Good Neighbor, and wary of alienating Latin American opinion as geopolitical tensions heightened in the late 1930s, US policymakers "set a new precedent for international tolerance toward confiscation of privately owned foreign property."[140] This policy of non-interference, in a dispute which implicated legitimate US interests, was maintained even in the face of strong domestic pressures to intervene—from the affected oil companies, as expected, but

[134] Pratt 1964, 137, 318; Adler 1965, 100; Munro 1974, 373; Langley 1980, 117-9.
[135] On the concomitant diminution of Anti-American sentiment among regional elites, see McPherson 2006, 18..
[136] Rhodes 2001, 123; Koppes 1982, 62. A similar incident occurred in 1937 in Bolivia, which I do not discuss due to lack of space. See Flores and Cunha Filho 2020; Ingram 1974.
[137] Rhodes 2001, 123; Knight 1987.
[138] Maurer 2011, 590; Gilderhus 2000, 90. In contrast, some scholars take the view that, "[r]ather than representing the epitome of the Good Neighbor Policy, the Mexican oil expropriation represented its end." This view emphasizes that the State Department was involved *at all* in mediating the dispute. This view is less than convincing, however, as it abstracts from the historical context of previous US interventionism, which oriented the expectations of participants in the dispute, on both the US and Mexican sides. Maurer 2013, 246.
[139] A war scare had arisen over Mexican expropriation of US property as recently as 1927. Moreover, as Interior Secretary Harold Ickes revealed with respect to the Mexican decision, the US had "no international oil policy… except to protect the interests of our nationals." See Koppes 1982, 63, 71.
[140] Adler 1965, 121.

also from more liberal corners.[141]

Elected in 1934 with a mandate to enact the unrealized vision of Mexico's 1917 Revolution, Cárdenas undertook a series of "Mexico for Mexicans" reforms that brought him into conflict with US business interests and, by extension, the State Department.[142] "But none of these actions had the explosiveness of the petroleum issue."[143] In December 1937, Cárdenas's government intervened in a dispute between Mexican workers and foreign-owned oil companies, awarding the workers a drastic wage increase and greater control over the operation of oil properties.[144] Mexico's Supreme Court upheld this order, yet the oil companies refused to comply even after the wage award was significantly decreased on appeal.[145] Instead, the oil companies appealed to the State Department for support and orchestrated coordinated mass withdrawals from Mexican banks in an attempt to devalue the peso and pressure the Mexican government.[146] On 18 March 1938, Cárdenas responded to this defiance of his government's authority by issuing a decree that nationalized the Mexican oil industry and expropriated the Mexican holdings of all foreign-owned companies.[147] This move shocked Washington, which had been content to treat the dispute as a Mexican domestic manner.[148] Roosevelt, Hull, Welles, and Daniels granted that the expropriation was legal.[149] And given their own political leanings they had little sympathy for the oil companies.[150] Nonetheless, they believed that US companies were entitled to just compensation under international law.

[141] The *New York Times*, for instance, called on FDR to "spank" Mexico. Quoted in Coleman 1952, 224.. On the oil companies' efforts to pressure FDR into taking a firmer line, see Pike 2010, 277; Daniels 1947, 231.
[142] Smith 2000a, 50–1; see also Becker 1996, 115–47; Dwyer 2002; Dwyer 2008.
[143] Koppes 1982, 65.
[144] Coleman 1952, 218, reports that the wage increase would have amounted to a of 3,000 per cent increase. See also O'Brien 1999, 300–3.
[145] Apparently, the award was decreased from 65 to 26 million pesos, or $18 to $7.2 million dollars. Knight 2010, 95; Smith 2000a, 51.
[146] Santa Cruz 2012, 42.
[147] On Cárdenas's political calculus in an era of "fervent, revolutionary nationalism" see Dwyer 2002, 378.
[148] Ambassador Daniels reportedly described the 18 March decree as a "thunderbolt out of a blue sky." Quoted in Smith 2000a, 51. Welles had told the British Ambassador "there would seem to be no more reason for this government to interpose in the matter than there would be for the Mexican government to interpose if the decision had been rendered by the Supreme Court of the United States." Quoted in Wood 1961, 205.
[149] Indeed, US courts upheld the expropriation as consistent with international law, declining to find for the oil companies when they sued in US courts. See Woolsey 1938.
[150] See Daniels 1947, 226; Smith 2000, 51; Pike 1995, 194-6; Woods 2021, 98–9. Cf. Koppes 1982, 69.

From the beginning, both sides explicitly framed the expropriation issue within the context of the Good Neighbor Policy.[151] In the first diplomatic note presented to the Mexican government after the decree, on 26 March, Hull explicitly invoked the "policy of the Good Neighbor" and its subsidiary principles: "the adjustment of difficulties by processes of negotiation and agreement, fair play and fair dealing, and the wholehearted disposition to cooperate each with the other for the promotion of their mutual interests and mutual welfare."[152] At a press conference a few days later, Hull reiterated his "earnest hope that because of the very friendly relations existing between the two governments a fair and equitable solution of this problem may soon be found by the Mexican government."[153] Ambassador Daniels also took extraordinary steps to ensure that Mexico would not perceive the initial US reaction as overly aggressive.[154] This conciliatory tone was corresponded by Cárdenas, who offered that the United States had "won the esteem of the people of Mexico" by the "proof of friendship" shown in "moments of trial."[155] In a 31 March statement, the Mexican President praised the Roosevelt Administration for "continu[ing] to support the policy of friendship and respect of each nation, a policy which is winning for your country the affection of many peoples of the world."[156] In the broader Latin American press, the United States was praised for the "admirable calmness" of its reaction.[157]

This initial amity masked dissension within the Roosevelt Administration over how to respond.[158] Hull favored a harsher response more aligned with that of Britain, which had cut off diplomatic relations and imposed economic sanctions on Mexico.[159] The Secretary of State requested that his counterpart at Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, discontinue a 1936 arrangement whereby the US purchased Mexican silver above the world market rate, which would have led to severe depreciation of

[151] Rogers 1951, 62–74.
[152] Quoted in Wood 1961, 209-11.
[153] Hull [1938] 1956, 662. See also Dwyer 2008, 192.
[154] Daniels found the language of Hull's 26 March note to be too brusque; he even worried the note would cause Mexico to break diplomatic relations. In an act of "extraordinary insubordination," Daniels relayed that Mexican Foreign Minister Hay could consider the note "not delivered." Koppes 1982, 70; Wood 1961, 209-4.
[155] Wood 1961, 213-4.
[156] Dallek 1995, 124.
[157] Dozer 1961, 34; Meyer Cosío 1966, 144–6.
[158] Gilbert 1963, 61.
[159] Randall 2005, 98; Gellman 1979, 51-6. British investors had controlled twice as large a share of the Mexican oil industry (50 per cent) than Americans (24 per cent).

the peso.[160] Morgenthau and others opposed this move on the basis that it risked alienating Mexico and pushing Cárdenas towards Germany and Italy.[161] Other officials focused on US standing rather than security. For example, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes wrote in his diary, "[i]f bad feelings should result in Central and South America as a result of the oil situation that exists just now with Mexico, it would be more expensive for us than the cost of all the oil in Mexico."[162] Ambassador Daniels again emerged as the loudest voice in favor of the greatest restraint. Writing FDR to oppose the silver move, he warned that the "Good Neighbor policy, the noblest conception of preserving unity in the Western Hemisphere in a mad world, is in danger."[163] To Hull, Daniels wrote that there was "no right for any other nation to intervene in what was purely a domestic concern. The increase in wage agitation is universal. No country can control the problem in a neighbor."[164] Daniels urged Hull to pursue a "course of conciliation, even at some sacrifice [because] the Good Neighbor Policy must be undergirded if this hemisphere is to escape the contagion that threatens Europe…" The Ambassador continued: "In dealing with these [other American] countries, which have an inheritance of Spanish foolish pride, we need to exercise the forbearance which is the position of strong nations that would help the weak."[165] These arguments in favor of restraint may not have moved Hull but they did appeal to Roosevelt, who wanted to avoid antagonizing other Latin American countries like Argentina and Brazil with overly harsh treatment of Mexico. FDR directed Morgenthau to resume the purchase of Mexican silver, though at world market prices. Subsequently, the State Department refrained from any sustained efforts at economic coercion, providing, for instance, minimal support for the oil companies' efforts to block global and US sales of Mexican oil.[166]

Despite the promising invocations of neighborliness that marked its onset, the diplomatic crisis soon deepened as the extent of the disagreement became clear. The United States insisted upon "prompt, adequate, and effective compensation" for US property owners, and originally backed the oil companies' claims for $200

[160] Maurer 2011, 606.
[161] Tyrrell and Sexton 2015, 113.
[162] Quoted in Maurer 2011, 605.
[163] Quoted in Coleman 1952, 200. See also Daniels 1947, 217-254.
[164] Quoted in Randall 2005, 104.
[165] Quoted in Coleman 1952, 225.
[166] Jayne 2001, 86–91.

million.[167] At first Cárdenas had offered assurances that "[w]e are not going to refuse to pay for what is expropriated. We are acting on a high legal and moral plane to make our country great and respected."[168] The State Department preferred that the oil companies and Mexico reach a private settlement. "Such a conclusion, it was believed, would enable the department to protect American interests, strategic and commercial, without giving the appearance of pressuring Mexico into submission and thus compromising the Good Neighbor policy in the region."[169] (This stood in stark contrast to the preceding era in which US administrations could be consistent counted upon to aggressively advance business interests abroad.[170]) It soon became clear, however, that Mexico would not meet the companies' demands for prompt compensation. "Direct negotiations between the oil companies and the Mexican government during most of 1939 came to naught."[171] The Mexican government denied that compensation was due on two grounds: first, that Mexican citizens' property had also been expropriated, making it a general action that did not fall under international law; and second, that the companies had been in violation of the Mexican Supreme Court, making expropriation punitive and therefore legal.[172]

Nor did Mexico defer to Washington's proposed mechanism for settling the dispute, namely, formal arbitration before a panel that could impartially apply international law. According to Welles, in 1938, his government had "exhibited patience and forbearance, and has shown to the Mexican government all possible indulgence" but it could not give up on arbitration without "impairing the integrity of the principles upon which [the Good Neighbor Policy] rests."[173] Far from accepting arbitration as a cornerstone of the Good Neighbor Policy, Mexican diplomats framed US insistence on arbitration as a form of "imperialistic aggression" and denied that Latin American states saw arbitration as a legitimate form of neighborliness.[174]

Mexico's refusal to meet the oil companies' demands for compensation, and

[167] Hull 1938; Koppes 1982, 68; Flores and Cunha Filho 2020, 679.
[168] Quoted in Daniels 1947, 234. See also Coleman 1952, 219-20.
[169] Randall 2005, 101.
[170] On the origins and logic of "dollar diplomacy," see Loveman 2010, 227; Pérez Jr. 1982, 168-9; Pratt 1964, 133.
[171] Green 1971, 52.
[172] The legal questions are outlined in Wortley 1957, 24–6.
[173] Welles [1938] 1956, 668.
[174] Wood 1961, 242-3.

concomitant rejection of arbitration, led to a diplomatic impasse that persisted throughout much of 1939. Only the advent of WWII in Europe caused the State Department to break with the oil companies and engage in direct intergovernmental negotiations with Mexico.[175] Negotiations, led by Daniels on the US side, quickly bore an agreement that resolved several questions favorably for Mexico. On the key question of compensation, Mexico would provide a minimal cash deposit and make additional payments according to a formula determined by a bilateral commission.[176] The State Department had tacitly accepted that the strict application of international law was no longer a key tenet of the Good Neighbor Policy.[177] Even more dramatically, it had demonstrated that it was no longer willing to unconditionally support US businesses that encountered difficulties in Latin America. By 1940, in a stark inversion of "dollar diplomacy," the Department was even pressuring Standard Oil to accept a *smaller* share oil profits in Venezuela so as to preclude another crisis.[178]

This change in policy was clearly influenced by the growing security threat posed by the Axis powers and the perception that alienating Mexico could provide an opening for Germany.[179] There is evidence that Cárdenas recognized and exploited this dynamic to limit US opposition.[180] Even Secretary Hull later admitted that the settlement was "a large factor in having our neighbor to the south in full accord with us at the moment of Pearl Harbor."[181] However, the "role played by the Second World War in determining the outcome of the oil crisis warrants reexamination."[182] While security considerations lurked in the background, they were one step removed from the proximate aim. Put simply, "Roosevelt did not wish to jeopardize a growing reputation for restraint in Latin American affairs."[183] And as noted above, there is evidence that South American elites were impressed with

[175] Meyer 2014, 217–20.
[176] The deposit was for only $9 million. The bilateral commission ultimately determined that Mexico owed $24 million in total compensation, whereas the US oil companies had claimed $200 million in expropriated property. Flores and Filho 2020, 679. The US also agreed to extend $30 million in Export-Import Bank credits to Mexico, ostensibly for the construction of roads. Hull [1941] 1942, 399–402; Macmahon and Dittmar 1942.
[177] Wood 1961, 206.
[178] Pike 1995, 244; Adler 1965, 124.
[179] Randall 2005, 105; Salinas 1988, 90–2.
[180] Pastor and Castañeda 2011, chap. 4; Becker 1996, 158; Randall 2005, 99; Dominguez and Fernández de Castro 2009, 10–11.
[181] Quoted in Gilbert 1963, 84.
[182] Dwyer 2008, 192.
[183] Dallek 1995, 124.

US restraint in this instance.[184]

A potential objection is that Cárdenas's defiance of the US demonstrated the *limits* of whatever deference Washington could expect in Latin America.[185] From this perspective, "[t]he Roosevelt administration allowed Latin Americans to take advantage of the United States because 'it did not want to disturb the harmony among the American nations. But in the long-run respect is more important harmony and harmony which is not based on respect is only the prelude to discord.'"[186] What this interpretation fails to recognize, however, is that the Good Neighbor Policy did not promote harmony for its own sake. Rather, harmony on bilateral issues where the United States could afford to practice restraint was necessary for Washington to solidify a hemispheric hierarchy that it led, and which emerged as an increasingly crucial aspect of overall US foreign policy throughout the late 1930s.

PRESTIGE AND PAN-AMERICANISM

For US policymakers, their nation's growing regional prestige was not merely manifest in abstract professions of Latin American goodwill. The Good Neighbor's goal, especially urgent after 1936, was to institutionalize a "Pan-American" hemispheric hierarchy with the United States at its apex. Pan Americanism was the belief that American nations shared, as a State Department memo put it in 1939, "distinguishing ideals and beliefs which bind us together in contrast with the other non-American powers," including a "belief in peaceable adjustment of disputes, aversion to the use of force… [and] adherence to the principles of equal sovereignty of states and justice under international law…"[187] As early as 1933, in an address at the Pan-American Union for Pan-American Day, FDR suggested that "[t]he essential qualities of a true Pan Americanism must be the same as those which

[184] The Mexican Left notably dropped (at least for the moment) its longstanding railing against "'Yankee imperialism,' as it came to be favorably impressed by President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy" in the context of the expropriation crisis. Ingram 1974, 21.
[185] Friedman and Long 2015, 185–6; Coleman 1952, 216; Santa Cruz 2012, 43.
[186] Gellman 1979, 80; Wood 1961, 221. Domestic political criticism of the Good Neighbor Policy emerged on the same lines: it had failed to secure deference from Mexico in the first place. Coleman 1952, 221.
[187] Quoted in Gilderhus 2000, 103. Pan-Americanism ultimately entailed a broader set of foreign policy tools beyond neighborly restraint, including extensive economic aid and cultural publicity programs orchestrated by the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations. Raymont 2018, Chapter 2. See also Heiss 2013 (propaganda and cultural diplomacy); Haines 1977 (economic relations and assistance); Chavez 2021 (presidential diplomacy).

constitute a good neighbor…"[188] Indeed, the crucial quality for the emergence of US-led Pan-Americanism proved to be, in FDR's words from 1938, "the self-restraint to refuse strident ambitions which are sure to breed insecurity and intolerance…"[189] US officials were explicit that neighborly restraint had created a beneficial hemispheric order. Welles, for instance, wrote of his view

> that the proper concept of the Good Neighbor policy is one of mutuality of interests based upon the self- respect and sovereignty of each of the twenty-one American republics. While *many concrete advantages may be derived*, and in fact have been derived, by all of these countries from the application of this broad principle of joint interest, such gains should properly be considered, I think, as growing out of this broad basis of inter-American cooperation, rather than as a specific exchange of favors…[190]

As a good neighbor, the United States enjoyed a form of unequal and diffuse reciprocity from Latin American nations. The prestige accrued through neighborly restraint paid off in terms of the material economic and security aspects of Pan-Americanism.[191]

First, good neighbor-ism secured tangible economic benefits in the form of reciprocal trade agreements, which remained a chief priority of Secretary Hull throughout the 1930s.[192] The Reciprocal Tariff Act of 1934 amended the highly protectionist Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, which had triggered precipitous declines in hemispheric trade during the early years of the Depression. The Act empowered the Roosevelt Administration to negotiate significant reciprocal tariff reductions, which Hull achieved with Cuba (1934), Brazil (1935), Haiti (1935), Columbia (1935), Honduras (1935), Nicaragua (1936), Guatemala (1936), Costa Rica (1936), El Salvador (1937), and Ecuador (1938).[193] Given the disparity in economic power between the United States and these bilateral trading partners, it is far from obvious that Washington was primarily motivated by the stated aim of bolstering US exports during the Depression. A progressive critic of the Administration in the Senate charged that these agreements ensured that Latin

[188] Roosevelt 1933b, 244.
[189] Roosevelt 1940, 564.
[190] Quoted in Wood 1961, 314, emphasis added.
[191] See Hall 2011.
[192] Gardner 1971.
[193] Notably, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile rebuffed US overtures. Steward 1975.

American countries "for the sake of American merchants… remain dutiful little colonies under Uncle Sam's tutelage."[194] In less polemical terms, the agreements ensured that Latin America would remain within the US "economic sphere."[195] US standing appears as both a cause and consequence of Latin American countries voluntarily ceding influence over their economies to Washington at the expense of other trading partners.[196]

Second, the security implications of the Good Neighbor Policy became increasingly salient throughout the 1930s as Washington sought a Pan-American basis for its policy of neutrality from brewing conflicts in Europe and Asia. The prospect of war in many ways magnified Latin Americans' dependence on the United States and, consequently, their perceptions of US power.[197] And in the Washington's view,

> the Caribbean republics, rewarded by American disavowal of unilateral intervention, now stood obligated to integrate their collective energies in the common defense. This meant, generally, acquiescence in Washington's policies to secure the vital Caribbean area by strengthening American military installations, by acquiring new defense sites, and by forceful measures by Caribbean governments to rid their countries of subversive elements.[198]

FDR made this point explicit in an address to the Pan-American Union on 15 April 1940. The President took credit for hemispheric peace, which he attributed to the United States' "[s]elf-restraint and the acceptance of the equal rights of our neighbors… In pursuit of that purpose the Good Neighbor reversed the traditional policy of force, or rather sought to sublimate the power of the United States into a moral force." Cooperation on matters of hemispheric defense was, therefore, a "natural outgrowth of our good neighbor policy."[199]

The United States did seem to reap significant security benefits from the Good Neighbor Policy at the Eighth International Conference of American States in Lima (1938), as well as additional conferences held in Panama City (1938) and Havana (1940). While an institutionalized defense pact eluded the US delegation to

[194] Quoted in Johnson 1995, 286. See also Greene 1971.
[195] Rhodes 2001, 120. Drawing out this aspect of the policy, see Friedman 2018.
[196] For example, see Langley 1980, 147.
[197] Dozer 1965, 46–63.
[198] Langley 1980, 165.
[199] Roosevelt 1940.

Lima, it secured a strong guarantee of hemispheric support in the event that any state was threatened with invasion.[200] The Declaration of Panama went even further, establishing a formal "neutrality zone" around the entire Western Hemisphere (excluding only Canada) and authorizing specific means of military cooperation, including the stationing of US warships in Latin American ports to deter belligerents from entering.[201] Finally, the 1940 conference produced the Act of Havana, which enlisted all Latin American states to enforce a longstanding US policy that hemispheric territories could not be transferred between two non-American states.[202] At a time when Roosevelt was attempting to balance public commitments to neutrality with mobilization in support of the Allies, these efforts to further "continentalize" the Monroe Doctrine appeared vital.[203] In FDR's words, US "plans for national defense" accounted for the "natural outgrowth of our good neighbor policy in our relations with the other American Republics. Happily for democracy, the Americas stand forth today as a notable example of international solidarity in a world in which freedom and human liberty are threatened with extinction."[204]

The United States' prestige as the hemisphere's legitimate defender also blunted Germany's efforts to ingratiate itself throughout Latin America, where many states had large German diasporas.[205] Latin American diplomats rebuffed Nazi overtures from 1939 to 1941 by expressing their "full support of hemisphere solidarity under the leadership of the United States," which served as "a voluntary defender of the weak regardless of what the costs may be."[206] US Assistant Secretary of State Samuel Breckinridge Long went to far as to claim that the Latin Americans assumed "United States invincibility" and would not accept any "challenges to our authority in our own yard…"[207] This remarkable transformation owed, in part, to the fact that FDR's

rhetorical construction of the world as a global neighborhood did

[200] Adler 1965, 116; Dozer 1961, 53; Gellman 1979, 75.
[201] Pike 1995, 246; Gellman 1979, 133.
[202] Pike 1995, 248-9; Gellman 1979, 100; Manross 1945, 2–10.
[203] Dozer 1961, 67-8.
[204] Quoted in Gellman 1979, 113
[205] See Adler 1965, 113-5; Langley 1980, 165; Gellman 1979, 78, 85; Haines 1977, 376. For an overview of the cooperation sought by Washington, see Duggan [1940] 1961, 15–17. Reporting that more than 4,000 Germans were deported from Latin America to be interned in US detention centers during WWII, see Friedman 2003a.
[206] Dozer 1961, 99, 103; Friedman 2003, chaps. 1-2.
[207] Quoted in Gellman 1979, 135.

> political and persuasive work for him, for it authorized the assumption of a nationalized American ideological hegemony at home and overseas, and provided a framework through which his leadership and that of his nation could appear benign—especially when compared to the militaristic and imperial alternatives offered by other nations.[208]

The new dynamic was perhaps captured best by a quote attributed to Anastasio Somoza after he had engineered his elevation to Nicaraguan President: "I am 100 per cent for the Monroe Doctrine—America for the Americans. Any time the United States disappears as a free and powerful country our fate will be to become a colony of a European or Asiatic nation."[209]

Ultimately, all nine states in Central America and the Caribbean joined the United States in declaring war against the Axis powers, while Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico severed ties with them. There is no doubt that the Good Neighbor Policy affected this outcome. "If dollar diplomacy or the Big Stick or any of the formulas which have graphic expression to the imperialistic policy had been in force when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor," *El Tiempo* of Bogotá opined, "certainly the United States could not have counted upon the enthusiastic adherence of these republics."[210] Deference to the United States was not universal; Latin American nations did not behave as a monolith. "Argentina, and to a lesser extent Brazil, consistently resisted a United States-dominated hemisphere," and Chile (but not Brazil) joined Argentina in refusing to break relations with Germany.[211] Yet defiance was now the exception where once it had been the rule; during WWI, only 8 American states, mostly US protectorates, had budged from neutrality. The US perception—articulated by Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Adolf Berle—was that the "heartening thing in [the advent of war] is the swift and virtually unanimous support from all the republics in this hemisphere. If ever a policy paid dividends, the Good Neighbor policy has. So far, they are sticking to us with scarcely a break and you will have a united hemisphere…"[212]

[208] Stuckey 2013, 133.
[209] Dozer 1961, 70.
[210] Quoted in Dozer 1961, 113.
[211] Rhodes 2001, 125. On US-Argentine diplomatic conflict during WWII, see Woods 2021. On the US "triumph of persuasion" vis-à-vis Brazil, see Valim 2019.
[212] Berle and Jacobs 1973, 384; Adler 1965, 124.

"First the Hemisphere, then the World"

One possible inference from the connection between the Good Neighbor Policy and US-led Pan-Americanism is that material concerns about economics and especially security, rather than the desire for prestige, motivated Washington's decade of restraint. Even if good neighborliness constituted a prestige policy, Washington may have sought prestige as merely a proximate goal for securing short-term material concessions.[213] This interpretation fails to consider the resonance between the Good Neighbor Policy and the Roosevelt Administration's broader foreign policy—what one author describes as "first the hemisphere, then the world."[214] As Assistant Secretary Berle put it in May 1939, "[t]he Latin American policy is really the foundation of pretty much everything we are doing."[215] The Good Neighbor Policy, as an integral component of US-led Pan-Americanism, sought to signal the exemplarity of US "democratic forms" and "restraint" not only within the hemisphere, but to Europe as well.[216]

> If the United States could demonstrate that within its own hemisphere it could forge an international system less exploitative and less given to producing the sort of friction that brought on wars, then the Old World might begin to attend to the New World; then its leaders might emulate American ways and reconcile themselves to the destiny of surrendering the mantle of international leadership… Even from the inception of the Good Neighbor Policy, something far more compelling than mere national economic self-interest drove Roosevelt in his approach to Latin America. So far as he was concerned, hemispheric policy above all else provided the means, the springboard, whereby the United States ultimately could assume a role of paramount significance among those countries that truly interested him: the countries of the Old World, both Atlantic and Pacific.[217]

[213] For example, see Adler 1965, 112.
[214] Pike 1995, 219.
[215] Quoted in Gellman 1979, 81.
[216] Stuckey 2013, 124. FDR's rhetoric distinguishing the United States on the basis of its restraint was applied to allies and adversaries alike: he "stak[ed] the American claim for global leadership… [on] opposing it to the British colonial model" just as he made clear that "the United States under his leadership, offered partnership. The Germans offered domination." Ibid., 174-5. See also Costigliola 1984.
[217] Pike 1995, 217.

As early as the Buenos Aires Conference in 1936, Roosevelt had seen Europe as an equal audience alongside Latin America for US conspicuous restraint and the kind of hemispheric order this enabled.[218] The rhetoric and practices of good neighborliness helped to secure domestic and international support for FDR's vision of a "democratized world dominated by the United States" and of US "moral leadership" in the post-war era.[219] The Good Neighbor Policy was fundamentally a prestige-seeking policy in both the short and longer terms.

CONCLUSION: PERFORMATIVE RESTRAINT ON THE PAN-AMERICAN STAGE

Hans Morgenthau identified the Good Neighbor Policy as one of the "classic examples" of a state conducting foreign policy on the basis of its "reputation for unchallengeable power and… for self-restraint in using it."[220] Morgenthau held that the neighborly restraint of the 1930s was made possible by the United States' pre-existing prestige, derived from displays of power over the preceding decades. In contrast, this chapter initially noted that, by 1932, the United States' reputation for military might had apparently failed to secure the desired degree of deference in Latin America, especially from the larger republics such as Mexico and Argentina. In order to further enhance US prestige, the Roosevelt Administration sought to proactively demonstrate the United States' capacity for, and commitment to, restraint that was both volitional and supererogatory. The Good Neighbor Policy evolved to encompass symbolic commitments to non-intervention at Montevideo and Buenos Aires, as well as meaningful limitations on US political interference in the region. These policies were seen at the time as a great success—by Roosevelt, Hull, and other key Administration officials, as well as by bipartisan commentators and the wider US public. As a Bolivian editorial put it in 1943, the preceding decade seemed to have effected the "complete reversal of the sentiments of the [Latin] American peoples who today look on the United States as a senior comrade, strong and just."[221]

While this chapter has mostly focused on the motives and perceptions of US policymakers, Latin American elites played an important role in the Good Neighbor Policy, encouraging US restraint through the conferral of praise and prestige.

[218] Gellman 1979, 64-65; Ninkovich 2001, 226-7.
[219] Stuckey 2013, 169, 197.
[220] Morgenthau 1949, 56–7.
[221] Wood 1961, 322; see also Munro 1974, 382-3.

There are certainly examples of unsubtle manipulation, such as the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo's "use of symbols designed to make U.S. officials feel a certain affinity with him. To disarm his critics, Trujillo deliberately invoked the language of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy..., dubbed his agricultural policy the Dominican New Deal, and nominated Roosevelt for the Novel Peace Prize."[222] As discussed above, Mexico's President Cárdenas undertook a similar strategy of invoking good neighborliness to box-in Washington during the expropriation crisis.[223] Friedman and Long posit "soft balancing" on the part of Latin American states, which attempted to "convinc[e] U.S. foreign policy makers that it serve[d] the United States' long term interest" to exercise restraint, including by demonstrating that the "costs of military intervention [were] rising."[224] According to this interpretation, "Roosevelt's decision to commit the United States formally to a policy of non-intervention in Latin America was not an act of *noblesse oblige* but the culmination of several decades of diplomatic and legal activism in multinational forums by Latin American countries..."[225] There is no doubt that Latin American intellectuals and diplomats contributed to developing the discourses of non-intervention and non-interference that the United States was able to dramatically deploy. Yet there is also significant evidence that US policymakers proactively sought to enhance their prestige by exceeding expectations of their restraint, in keeping with the theory of "holding back to rise above" (see Table 3.1).

The strongest contending explanations in this case derive from the logic of material consequences. There is evidence to support the mechanism of "holding back to hunker down," since US policymakers backed away from interventionism after determining that it delivered questionable material benefits at a serious material cost.[226] On one hand, the Coolidge, Harding, and Hoover Administrations benefitted from the United States "overwhelming sense of security" in the 1920s.[227] Washington's primary concern had long been keeping Latin America free of competing, extra-hemispheric, powers; the threat of external intervention was

[222] Friedman 2003b, 631–2; Roorda 1998.
[223] Britton 2006, 35; Dwyer 2002.
[224] Friedman and Long 2015, 154.
[225] Ibid., 135.
[226] A related argument is that cost-benefit calculus shaped the US strategy of "informal" imperialism, in which the US was "not concerned with territorial control." Scarfi 2016, 192.
[227] Braeman 1982, 358. See also Buell 1931, 132; Wood 1961, 3.

TABLE 3.1. Summary of Evidence of US Performative Non-Intervention, 1933 – 1940.

1.	**Framing**: *voluntary? principled*?	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** US leaders' public statements and formal diplomatic declarations repeatedly included these rhetorical elements.
2.	**Underlying capability:** *demonstrated? claimed by actor? accepted or assumed by audience?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** US capacity for military intervention was repeatedly demonstrated and explicitly recognized by US leaders and Latin American elites, who constituted the main audience.
3.	**Prestige motive:** *referenced by actor? attributed by other analysts?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** Clear evidence that US leaders justified policies in terms of prestige; somewhat mixed evidence about whether they viewed corresponding assertive policies as materially beneficial.
4.	**Keeping the option open:** *do leaders resist commitments that undermine voluntary nature of restraint*?	**Mixed support for "holding back to rise above."** After initially reserving rights to intervene on behalf of US lives and property at Montevideo, US later committed to non-intervention without reservations. This commitment was likely not seen as undermining the voluntariness of US restraint, given the predominance of its power. Other forms of political non-interference remained supererogatory,
5.	**Reference others' lack of restraint**: *do leaders respond by doubling down on restraint? frame it in relative terms?*	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** Extending restraint into non-interference and creation of Pan-American order was motivated by positional considerations vis-à-vis European powers, especially Germany.
6.	**Investment in presentation**: *do states toe the line? cry foul?*	**Limited relevant evidence.** Little evidence that audience members' doubted voluntariness of US restraint, though some doubted US sincerity. Little evidence that the US needed to respond by toeing the line or crying foul.
7.	**Sensitivity to social costs**: *do leaders react to perceived disrespect or humiliation?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** Humiliation in Nicaragua ensures that US leaders do not see interventionism as a viable path to military or moral prestige, accelerating re-orientation to restraint.
8.	**Material consequences:** *do leaders adjust to changing material cost-benefit calculus?*	**Some support for "holding back to hunker down."** There is some evidence that initial US restraint, e.g., liquidating interventions in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, were due to considerations of mounting material costs vs. diminishing benefits. This does not account for subsequent performances of restraint
9.	**Social appropriateness:** *do leaders rule out alternative policies?*	**Minimal support.** No evidence that policymakers viewed restraint as a categorical moral imperative. In fact, they needed to be persuaded that restraint paid social dividends (e.g., after Cuba crisis in 1933) to embrace the policy. ("Holding back to blend in" may account for pre-1932 limits on US interventionism but cannot account for subsequent efforts to exceed baseline expectations of U.S. obligations).
10.	**Parochial interests:** *does restraint have narrow partisan support?*	**Minimal support.** The primary foreign policy elites remained in place throughout the case. The Good Neighbor Policy built upon Republican Administration's policies of restraint and earned bipartisan support. Organizationally, a small coterie of advisors at the State Department organized the policy and when other parts of the government became involved, they were frequently even *more* pro-restraint than Secretary Hull (e.g., Treasury Secretary Morgenthau in the Mexico oil crisis).

greatly diminished in the aftermath of World War I. And "[w]hile favoring the expansion of overseas trade and investment, American officials were not willing to incur excessive costs and risk in their pursuit."[228] On the other hand, the costs of interventionism mounted, threatening—in the words of Hoover's Secretary of State Henry Stimson—"our good name, our credit, and our trade."[229] As a contemporary commentator hoped, "the good will which the United States will gain in Latin America from this policy of nonintervention will have a much greater ethical *and commercial* value to us than would any policy of protection by armed force."[230] In short, the Good Neighbor Policy may have represented, not a change in priorities from security and economic interests to prestige, but merely a change in tactics for securing those material interests.[231]

Note that even in this explanation, prestige remains the *proximate* goal of the Good Neighbor Policy because it permitted Washington to secure through persuasion what it had previously sought to secure through coercion.[232] Moreover, several key aspects of the case cannot be explained through material cost-benefit calculus. FDR's predecessors had sought to minimize the costs of US foreign policy by liquidating ongoing interventions. But the Roosevelt Administration recognized another category of costs, namely, the social costs of Latin American opprobrium and distrust, which could only be addressed through a more thorough transformation of US policy.[233] Adopting the discourses of non-intervention and non-interference, the Administration explicitly presented its various policies—from military withdrawals to diplomatic commitments to symbolic, self-deprecating, diplomacy—as a coherent performance.[234] Finally, at least for FDR personally, the goal of the Good Neighbor Policy was not only to safeguard US national security: he sought to reaffirm US moral prestige and forge a regional order to validate his vision of the United States leading a liberal world order.

Other explanatory logics find less support in the case. There is some evidence of "holding back to blend in," insofar as the initial impetus for abandoning

[228] Ibid.
[229] Quoted in Dozer 1961, 12. See also Tyrell and Sexton 2015, 102; Meiser 2015, 239; Munro 1969, 1; Beisner 1968, ix.
[230] Buell 1931, 126, emphasis added.
[231] Long 2015, 4; Wood 1962 (discusing 'external restraints' on the policy).
[232] Pike 1995, 137. See also Green 1971; Langley 1980, 137; Smith 2000b, 64.
[233] Cf. Stuart 1939, 170.
[234] Long 2015, 5-6.

overt interventionism derived from its social costs in terms of opprobrium, distrust, and disrespect of the United States in Latin America. But the relevance of this mechanism diminished with time, as Washington clearly sought to leverage its restraint into hemispheric *leadership*. This shift from avoiding opprobrium to pursuing prestige was complete by 1936, when FDR called for the Buenos Aires conference at which he proactively committed the United States to a policy of non-intervention without reservations. Additionally, while FDR, Hull, Welles, and Daniels played crucial roles in the case, the re-orientation toward restraint commanded broad and bipartisan support, as the continuities between FDR and Hoover demonstrate. "Holding back to guard turf" appears to have mattered only at the margins. Given the continuity that marked US domestic politics during this period, "holding back to earn credit" came into play only insofar as FDR linked his personal standing to his success elevating US prestige in Latin America.

Finally, the case notably does *not* display the "holding back out of habit" dynamic. The Good Neighbor Policy unfolded strategically, in response to policymakers' conscious pursuit of prestige and against the backdrop of Washington's repeated assertions of national power in the Americas. The primary record reflects that policymakers discarded interventionism as counterproductive, rather than ruling it out as inherently inappropriate, let alone unthinkable. Perhaps the clearest evidence that Washington did not internalize a norm of non-intervention in the hemisphere was the reversion to interventionism as early as 1954, when Washington supported a coup to overthrow Guatemala's leftist president, Jacobo Árbenz.[235]

The Good Neighbor Policy did not endure past the United States' ascent to leader of the free world.[236] While outside the scope of the chapter, this further suggests that the success of restraint did not solely hinge on its correspondence to US power but also depended upon its performance as suitably volitional and supererogatory. Undermining the volitional aspect, the Cold War (re)introduced the specter of foreign (i.e., Soviet) involvement in the hemisphere and led to a sense of that US hegemony was vulnerable. And undermining the supererogatory aspect, Washington continued to champion liberal norms—both regionally and globally—

[235] Gellman 1979, 181-7, 227. Describing the effect of this policy, the *New York Times* declared that "U.S. Prestige Ebbs in Latin America." Brewer 1954.
[236] On the factors leading Washington to abandon non-intervention, see Wood 1985.

that framed non-intervention as an obligation. The wartime institutionalization of hemispheric harmony[237] may have eroded, rather than enhanced, the chief rationale for US performative restraint—an irony with important implications discussed in the conclusion.

[237] Holden and Zolov 2000, 173–89. Cf. the relationship between institution-building and restraint in Ikenberry 2001.

CHAPTER 4

PRESTIGE AND NON-INTERVENTION (II): GERMANY'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE IRAQ WARS, 1991—2005

The reunification of West and East Germany in 1990 naturally raised questions about the future of the Federal Republic's foreign policy.[1] For some scholars, the lifting of Cold War constraints offered "new opportunities for German influence and self-assertion" in Europe.[2] The "normalization thesis" held that Germany might revert back to patterns of conflict with historical rivals like France; pursue militarism, rearmament, and perhaps nuclear proliferation; abandon its support of European integration; and reinject "power politics" into the region.[3] Yet many other observers expected that the "modesty, moderation, self-limitation, [and] 'culture of restraint'" that had characterized West German foreign policy during the Cold War would endure.[4] After incorporating the East into the Federal Republic, Germany would "continue to limit its ambitions despite its relative power advantage" and maintain the "voluntary self-limiting of [its] power within multilateral frameworks."[5]

This chapter highlights the pursuit of prestige as a central aspect of Germany's evolving foreign policy in the decade and a half after reunification.[6] During the Cold War, West Germany had shunned, in Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's words, all forms of "excessive nationalism."[7] Internationally, its

[1] For an overview, see Ash 1994; Berger 1998; Webber 2001; Peters 2001; Baumann and Hellmann 2014.
[2] Duffield 1998, 45. For the predictions of IR realists along these lines, see Mearsheimer 2018; Layne 1993; Waltz 1993; Baumann, Rittberger, and Wagner 2001.
[3] Banchoff 1996, 38; Rittberger 2001, 1–10; Maull 2006.
[4] Wittlinger 2010, 116; Katzenstein 1997, 2, 9, 73; Malici 2006.
[5] Sperling 2003, 15–9. See also Bulmer and Paterson 1996; Hyde-Price 2001; Harnisch and Maull 2001; Longhurst 2004; Wittlinger 2010, 130.
[6] Note that the word 'prestige' (Machtsprestige) was rarely used by German leaders because of its historical connotations. For instance, though "Chancellor [Gerhard] Schröder… did not shy away from referring to Germany as an important power, a Grosse Macht ('big power') but he avoided the word Grossmacht ('great power'), a word laden with past history…Germans themselves speak of being more selbstbewusst, a term that is difficult to translate, but implies an assertive self-confidence based on self-awareness…" Gül 2007, 146.
[7] Quoted in Banchoff 1996, 42.

leaders had displayed a "leadership avoidance reflex."[8] Thus, it seemed, "Germans had redefined their foreign policy interests from being an expansion of national power and prestige to being one of promoting Western values…"[9] However, this interpretation mistakes means and ends. West Germany had not renounced prestige as a goal in general, merely certain saber-rattling strategies for seeking it.[10] Broadcasting a "culture of restraint" itself carved out a distinctive status niche. Pursuing a "policy of the good example" and "policy of responsibility" bolstered West German standing within the Atlantic Alliance and more broadly.[11]

After reunification, Germany confronted social pressure to become, as President George H. W. Bush put it, a "partner in leadership," responsible for upholding world order with force if necessary.[12] As allies' shifting demands highlighted Germany's lack of capabilities, Berlin's "restraint" appeared to express impotence rather than principle: it was perceived to *diminish* German prestige. The desire to preserve their prestige and alliance standing thus motivated German leaders to effect a major shift in foreign policy during the mid-1990s, sending troops for international interventions, even those involving offensive combat operations, in the context of multilateral initiatives and in service of humanitarian norms.[13] This shift did not herald the "normalization" of foreign policy and the end of Germany's distinct culture of restraint, but rather represented an effort to render that culture compatible with leaders' growing concern for prestige. Once Germany had demonstrated the capacity and responsibility for humanitarian intervention, this set the stage for Berlin to subsequently perform restraint that would appear volitional and supererogatory, credibly expressing moral exceptionalism. By the early twentieth century, Berlin was positioned to seek prestige not by sending military forces abroad, but from pointedly refraining from doing so.

This chapter focuses on Germany's performance of restraint in the face of

[8] Paterson 2008, 99; Pond 1996, 36; Katzenstein 1997, 2; Duffield 1998, 3–5; Rudolf 2005, 141–2; Haftendorn 2006, 402.
[9] Erb 2003, 72.
[10] Thomas Schelling notably made this point with respect to nuclear weapons. Germany was "the only country that could take away the status of wielding the scepter of power from the atomic weapons by voluntarily renouncing them." Schelling 1966, 471. Making the same point more generally, Rudolf 2005, 137; Haftendorn 2006, 400–4; Wittlinger 2010, 117; Hacke 2015, 88–90.
[11] Baumann and Hellmann 2014, 69.
[12] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 430. President Clinton repeated a similar call in 1994, per Bulmer and Paterson 1996, 17.
[13] Hellmann 1996; Duffield 1999, 767; Webber 2001, 5; Erb 2003; Malici 2006, 38; Schmitt 2012.

intense pressure from the United States, the world's sole superpower and its most important Cold War ally, to participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Over several months in late 2002 and early 2003, the Bush Administration aggressively lobbied U.S. allies to join a "Coalition of the Willing" for a war of regime change in Iraq.[14] Nearly 40 countries offered material or symbolic support for the campaign against Saddam Hussein, including most major U.S. allies such as Britain, Japan, and South Korea. Germany was the first state to declare a policy of absolute non-participation in a war against Iraq—regardless, even, of a potential UN Security Council authorization.[15] The government of Chancellor Gerhardt Schröder sharply criticized the Bush Administration's logic of preemptive, unilateral, warfare in principled terms, and attempted to form a global counter-coalition against the United States with France and Russia. Schröder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer invoked Germany's participation in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations during the previous decade to assert that Berlin no longer had to prove its capabilities. German leaders believed that principled restraint would broadcast a "German Way" of foreign policy that defended diplomacy and the rule of law against American unilateralism, which amounted to a major challenge to the liberal international order.[16]

Berlin's non-intervention in Iraq—which is also often framed as "non-participation" in the U.S.-led intervention—has been recognized as the moment that "Germany said 'no'" to its Cold War patron, establishing its independence and autonomy from Washington.[17] Such conspicuous defiance of the United States was interpreted as a "Great Power gesture"[18] that elevated Germany's diplomatic standing at the "center of the anti-war bloc."[19] The logic of "holding back to rise above" explains the central dynamic of this case, namely, that it was through *restraint* that the Federal Republic sought to cast off "self-limitation, modesty, and deference" and show "considerable assertiveness."[20] In theory—and as minds German leaders evidently believed—the "ability to resist another actor's exertions...

[14] King 2002.
[15] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2005, 339, 351.
[16] Brunnée and Toope 2010, chap. 6.
[17] Dettke 2009.
[18] Maull 2006, 145.
[19] Anderson, Bennis, and Cavanaugh 2003, 2.
[20] Wittlinger and Larose 2007, 485.

demonstrate[d] relational power."[21] In practice, however, it is more difficult to gauge the success of this bid for prestige. After the dramatic pre-invasion moment had passed, and as the social costs of their performance became increasingly clear, German leaders shied away from their confrontational stance vis-à-vis the United States and sought to repair the relationship.

This chapter explains how and why Germany pursued prestige through performative non-participation in the US Coalition of the Willing. It proceeds in six sections. First, I analyze the crucial debate about deploying the German military, the Bundeswehr, for "out-of-area" interventions in the 1990s, which centered on reconciling the "culture of restraint" with Germany's alliance standing. Second, I show how Germany's increased sense of self-confidence in security policy after a string of out-of-area deployments set the stage for the Schröder government to perform restraint vis-à-vis the United States. Third, I elaborate the specific rhetoric and policies that comprised Germany's performance of non-intervention during the lead-up to war in 2002 and 2003. In the fourth and fifth sections, I discuss how the prestige motive accounts for this performance better than other explanatory logics rooted in material consequentialism, social appropriateness, or domestic politics. The final section concludes.

PRESTIGE AND INTERVENTION AFTER REUNIFCATION

In the Cold War context, a commitment to multilateralism and opposition to the use of force were reinforcing pillars of German security policy. As a condition for securing full sovereignty from the Allies, West Germany "consent[ed] to such limitations on its sovereign powers as will bring about and secure a peaceful and lasting order in Europe."[22] These included quantitative and qualitative limitations on the Bundeswehr and an agreement to ensconce German forces within NATO. The Basic Law, the West German constitution, explicitly prohibited the use of force outside of the bounds of multilateral commitments;[23] the Bundeswehr served as a "treaty army," with a purely defensive purpose within the NATO framework.[24] Even

[21] Long 2015, 14.
[22] Legro 2005, 99, citing Art.24(2) of the Basic Law. Art.26(1) declares that "[a]cts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for a war of aggression, shall be unconstitutional."
[23] For example, the Federal Republic foreswore nuclear weapons at its advent in 1949 and was without a military of any kind until the establishment of the Bundeswehr in 1955.
[24] Otte and Greve 2000, 89. German troops were stationed on German territory, which would

as West Germany became the largest economy in Europe, it remained dependent upon its NATO allies, chiefly the United States, for nuclear deterrence and security. [25] Self-restraint was seen as necessary to avoid another German *Sonderweg*—"separate path" or "special path"—referring to the nineteenth-century rejection of liberalism and embrace of militarism that had culminated in two disastrous world wars. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who guided reunification, pledged continuity with the Bonn Republic's role as a "civilian power."[26]

The expansion of Cold War-era security alliances' role to encompass a broader range of humanitarian and "peace enforcement" operations during the 1990s brought these tenets of German foreign policy—multilateralism and the non-use of force—into conflict.[27] In 1987, the United States requested that the Federal Republic send troops to the Persian Gulf.[28] Chancellor Kohl declined. But pressure mounted a few years later during the First Gulf War. Kohl cited the Basic Law limitation on sending German forces abroad in again declining to contribute combat troops for the US-led campaign. However, he did send 18 fighter jets and 200 troops to Turkey, a NATO ally that faced potential retaliation from Iraq. Most importantly, Germany contributed 18 billion deutschmarks, one third of its defense budget for 1991, to directly fund the US war effort. Considered in historical context, these contributions were extensive. The deployment of troops to Turkey was the first time German troops had been deployed outside of Europe since 1945.[29]

Germany's allies, however, saw things differently. "In Washington, the German refusal to lend political support to Desert Storm and 'take on responsibilities for leadership' was seen as a lack of solidarity and unappreciative of [US] support in the unification process…" This reaction suggested that "opposing

be on the front line of any conflict between NATO and the Soviet bloc. Any hints of departure from this policy were typically transparent attempts to secure even greater commitments of U.S. troops to German defense. Gerzhoy 2015 provides an example in the context of proliferation.

[25] See Hanrieder 1989, 4–19; Duffield 1998, 40; Baumann, Rittberger, and Wagner 2001.

[26] Harnisch 2001, 35; Harnisch and Maull 2001. As political conditions of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, which paved the way for reunification, Germany agreed to maintain limitations on its standing army, the renunciation of nuclear weapons, and a constitutional ban on war except in cases of self-defense. See Hanrieder 1989, 4–19.

[27] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 39.

[28] The United States had previously requested West Germany to contribute troops during the conflict in Vietnam, but Bonn had refused.

[29] For one author, this already represented the "most profound change" in German foreign policy around reunification. Hacke 2015, 91.

the Gulf War was turning Germany into an unreliable ally and was leading it into isolation and (back) on an ill-fated special path."[30] Rather than principled restraint, the decision not to participate in the Gulf War was seen as a dangerous kind of "risk avoidance;" Germany's "abstention" was reframed as "abdicating responsibility" and tied to "free riding," and its substantial financial contribution, derided as "chequebook diplomacy."[31] "Germany's defection from the Gulf War coalition limited its voice in the negotiations and prompted complaints about unilateral decision making, nationalization of NATO, and Germany's downgrade to a second-class member."[32]

Germany's lack of basic capabilities to participate in multilateral operations outside of Europe belied a principled basis for its non-participation.[33] Even the very limited actions in 1991 revealed the lack of airlift capabilities. Germany was reduced to leasing commercial Ukrainian airliners to transport troops to Turkey and had to lease other equipment from allies. This fueled widespread interoperability concerns and discussions within NATO about the "adequacy" of Germany as a defense partner.[34] The subsequent development of a "[global crisis] management role for NATO… highlighted the mismatch between Germany's commitment in principle to NATO missions and the political and material obstacles in the way of its playing a role of any substance."[35] For members of the center-right government, these developments reinforced their anxiety about "Germany's place in the world."[36] In the eyes of Chancellor Kohl, the "virtues" of German foreign policy were "predictability," "reliability," and "solidarity;" to shirk greater responsibility in world affairs would be to "undermine the country's credibility."[37] Defense Minister Volker Rühe concurred that given the "new reality where 'war . . . has returned as an instrument of politics,' Iraq had cast 'a bright light on the need to redefine united Germany's international role' to reconfirm its status as a reliable Western ally."[38] Rühe believed that "only those who act have international

[30] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 431.
[31] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 46, 50; Wittlinger 2010, 118.
[32] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 434.
[33] Duffield 1999; Bulmer and Paterson 2010; Baumann and Hellmann 2014; Dettke 2018.
[34] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 122–3, 131.
[35] Miskimmon 2009, 570.
[36] Larres 2003; Otte and Greve 2000.
[37] Duffield 1998, 66.
[38] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 432.

influence."[39] As Rühe's Chief of Staff bitterly remarked: "The Belgians sent a ship and they had more influence than us."[40]

Nor were these dynamics unique to the Gulf War. Also in 1991, Kohl's government unilaterally recognized the governments of Croatia and Slovenia, preempting ongoing European diplomacy on how to handle the disintegration of Yugoslavia. While widely interpreted within Germany as an assertion of foreign policy independence and autonomy,[41] it quickly became apparently that "the first time since the end of the Second World War that Germany openly defied both the United States and its West European partners" was in reality an "ill-conceived and clumsy policy" and "more a sign of helplessness than assertiveness."[42] Germany lacked the capabilities to make its recognition of Croatia and Slovenia meaningful by protecting their sovereignty against Serbian aggression. For this, Berlin relied upon France and the UK, who put troops on the ground as part of the UN-backed protection force. Germany's Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, admitted that Germany was "powerless, impotent" in the face of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, which revealed that the "traditional instruments of our peace policy are insufficient."[43]

The "Out-of-Area" Debate

After these debacles, the government resolved that "there would be no [other] episode in which Germany would stand aside... Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher therefore declared before the UN general assembly in September 1991 that Germany was ready to assume larger international responsibilities."[44] Kohl and his allies were at pains to paint increased military capabilities as not only compatible with, but necessary for, a "responsible" foreign policy. This required constructing a new meaning of responsibility. The term "was now used to indicate that responsible German foreign policy would be in contrast to the old Federal Republic's alleged privilege of standing by and leaving dangerous missions to its

[39] Rathbun 2004, 87.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Kohl's coalition originally considered it a "resounding success for German foreign policy." Crawford 1996, 513.
[42] Rudolf 2005, 135; Karp 2005, 63.
[43] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 54.
[44] Otte and Greve 2000, 94.

allies."[45]

In the face of strong opposition from the political left—including the main opposition Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and especially the traditionally pacifist Greens—Kohl staked significant political capital in the "out-of-area" debate, casting safeguarding Germany's "standing within NATO" and "emphasiz[ing] German influence" as the main goals.[46] The Chancellor declared a program of investment in Germany's military capabilities and the development of sufficient "capacity to act."[47] This program comprised three elements. The first was investment in Germany's military capabilities. The second was an effort to secure a ruling from the Federal Republic's High Court that the Basic Law allowed for the deployment of Bundeswehr troops out-of-area. And the third was a series of foreign policy motives, derided as "salami tactics" by opponents, that "cut away" at Germany's tradition of anti-militarism by participating in increasingly robust ways in international peacekeeping operations.[48] Early steps in this direction were small and relatively uncontroversial, including sending Bundeswehr troops on a UN peacekeeping mission to Cambodia in 1992, and sending logistics troops to the UN mission in Somalia (UNOSOM) the same year.

Other missions proved highly contentious, especially those in the former Yugoslavia. Under the "Kohl Doctrine," the Chancellor pledged not to send combat troops to areas, such as the Balkans, where the Wehrmacht had operated during WWII. Yet Kohl proposed providing non-combat support for the operations against Serbia, which provoked heated domestic opposition. The SPD sued the government in 1992 over its participation in the "Sharp Guard" embargo of the former Yugoslavia by NATO and the Western European Union (WEU). However, the High Court ruled that this was consistent with the Basic Law.[49] Then, in 1993, the Kohl government participated in "Deny Flight," the NATO operation to enforce a UN authorized no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SPD again brought a legal challenge, this time joined by the liberal Free Democratic Party, which was part of

[45] Baumann and Hellmann 2014, 69.
[46] Ibid., 29, 40. See also Brummer and Oppermann 2019; Harnisch 2004; Bulmer and Paterson 1996, 15.
[47] Rathbun 2004, 87; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 55 fn. 35, citing 'allied criticism' as main motive for Chancellor Kohl's support of increased defense expenditures.
[48] Rathbun 2004, 90–2; Baumann and Hellmann 2014, 67.
[49] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 56.

the coalition government.[50] In its resulting landmark ruling, issued in 1994, the High Court held that out-of-area operations were acceptable under the Basic Law, citing the imperative to meet the "expectations of partners."[51] The Court did place important limitations on the Bundeswehr's out-of-area activities, however. Military deployments could only be undertaken in the context of a multilateral effort and required authorization by a majority in the Bundestag.

On the heels for this ruling, Kohl sought to use the 1994 federal elections as a referendum on participation in out-of-area operations. After his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was returned to government, Kohl proceeded with investments in German capabilities and sent additional German troops to Somalia for the UNOSOM II operation. The government was also increasingly forthright about its motives. Defense Minister Rühe "stressed that to remain credible within the alliance an enhanced readiness to partake in collective actions to preserve peace... This, he said, would require a reorientation of the Bundeswehr to include also verfügbar (rapid reaction) forces..." [52] Further clarifying that "alliance credibility" was isomorphic with "alliance standing" and indeed with concern for international status more broadly, the Kohl government linked its participation in UNOSOM II to its application for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.[53] Put simply, "the government appeared to be using the Bundeswehr to increase [Germany's] international influence."[54]

In 1995, the Dayton Accords for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina established the Implementation Force (IFOR) to be carried out by NATO, the first time NATO would deploy out-of-area. The German government proposed to deploy German troops to Bosnia, disregarding the Kohl Doctrine.[55] Moreover, NATO troops would be allowed to use force beyond self-defense; even though German troops would not participate in a combat role, this was the first time that they had been deployed out-of-area as part of a peace *enforcement* operation, rather than for peace keeping or humanitarian purposes.[56] Over some opposition in the

[50] FDP members of the Bundestag had voted in favor of authorizing the operation but also sued to force a decision from the High Court, which was rendered in 1994.
[51] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 57, 61; Mattox 2015, 92.
[52] Longhurst 2004, 101–3.
[53] Overhaus 2005, 36.
[54] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 61.
[55] Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016.
[56] Lefebvre and Lombardi 1996.

Bundestag, Kohl secured authorization for a contingent of 4,000 German troops to participate in IFOR.[57] Germany's contributions to NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR), which succeeded IFOR in its mission of monitoring peace in the Balkans, was even more meaningful. In total, between 1997 and 2001, Germany contributed 17,510 troops to SFOR, the fourth largest contribution behind the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.[58] "If the number and geographical scope of troop deployments beyond a nation's borders is accepted as an adequate measure in this context, then German security and defense policy has begun to display more 'self-confidence.'"[59]

The Rise of Red-Green Foreign Policy

In 1998, the SPD and the Greens together won a majority of votes in the Bundestag. The "Red-Green" coalition government took power in October with the SPD's Gerhard Schröder as Chancellor and the Green's Joschka Fischer as Foreign Minister, and immediately confronted a foreign policy crisis of impending ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. After the elections but before taking office, the Red-Green coalition voted overwhelmingly in favor of NATO's mission in Kosovo (KFOR), which notably lacked UNSC authorization.[60] While the left had won the election, the center-right had won the foreign policy debate.[61] Red-Green ministers accepted that if Germany wanted "credibility in putting forward ideas for the future of the Balkans," its "reputation would be enhanced" by playing a "leading role in the KFOR."[62] In 1999, Germany launched air strikes against Serbian forces as part of NATO's Kosovo mission, its first direct military engagement since 1945.

In government, the Red-Green coalition carried out far-reaching reforms to make the Bundeswehr capable of deploying overseas. The SPD Defense Minister, Rudolf Scharping, proposed to more than double the Bundeswehr's operational forces and increase the overall defense budget by up to a third, with a focus on enhancing air and sea transport capabilities.[63] These proposed reforms were well received by Germany's allies, and while only a fraction of the proposed investments

[57] Zyla 2016a, 423.
[58] Zyla 2016b, 311.
[59] Overhaus 2005, 33; Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016.
[60] Hansel and Oppermann 2013; Rathbun 2004, 83.
[61] Hyde-Price 2001; Maull 2000; Hoffmann and Longhurst 1999, 154–5.
[62] Miskimmon 2009, 566; see also Rudolf 2005, 141.
[63] Longhurst 2004, 110.

materialized, "German soldiers…found their esteem growing among their NATO peers."[64] By the end of the 1990s, German military spending ranked fourth globally, behind only the United States, Japan, and France, but ahead of the United Kingdom and Russia.[65] The budget for peacekeeping exploded from €131 million in 1995 to more than €1.5 billion in 2002.[66]

Two factors fueled increased support for a military intervention capability on the traditionally anti-interventionist German left. The first was a growing realization that absolute pacificism could conflict with humanitarianism. The massacre of Bosniak Muslims by Bosnian Serb forces at Srebrenica in July 1995 provoked widespread horror in Germany that the international community had failed to prevent the massacre. This shock was particularly formative for the left.[67] Up until this point, for the SPD and the Greens "[a]ny consideration of concrete military intervention" had raised an "association with offensive, chauvinistic, great power politics."[68] After Srebrenica, Joscha Fischer, long a leader on foreign policy issues for the Greens, declared that "nonviolence is not an end in itself." Fischer and other centrist Greens criticized non-interventionists in their ranks for adopting a "mentality of exceptionalism" that exempted Germany from the obligations of upholding the peace that they professed to value.[69] As Fischer put it, "I'm convinced that what we've done as the German government has been right from the start … Germany couldn't have acted any other way. [From history] I haven't only learned 'no more war' … I've also learned 'no more Auschwitz.'"[70] This reframing of the lessons of history paved the way for "broad acceptance of Germany's international responsibility for crisis management among majority opinion in the Bundestag," and thus for the "rapid development in Germany's contribution to multi-national crisis management operations across the globe."[71] When Schröder proposed to take a leading role in NATO operations in Macedonia, including by deploying 600 soldiers, he secured approval from every SPD and Green member of the

[64] Ibid., 111; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 105.
[65] Owen 2001, 130.
[66] Szabo 2004b, 45.
[67] Rathbun 2009, 103.
[68] Rathbun 2004, 94. See also Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 133.
[69] Rathbun 2009, 104, 111.
[70] Quoted in *Financial Times* 1999. On Schröder sharing this view, see Schröder quoted in Stahl 2012, 54; Miskimmon 2009, 593.
[71] Miskimmon 2009, 568.

Bundestag.[72] Stirrings of domestic opposition to the expanded role of the Bundeswehr, especially among the Greens, remained in check so long as proposed interventions had a clear humanitarian goal, were undertaken in a multilateral context, and adhered to strict operational restraints.[73]

The second factor was the desire to enhance Germany's standing. By the end of the 1990s, a "large majority of decisionmakers in both parties" held an "increasingly positive self-image… of Germany… based on a 'sense of achievement and confirmation', because never before in history had Germany been at peace with its neighbors, unified, democratic and free…"[74] Its leaders had not been alive during WWII and thus did not carry the "shock of shame" that had constrained earlier generations.[75] Generational change influenced foreign policy as German leaders evinced greater "self-assuredness" and the "confidence of a grown up nation."[76] More broadly, Germans described their country as possessing a "confident modesty" that equipped them to "gai[n] respect worldwide."[77] During an international conference in 1999, Schröder stated that "Germany had 'come of age' as a full member of NATO, now being ready 'without any reservations'… to assume responsibility as a 'normal ally'… playing the same role militarily as the big Western partners."[78] Schröder had brought a "fundamental belief… to the chancellorship—that Germany's foreign role should match its economic power and its growing geopolitical importance. This new self-assurance has been a leitmoti[f] of [his] time in office."[79] Regardless of whether this amounted to a full scale "resocialization" of Germany as a great power,[80] it is clear that Germany engaged in a military build-up in order to gain influence. Support for intervention was fueled by concern with others' perceptions of Germany's capabilities and the character of its international

[72] Longhurst 2004, 79. In contrast, the CDU/CSU, now in opposition, began to question certain proposed interventions, such as the one in Timor-Leste, on the basis that they did not sufficiently implicate German interests. Therefore, in a sense, it was the Left that now championed humanitarian out-of-area operations even more than the Right. See Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 119; Longhurst 2004, 78–9.
[73] Even during peace enforcement operations, Germany did continue to telegraph restraint in terms of its strategies and tactics, which were "less assertive" and careful to avoid "neo-colonial arrogance" in order to secure the respect of allies. Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 109–111.
[74] Harnisch 2001, 49.
[75] Maull 2006, 279.
[76] Harnisch 2001, 50; Wittlinger 2010, 123.
[77] Wittlinger 2010, 132, 144.
[78] Baumann and Hellmann 2014, 76–7; Hyde-Price and Jeffery 2001, 690.
[79] Longhurst 2004, 19.
[80] Harnisch 2004, fn. 6.

contributions.[81] In his memoir, Schröder cited Kosovo as the end of Germany's period as a "foreign policy dwarf" which marked a "rebirth of confidence."[82] Full participation in KFOR proved Germany's "moral size."[83] Meanwhile, a dwindling cohort of domestic critics were left to charge the Chancellor with harboring "German exceptionalism" and pursuing "world power status."[84]

In sum, the Red-Green coalition's support for humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and elsewhere marked the effective end of the "out-of-area" debate in German foreign policy. Widespread agreement prevailed, even on the left, that German standing depended upon its demonstrated "ability to act within the bounds of its treaty obligations."[85] On one hand, this belief was rooted in the traditional concern for alliances and the desire to safeguard multilateralism. Schröder referenced these considerations in arguing that "given our history we cannot leave any doubt on our reliability and firmness..." [86] Foremost in his calculations regarding Kosovo, for instance, "was the new German government's responsibility to demonstrate continuity and dependability in its foreign policy."[87] Thus, one striking "paradox of the period is that German acquired more capabilities for military action in order *not* to pursue a more autonomous military policy..."[88] Berlin came to see total abstention from the use of force in its foreign policy as at *odds* with its policy of "self-containment"[89] in the sense of "voluntary adherence to institutionalized multilateralism." [90] Yet on the other hand, German interventionism was an expression of the desire to retain, not only multilateral relationships, but a position of respect within them.

GERMANY AND THE US: FROM "RELIABLE" TO "RESPECTED" PARTNER

At the turn of the millennium, Germany's desire for prestige was especially salient in its relationship with the United States, its most powerful and important ally. Schröder frequently referred to Germany's "desire to be equal" and interact at "eye-

[81] Longhurst 2004, 130–1.
[82] Quoted in Miskimmon 2009, 570.
[83] Quoted in Hänze 2001, 693; Hacke 2015, 88.
[84] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 133; see also Rathbun 2004, 85; Duffield 1998, 230–9.
[85] Stahl 2012, 53; Kaim 2004, 127.
[86] Schröder, in a speech to the Bundestag in 1999, quoted in Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 15.
[87] Miskimmon 2009, 563.
[88] Otte and Greve 2000, 90–4 (emphasis added).
[89] Rudolf 2005, 140.
[90] Karp 2005, 63.

level" with the United States.[91] Increasingly, Germany expected to be treated as a "partner in transatlantic relations, not a follower expected to fall in line with decisions made elsewhere."[92] Or, in other words, Germany would be not only a reliable supporter of US foreign policy but a "respected partner" in the bilateral relationship and within multilateral institutions such as NATO.[93]

Greater equality was predicated upon greater self-sufficiency. In citing his change of heart on the question of German intervention in the Balkans, Fischer cited his belief that Germany could not be content to rely upon the United States: "This war [in the Balkans] is a part of Europe and has to be ended by Europeans."[94] Yet KFOR ultimately inflamed anxieties about Germany's standing in the alliance. Schröder's government found itself "uneasy with the fact that Washington, once again, conducted the war 'on behalf of its European allies,'" especially given the prerogatives Washington exercised over issues such as the choice of targets for airstrikes. [95] Fischer lamented in 2000 that "[f]our times in this century the United States has intervened militarily in Europe, most recently in Kosovo, because we Europeans believed ourselves incapable of acting on our own."[96] The

> major lesson drawn from the political and military weakness exposed by the Kosovo crisis was that the European Union must increase its capability to act autonomously in the process of preventing and managing crises in Europe so that Europe gains 'real equity'... with America. In the aftermath of the Kosovo War, fed by the general perception that US foreign policy had been drifting towards unilateralism, it became almost a dogma in Germany that only a stronger Europe would get a hearing in Washington.[97]

Berlin championed the creation of a European Security and Defense Policy, separate from NATO, which would form the basis for a "new Atlanticism, a real

[91] Miskimmon 2009, 568; see also Dettke 2018, 151; Haftendorn 2006. Schröder was not personally anti-American—he had a relatively positive relationship with Clinton—but he did have a history of opposing what he perceived as overly unilateralist American foreign policy, such as the positioning of American missiles in Western Europe during the 1980s, and he had opposed the Gulf War. See Dettke 2018, 162–3; Berendse 2004.
[92] Karp 2005, 69.
[93] Duffield 1999, 782; Duffield 1998, 122; Haftendorn 2006, 399; Maull 2006, 113–4; Wittlinger and Larose 2007, 484.
[94] Fischer quoted in 15 Hansel and Oppermann 2013.
[95] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 440–1. See also Rudolf 2005, 141.
[96] Fischer 2000.
[97] Rudolf 2005, 136.

partnership of equals, or at least near equals."[98] In these fora, without Washington present, Berlin could "play the role of… the best pupil in the class"[99] and advance a distinctive "German model of postnational military policy."[100]

Schröder and Fischer grew especially concerned about the unilateralist mood in Washington after George W. Bush's election.[101] Latent tensions came to the fore in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.[102] Addressing the German public on 9/11, Schröder promised "unconditional solidarity" with the United States and proactively declared support for invoking NATO's Article V collective self-defense provision.[103] On 6 November, in response to a US request, Schröder announced that he would seek authorization for 3,900 Bundeswehr troops to participate in the international mission in Afghanistan (ISAF). The German public was sympathetic with the United States but participating in ISAF provoked renewed opposition on the left.[104] Schröder took the politically risky step of tying the question to a vote of confidence in the Bundestag, forcing SPD and Green members to vote against their own government in order to oppose the war.[105] To justify this step, Schröder cited "Germany's international responsibility, its role as a transatlantic partner and the general credibility of German foreign policy…"[106] Staking his chancellorship on the ISAF vote was consistent with Schröder's conception of Germany as "ready to take on more international responsibilities and expected in return to be taken more seriously by major international players."[107] For his part Fischer, despite his past as a stanch anti-militarist, also appealed to these factors in supporting ISAF.[108] "A German abstention, [Fischer warned], would… weaken the international position of Europe."[109] As the Defense Minister,

[98] Ibid.
[99] Gül 2007, 145; Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 408.
[100] Otte and Greve 2000, 76.
[101] In 2000, Fischer said in the US: "We note with concern all voices in the United States that favor American unilateralism." Quoted in Karp 2005, 67. See also Press-Barnathan 2006; Johnston 2012, 142.
[102] Pond 2005.
[103] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 86–7.
[104] Public fatigue with interventionism had been mounting. There had been stirrings of renewed opposition even prior to ISAF, with many Green MBs voting against participation in the "Essential Harvest" NATO mission in Macedonia in August 2001.
[105] Szabo 2004a, 19–20. While Schröder could have secured enough votes in the Bundestag for German participation by relying upon opposition votes of the CDU/CSU and FDP, he thought it important that his government support the invasion.
[106] Longhurst 2004, 84. See also Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016, 57–63.
[107] Szabo 2004a, 19.
[108] Johnston 2012, 142.
[109] Fischer 2001b: 19296, quoted in Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 15.

Peter Struck, put it: "The question [of] whether NATO ought to restrict its role to alliance territory became irrelevant on Sep. 11, 2001."[110]

Schröder viewed the Bundestag's approval of ISAF as the "end to the chapter of Germany's limited sovereignty after World War II," which made Germany an "equal partner in the international community... In other words, the deployment of the Bundeswehr in the Hindu Kush is an expression of Germany's complete sovereignty over its foreign and security policy."[111] Yet this enthusiasm was not uniformly shared within his governing coalition; the Bundestag vote provoked resurgent opposition to "Militärangebotspolitik," the policy of proactively proposing German military aid to international missions. In light of significant "intraparty anger," members of the governing coalition "were unlikely to bear another deployment of German troops in the near future."[112] Mounting skepticism on the left about German interventionism in general was compounded by intense disapproval of the Bush Administration's war on terror rhetoric and strategy. When gathering support for the intervention in Afghanistan, the United States ignored NATO as a consultative forum, undermining Germany's attempt to be a "valued and dependable ally."[113] Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense and a leading neoconservative, "berated the Europeans for their lack of military prowess and confirmed that the US would, in the future, feel quite free to pick and choose its allies and partners, warning that NATO states should no longer consider themselves to occupy positions of privilege."[114] Meanwhile, the German government articulated its own, sharply divergent, strategy for combatting terrorism, which prioritized increased economic aid and intercultural engagement with the Muslim world and devalued military force as a tool of last resort.[115]

Germany's participation in ISAF was limited in significant ways. Berlin added "Special Remarks" to the NATO rules of engagement document, qualifying that German troops were only authorized to use force for the purpose of self-defense.[116] Most importantly, Schröder qualified his promise of "unconditional solidarity" with the US by in the same breath pledging "no adventures" would be

[110] Overhaus 2005, 30.
[111] Quoted in Münch 20201, 74.
[112] Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 18.
[113] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 443.
[114] Longhurst 2004, 87.
[115] Erb 2003, chap. 7; Kaim 2004, 132.
[116] Saideman and Auerswald 2012, 76–8.

undertaken with German forces.[117] The Chancellor's remarks after 9/11 bear quoting at length:

> We still do not know if the United States expects and will request support from the NATO partners, and if so, what kind of support. It could be military support. This option is not, and cannot be, excluded… [Yet] *any alliance obligation corresponds to a right, in this case a right to information and consultation…. Germany is prepared to take risks, even military ones, but it is not prepared to embark on any reckless adventure*. Thanks to the prudent conduct of the American administration, we have not been called upon to embark on any such adventure, and surely will not be in the future… *A fixation on purely military means would be fatal*.[118]

Schröder pressed these same points privately with Bush.[119] Thus, he "had already laid down his 'red-lines' for consultation and a preference for restraint [in] September 2001."[120] The issue of consultation emerged as one of the key symbolic representations of the respect and consideration that Germany, Schröder believed, was due.[121] Out-of-area operations had tethered Germany's reputation as a credible ally to its willingness to use force; but this willingness should also endow Germany with influence over the interventions in which it was expected to participate.[122] Unsurprisingly given this context, it was US unilateralism above all else that triggered Germany's defiant performance of restraint as Washington prepared to extend the war on terror to Iraq.

"GERMANY SAYS 'NO'" TO INTERVENTION IN IRAQ

In January 2002, with the invasion of Afghanistan still in its early stages, the Bush Administration indicated its intention to expand the war on terror. In January, President Bush's State of the Union address linked the regime of Saddam Hussein to "support [for] terror:"

> The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and

[117] Harnisch 2004, 6–7.
[118] Quoted in Johnston 2012, 142 (emphasis added).
[119] Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 19–20.
[120] Longhurst 2004, 88; Eberle 2019.
[121] Merkl 2005, 30.
[122] Miskimmon 2009, 573 referencing Hellmann 2001.

> nuclear weapons for over a decade… States like [Iraq], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger… The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons. Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun.[123]

The 2002 National Security Strategy elaborated a case for the preemptive use of force against regimes seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction.[124] Tellingly, the NSS also asserted that "[a]t the time of the Gulf War, we acquired irrefutable proof that Iraq's designs were not limited to the chemical weapons it had used against Iran and its own people, but also extended to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and biological agents."[125] The main pillars of the case for intervention in Iraq were established: Saddam Hussein was set on acquiring nuclear weapons and had already started down the path to do so; acquisition of nuclear weapons by the Iraqi regime would unacceptably threaten U.S. national security because of the risk that they would fall into the hands of terrorists; and preemptive force was a legitimate, and indeed necessary, tool to deal with this threat.[126] In August, Vice President Cheyney put doubts to rest with a speech that outlined the US strategy of "preemption" and called for a war of regime-change against Saddam Hussein.[127]

Over the next seven months—from August 2002 until the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003—Germany openly defied the United States, its most important ally, by sticking to a policy of strict non-intervention and by rallying opposition to the U.S. intervention at the United Nations. This section describes this policy as a performance of restraint that, in Henry Kissinger's words, served as a "a pretext for a reorientation of German foreign policy in a more national direction."[128] "Opposing perceived US unilateralism was… an opportunity to stand up to the Bush administration. On a more fundamental level, Germany reclaimed the right to national sovereignty in spite of its commitment to multilateralism. This self-

[123] Bush 2002b.
[124] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* 2002, 15.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Kaufmann 2004; Woodward 2002; Isikoff and Corn 2006.
[127] Pond 2005, 37.
[128] Quoted in Rudolf 2005, 133.

assertion was a new development for German foreign policy…"[129] Yet it is not merely that Germany was "more conscious of its power, strutting across the European and the transatlantic stage in a self-serving and confident manner."[130] As this section makes clear, the content of German defiance mattered in addition to its style. It matters, in short, that Germany expressed defiance through restraint. Non-intervention in Iraq was specifically geared towards broadcasting German moral leadership.

America Assembles a "Coalition of the Willing"

Driven by fundamentally unilateralist impulses, the Bush Administration assembled a "Coalition of the Willing" for the Iraq invasion. Reflecting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's earlier assertion that "the mission determines the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission," the "Coalition of the Willing" existed outside the auspices of NATO or other structures that gave allies input into the goals or parameters of the mission.[131] The Bush Administration intended to avoid any forum in which preparations for war might be derailed. This approach anticipated opposition from European leaders and publics. "Already in February 2002, well before the Bush Administration publicly pressed for a military intervention, a survey reported that four out of five Germans rejected German participation should a military attack to depose Saddam Hussein be undertaken."[132]

In May, Bush and Schröder met at a summit in Berlin amidst tensions regarding the US push for war.[133] The summit appeared to go well. Bush gave a speech before the Bundestag which was surprisingly conciliatory and in which he promised that "America will consult closely with our friends and allies at every stage."[134] The speech sought to allay concerns that Washington expected obeisance. Schröder reportedly ended the summit open the possibility of Germany participating in military operations against Iraq if they were authorized by the UN Security Council. Yet he had also reiterated his red lines: Germany will "not be at

[129] Dettke 2018, 158.
[130] Karp 2005, 65.
[131] Rumsfeld 2001.
[132] Johnston 2012, 138.
[133] For example, at the Munich Security Conference in early 2002, German Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping reproached the U.S. for its "naïve [thinking] that Europe would support such military action" against Iraq. Longhurst 2004, 86.
[134] Bush 2002a.

disposal for adventures," and required consultation as an equal and valued partner before any operations in which it was expected to participate.[135]

Schröder's rhetoric noticeably coarsened during the summer as he campaigned ahead of the September 2002 federal elections. In August, Schröder became the first leader of a major US ally to announce that they would not participate in an invasion of Iraq *even if it were sanctioned by the Security Council.*[136] He appealed to German contributions to ISAF to add weight to this reversal:

> We didn't shy away from offering international solidarity in the fight against international terrorism. We did it because we were, and are, convinced that it is necessary; because we knew that the security of our partners is also our security. But we say this with equal self-confidence: we're not available for adventures, and the time of cheque book diplomacy is over once and for all.[137]

This marked a new phase in German rhetoric towards the war effort. In an interview with *Die Zeit* on August 15, the Chancellor "openly criticized the Bush administration for not consulting with Germany and declared the need for a 'German Way.' He began to use charged phrases like 'reckless adventure' and made it clear that there would be no German military contribution to a war in Iraq, even though the Bush administration had not asked for one..."[138]

Schröder used his outspoken opposition to the Bush Administration's Iraq policy as a way of distinguishing his SPD from his chief rival Edmund Stoiber and Stoiber's CDU, which he charged with being too deferential to Washington. During a debate against Stoiber, he asserted that "I am for being consulted not only over when and how, but also over whether."[139] Or as he later put it in an interview with the *New York Times*, "consultation cannot mean that I get a phone call two hours in advance only to be told: We're going in. Consultation among grown-up nations has to mean not just consultation about the how and the when, but also about the whether."[140] Here again, the right to consultation came to stand in for Berlin's

[135] Schröder interview with FAZ, quoted in Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016.
[136] This position was even more categorical than the one staked out by France. Brooks and Wohlforth 2005, 102.
[137] Quoted in Hooper 2002. See also Szabo 2004a, 22–3.
[138] Szabo 2004a, 23.
[139] Ibid., 26.
[140] Larres 2003, 25; Schröder 2002.

status vis-à-vis Washington.[141] As discussed below, this framing solidified the public's perception that Schröder, more than Stoiber, would stand up for German principles and "would not bend" to the Americans.[142] The US Administration for its part assessed that Schröder was playing the "anti-Bush card" in order to "assert German sovereignty and interests," a strategy that was manifest in the Chancellor's many provocative declarations such as "I will not click my heels in response to orders from Washington."[143]

Yet German opposition to the impending war did not abate after Schröder's coalition won the elections. In a speech in January 2003, as Germany prepared to assume a rotating seat on the Security Council, Schröder doubled down on his position: "I put it a bit further here and now than what I have otherwise formulated in this question: Do not count on it that Germany would vote for a war-legitimising resolution."[144] This position, which went even farther than other skeptical UNSC members, notably France and Russia, provoked furious opposition from the White House, which subsequently named Germany to the "B list" of its allies. Secretary Rumsfeld went so far as to lump Germany in with Cuba and Libya as countries that impeded the fight against terrorism.[145]

Germany and the Anti-War Coalition

In the face of a deepening diplomatic crisis, Germany's rhetorical and symbolic opposition became if anything more conspicuous.[146] At the Munich Security Conference in February 2003, Foreign Minister Fischer spoke after Secretary Rumsfeld presented the US case for war. Fischer's televised riposte—"Excuse me, but I'm not convinced"–signaled a "declaration of independence from the United States, the end point of a half-century of nearly automatic compliance with the

[141] Szabo 2004a, 133–4.
[142] Ibid., 28.
[143] Ibid.; Larres 2003, 24. Other members of his government were even less restrained, with an SPD member of the Bundestag comparing Bush to Augustus Caesar, who as Roman Emperor ruled Germania, and the Justice Minister likening Bush's push for war as a distraction from domestic issue to "Adolf Nazi." Longhurst 2004, 89; Stahl 2012, 65.
[144] Quoted in Eberle 2019, 64.
[145] Kole 2003; Bernstein 2004.
[146] Crucially, German non-participation as discussed in this section encompassed much more than simply *not* sending troops to invade Iraq as part of the Coalition of the Willing. Given Schröder's domestic political constraints—namely, opposition to Bundeswehr deployment in the Bundestag—the most interesting puzzle here is why he persisted with performative (i.e., public, conspicuous, and active) resistance to US pressure to support the invasion.

American wish."[147] Within NATO, Germany along with France and Belgium vetoed US proposals to send radar-equipped aircraft and other defensive equipment to Turkey in the event of a war with Iraq.[148] This contrasted sharply with the 1991 Gulf War, when Germany had not only approved NATO's policy of providing for the defense of Turkey as a member state, but had itself sent troops to Turkey for that purpose.

At the UN, Germany aligned itself with France and Russia—permanent members of the Security Council with veto power over US-backed proposals for authorizing a war. On 10 February, after US Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation laying out the case for war, Germany issued a statement along with France and Russia calling for a "concerted effort to disarm Iraq through peaceful means."[149] On 14 February, the chief inspector of the International Nuclear Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, reported on the progress of weapons inspections being undertaken in Iraq pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1441. His assertion that "[w]e have to date found no evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear related activities in Iraq," as well as his conclusion that Iraq was in large part complying with the inspections, led both Germany and France to state that they did not consider Iraq to be in material breach of Resolution 1441.[150] Therefore, both countries' representatives made clear, they would not support a resolution authorizing an invasion. On 24 February, Schröder and French President Jacques Chirac met in Paris and jointly declared their opposition to the proposed US resolution authorizing war.

Though lacking a veto at the UN, Germany "initially led international efforts against a war," including by convincing France to join in a "diplomatic blocking effort" of more aggressive weapons inspections.[151] (A contemporaneous report considered even China and Russia "fence sitters" for a potential vote to authorize the invasion; only Germany, France, and Syria were considered "strong opponents."[152]) On 5 March, Fischer met with the foreign ministers of France and Russia to issue a joint declaration that their countries would not support a second UN resolution authorizing force. On 15 March, as inspectors withdrew and the

[147] Rudolf 2005, 133–4; Dettke 2018, 159.
[148] Finn 2003.
[149] Paul 2005, 66.
[150] ElBaradei 2003.
[151] Baltrusaitis 2010, 3; Wittlinger 2010, 102.
[152] Anderson, Bennis, and Cavanaugh 2003, 3.

United States and its partners prepared to invade, this group again issued a joint statement criticizing the developments. Overall, the "Schröder government not only declined to make a direct German contribution to the war in 2003, but also engaged in active counter-coalition building by lobbying France and Russia to support Germany's resistance to the [US] 'adventure.'... [This] seriously undermined the Bush administration in building an effective coalition against Iraq."[153]

The emergence of a French-German-Russian axis marked a "new phase for Berlin, in which 'Germany does not fight against isolation any more, but forges an alliance.'"[154] It also provoked a significant debate over "who speaks for Europe," since the Franco-German proposals at the UN "claimed to be speaking in Europe's name..."[155] European governments that supported Washington—including Eastern European countries new to NATO, dubbed the "Vilnius Ten"—pushed back against this claim. US officials picked up on this conflict, suggesting that the supportive nations of "New Europe" should receive more weight than those of "Old Europe." Germany and France did not back down. "Maintaining that their position was more representative of the European perspective – since even within those countries that had signed [letters in support of the US position] domestic opposition to a war was extremely strong – Berlin and Paris continued to claim the moral 'European' high ground."[156]

In the end, Schröder went further than any US ally in refusing any material or diplomatic support for the invasion. The Chancellor was the first to rule out participation in the war even with a Security Council Resolution, and he later ruled out German troops being deployed even for rebuilding Iraq after the war had concluded.[157] For some, "Schröder's assertion on 13 September 2002 that 'on existential questions of the German nation, decisions are only made in Berlin and nowhere else' confirm[ed] that, for Germany, the opposition to war was not primarily an issue for the 'power of peace' that Germany wanted to be. It was an issue of national interest and self-assertion."[158] In fact, these issues were not mutually exclusive, but reconciled through the performance of restraint.

German non-intervention in Iraq was presented by the Schröder government

[153] Baltrusaitis 2010, 2.
[154] Quoted in Eberle 2019, 65.
[155] Longhurst 2004, 91.
[156] Ibid., 92.
[157] Baltrusaitis 2010, 3; Harnisch 2004, 19–20; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 90.
[158] Dettke 2018, 160–1. See also Schöllgen 2015, 668.

as volitional and supererogatory restraint. First, the policy of non-intervention was linked to prior interventions because Berlin, Washington, and other states all assumed that Germany "would have been capable of participating in the Iraq coalition" if it so chose.[159] Schröder "skillfully deployed" the "new consciousness" of German capabilities developed during the 1990s: "From the fact that Germany had been unhesitatingly ready to help the United States in the Afghanistan war, he now coined the argument that Germany therefore did not owe the Americans any further proof of solidarity."[160] Unlike Kohl in 1991, Schröder did not reference a lack of capabilities as a reason to bow out of participation.[161] "On the contrary, German leaders state[d] that precisely because Germans have overcome their Cold War legacy of pacifism and deployed troops beyond national boundaries, even in combat missions, they have earned the right to distinguish among the circumstances that warrant the use of force."[162] Its defense expenditures gave Germany credibility to say no and the "right to tell its partners when they are wrong."[163] German defiance of the United States also implicated, albeit more obliquely, its economic heft: unlike other countries in Washington's "Coalition of the Bribed and Bullied," Berlin could "afford to resist the economic pressure" and pursue an independent path.[164]

Second, German non-intervention was presented with reference to the values of international law and diplomacy, multilateralism, and limitations on the use of force. In a speech on Iraq to the Bundestag in 2003, Schröder spoke of the need "to put the power of the law in the stead of the law of the powerful."[165] Standing up for the principle of restraint against US unilateralism was equated with asserting German status: "The international coalition against terrorism certainly will not serve as a pretext for doing whatever against whomever – particular not unilaterally," Fischer had declared in 2002, adding that "[a]llies are not

[159] Johnston 2012, 137.
[160] Herzinger 2005, 237.
[161] Indeed, Germany continued to demonstrate its capability to send Bundeswehr troops abroad, participating in the EU-led intervention in the Congo in 2003 even as it remained the chief critic of intervention in Iraq. Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006; Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016. Later deployments, such as Germany's third mission in Somalia in 2008—proved domestically noncontroversial as well.
[162] Karp 2005, 72.
[163] Quoted in Harnisch 2004, 15, 25. See also Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, 90–1.
[164] Newnham 2008, 186, 191.
[165] Quoted in Eberle 2019, 73.

satellites."[166] Or as the Foreign Minister later put it, "[a] world in which the national interest of the most powerful state is the criterion for the use of force cannot function."[167] Moreover, in keeping with my theory, Berlin's invocations of values had comparative overtones.[168] The government presented its policy as a form of "moral leadership;" in this framing, Germany became "responsible for peace."[169] "The Germans now clearly thought of themselves as the better representatives of these principles" of liberalism and the rule of law.[170] "[Germany] – in contrast to its American ally – stood for peace and democracy." The "explicit rejection of Germany's subordination to the United States" was thus cast as a contest for moral prestige.[171] "Now that Germany has… arrived after its 'long march to the West' … it can present itself as a competent guardian of Western values: the Germans in a way stylize themselves as *better Americans*."[172]

BERLIN'S BID FOR PRESTIGE

The Bush Administration's efforts to assemble the "Coalition of the Willing" dominated international news, with the White House regularly updating a list of coalition countries and their contributions.[173] In this context, openly defying the Bush Administration incurred diplomatic costs. And yet Germany's restraint was distinctive for the conspicuous nature of its presentation through public statements and diplomacy. "Schröder saw the role his predecessors played in the international arena as an example of an unnecessary lack of political courage. He believed that pussyfooting was neither the proper way to represent Germany's national interest nor the way to gain respect among its partners."[174]

The prestige motive was also evident in leaders' preoccupation with the symbolism of German "sovereignty" and "rights."[175] Schröder imagined his Iraq

[166] Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 20; see also Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016; Forsberg 2005.
[167] Karp 2005, 72–3.
[168] Larres 2003, 25–6.
[169] Quoted in Eberle 2019, 76. See also Szabo 2004; Gordon and Shapiro 2004. For a scathing critique of this self-conception as Pollyannish, and as a convenient fig leaf for Germany's and Europe's lack of power, see Kagan 2002.
[170] Wittlinger and Larose 2007, 490; Herzinger 2005.
[171] Wittlinger 2010, 102.
[172] Herzinger 2005, 241 (emphasis added).
[173] Schifferes 2003.
[174] Dettke 2018, 179.
[175] The SPD's leading foreign policy authority Karsten Voigt said that the 'no' showed how "the country is now sovereign." Quoted in Eberle 2019, 68.

policy as part of a broader policy of "freedom and independence" where Germany departed from the "apron strings of American foreign policy."[176] Germany was, according to the Chancellor, a "self-confident" and "grown up" nation; thus, "we will have to make these decisions [about foreign policy] sovereignly." Germany had "the right, maybe even the duty, in certain situations to say very clearly what we think. Partnership with the United States, friendship does not mean subordination."[177] "Therefore, Germany was entitled to be treated with sufficient respect…"[178] As Defense Minister Struck put it at the time, non-intervention was evidence that Germany is "not a charge of the United States."[179] A leading SPD parliamentarian applauded Schröder's resistance to US pressure because it showed that Germans were not American "vassals."[180] And while at times critical of Schröder's seeming indifference to alienating the US, the CDU, led after the election by Angela Merkel, agreed that "[w]e are free alliance partners and not under-age underlings."[181]

The intention to assert Germany's distinctive qualities vis-à-vis the U.S. was encapsulated in the idea of a "German Way" or "German Path," which the SPD adopted as its slogan for the 2002 campaign.[182] Initially intended to discuss social and economic programs, contrasting Germany's system of strong social support with the more free market American approach, the slogan became associated with foreign policy and Germany's status as a "self-confident country."[183] The SPD Party Whip declared that "[w]e have to go our own German way," which "implied that Germany had to assist in averting violence…"[184] Rhetorically, "Schröder turned the request for 'self-confident and loyal' actions as voiced by the proponents of a more active foreign policy…during the out-of-area debate into 'self-confident' vis-à-vis the United States with 'restrained' results…"[185] The "implicit notion of a German *Sonderweg* ['separate path'] now carried positive connotations, i.e., pacifist

[176] Dettke 2018, 179.
[177] Schröder quoted in Eberle 2019, 69, emphasis added.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Harnisch 2004, 11. Other translations have the quote as Germany is not "under the custody of" the US. See Stahl 2012, 63.
[180] Eberle 2019, 70.
[181] Quoted from CDU's foreign policy speaker Friedbert Pflüger, in Eberle 2019, 69-70.
[182] Longhurst 2004, 88–9.
[183] Overhaus 2005, 27.
[184] Stahl 2012, 63.
[185] Ibid.

Germany distancing itself from the warmongering United States and its allies."[186] Schröder and his party reconceptualized exceptionalism in terms of a "nonaggressive, peaceful approach" to international affairs, which was of course a complete inversion of the way in which the term had been intended.[187]

While the Bush Administration clearly served as the Schröder government's chief reference other, its audiences are harder to discern. On balance, officials' statements and the secondary literature suggest that Berlin was concerned with broadcasting its material and moral prestige, not only to the United States, but to other states in the European Union as well.[188] In his memoir, Schröder reflected on the key question at stake in late 2002 and early 2003: "Is our foreign policy subdued to the American, or is it more? I had an unequivocal answer to that, not in the sense of an insulated national position, but always with regard to Germany's European mission."[189] Opposing American unilateralism went hand in hand with developing European security institutions as a counterweight to U.S.-dominated NATO.[190] By 2003, Germany had become one of the "leading members of [NATO], only surpassed in importance by the United States and Great Britain. The Bush administration's tendency to downplay and often ignore the importance of NATO, the EU, the UN, and other international organizations [had] therefore perplexed Berlin, which, for good reason, highly value[d] the benefits of a multilateral approach."[191] The Bush Administration's "condescending indifference to outside opinion" undermined the alliance.[192] Schröder claimed that NATO could no longer serve as the "primary venue where transatlantic partners discuss and co-ordinate strategies;" European foreign and security policy would have to be formulated "in Europe, for Europe and from Europe."[193] Defense Minister Scharping indicated at the Munich Security Dialogue in 2003 that Germany opposed unilateralism on behalf of Europe.[194] Additionally, European publics overwhelmingly opposed the

[186] Wittlinger and Larose 2007, 490.
[187] Larres 2003, 25–6.
[188] Dettke 2018, 188–192; Marquis 2003; Matthijs 2016, 136. Foreign Minister Fischer alluded to Germany's partnership with the United States as a factor supporting its bid for EU leadership, given that Europe could be "strong only together with the United States and not as its rival." Vincour 2003.
[189] Schröder quoted in Eberle 2019, 70.
[190] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 56.
[191] Larres 2003, 28–9.
[192] Ibid., 29; Rudolf 2005, 135.
[193] Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 445–6.
[194] Harnisch 2004, 8.

war even as some of their governments supported the United States.[195]

Additionally, Berlin attempted to leverage the "reputation to rank international law and international cooperation above all else in its foreign policy" to achieve its "yearned-for permanent seat on the UN Security Council."[196] Schröder and Fischer may have calculated that "Berlin's opposition to the war in Iraq enlarged this 'window of opportunity' [for a permanent UNSC seat] by improving German standing among developing countries…"[197] Typical was the commentary in the *FAZ* that asserted that "Germany's reputation among UN members has grown through the government's resistance to the American line on the Iraq war."[198] In March 2004, "Schröder replaced the modest German 'readiness' rhetoric with an outright demand: 'Germany sees itself as a candidate for a permanent seat in the world security council…'" [199] This "prestige project" could even be taken to "demonstrate the country's (new) self-perception as a Great Power in Europe and beyond." [200]

Gauging Success

The theory of "holding back to rise above" centers on the pursuit of prestige, not its attribution. I have argued that the conspicuous and assertive ways in which Germany presented its policy of non-intervention *intended* to broadcast independence and moral exceptionalism; it is a different question whether restraint *succeeded* as a bid for prestige. Indeed, it seemingly failed to produce dramatic results and in some ways was plainly counterproductive. For instance, a 2005 *Financial Times* headline declared that "America is punishing Germany for its Iraq opposition," referencing the Bush Administration's decision to support Japan's bid over Germany's for a UN Security Council Seat.[201] Commentators charged Schröder with a "chain of missteps" that left Berlin dependent upon Moscow and Paris for leverage at the UN and squandered an opportunity to shape how the Iraq invasion

[195] More than half of the European public—54 percent in Germany, 61 in the UK, and 75 in France—believed that the U.S. was not seeking not peace, but rather control over Iraqi oil. Kritzinger 2005, 33.
[196] Herzinger 2005, 238–9.
[197] Overhaus 2005, 37.
[198] Von Eckart 2004.
[199] Overhaus 2005, 35–6.
[200] Ibid., 36; Erb 2003, 211.
[201] Dobbins 2005.

would play out behind the scenes.[202] Even sympathetic elements of the German press worried that Schröder's policy amounted to "self-inflicted isolation."[203]

Nor did Berlin see its standing in the European Union rise sharply as a result of its quest for prestige.[204] On one hand, Germany benefitted from the erosion of British influence after Tony Blair's enthusiastic support of the US Iraq policy alienated other European governments.[205] Yet on the other hand, Schröder was forced to defer to the French position on major EU issues such as farm subsidies and the extension of membership in Central Europe, lest Paris break ranks and leave Berlin alone in opposition to Washington.[206] Economic malaise further sapped German influence in the EU during this period. As the bloc's largest economy and the largest contributor to its budget, Germany's influence generally tracked its relative economic strength rather than perceptions of its military capabilities or moral authority.[207] In fact, Berlin's Iraq policy may have fueled anxieties about its potential domination of the European Union, since the "American connection [had traditionally] reassured Germany's European partners about the restraints on German power."[208]

The longer-term impact of this episode on US-German relations is also hard to gauge. Some see this as the symbolic moment when "the post Cold War period ended."[209] German performative restraint "rebalanced the transatlantic relationship from one of hierarchy to one of [greater] equality."[210] Before his first meeting with Bush after the invasion, Schröder maintained that he did not seek a "love affair" with the Americans but rather "entirely normal conversations" on subjects of mutual interest.[211] And while the Bush Administration clearly resented Germany's self-assertion through restraint, it grudgingly recognized that Germany had exercised initiative on the international stage and that its support could not be taken for granted in the future.[212] In any event, US-German relations improved

[202] Hacke 2015, 91; Szabo 2004a, 134.
[203] Longhurst 2004, 90.
[204] On the checkered history of German diplomatic leadership in the EU, see Bulmer and Paterson 1996, 17–9.
[205] Schweiger 2004.
[206] Pond 2005, 44.
[207] Bulmer and Paterson 2010, 1055–7; Bulmer and Paterson 2013.
[208] Szabo 2004b, 50; Kaim 2004, 134.
[209] Szabo 2004b, 41.
[210] Karp 2005, 78; Longhurst 2004, 95.
[211] Quoted in Szabo 2004a, 132.
[212] Dettke 2018.

markedly after Bush and Schröder left office, with Angela Merkel and Barack Obama working to restore mutual respect to the alliance.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Germany's non-intervention might permit alternative explanations based on the logics of material consequences, social appropriateness, or domestic politics. First, perhaps Berlin refused to participate in the Iraq invasion because Schröder and other leaders determined it was not in Germany's material interest to do so, as expected by "holding back to hunker down." Checkbook diplomacy on the scale of 1991 Gulf War would have been too costly given the post-reunification economic troubles; Schröder referenced this factor in asserting that German voters would abhor foreign policy "waste."[213] However, Germany was, and professed to be, capable of the kind of nominal contributions that could have defused the costly diplomatic crisis with a key ally. Smaller European states with much weaker economies offered largely symbolic support to the "Coalition of the Willing" in order to reap diplomatic dividends with Washington.[214] Germany took the opposite tack, engaging in conspicuous defiance, morally charged critique, and virtue-signaling.[215] This incurred significant diplomatic costs, including undermining NATO.[216] And on the other side of the consequentialist coin, it is not clear what material or security benefits—as opposed to prestige—could have justified these costs. Some scholars have framed German opposition to U.S. unilateralism—in concert with France and Russia—as a form of "soft balancing" that sought to "restrain the United States from undertaking unilateral military action by using the veto in international institutions."[217] Yet Germany did not pursue a soft balancing strategy beyond the Iraq issue, nor did the balancing coalition of which it was part stick together.

[213] Larres 2003, 24.
[214] For contemporaneous press reports, see USA Today 2005; Whitemore 2003; Sanger 2003. See also Maull 2006, 73; Davidson 2011. Indeed, this case represents an important counterpoint to existing studies that have shown how junior alliance members often seek prestige through participation in their patrons' military campaigns. Cf. Jakobsen, Ringsmose, and Saxi 2018; Davidson 2011.
[215] Johnston 2012, 148.
[216] Anderson, Bennis, and Cavanaugh 2003, 2; Pond 2005, 46. U.S. officials also denigrated German force preparedness to undermine the principled nature of their restraint. Wittlinger, 2010, 130; Smith 2003.
[217] Paul 2005, 69; Brooks and Wohlforth 2005, 94.

TABLE 4.1. Summary of Evidence of German Performative Non-Intervention, 1991-2005.

1.	**Framing**: *voluntary? principled*?	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** German leaders note that previous constraints on participation in international interventions had been lifted by 2002. They offer principled reasons for opposing the Bush Administration's policy, such as support for multilateralism and the international rule of law.
2.	**Underlying capability:** *demonstrated? claimed by actor? accepted or assumed by audience?*	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** The German government deployed the Bundeswehr for multiple "out of area" operations during the 1990s and early 2000s, including in Afghanistan.
3.	**Prestige motive:** *referenced by actor? attributed by other analysts?*	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer recognized the diplomatic costs that public, pointed, opposition to the United States would incur. They justified their opposition in terms of demonstrating Germany's independence and the sovereignty of its foreign policy.
4.	**Keeping the option open:** *do leaders resist commitments that undermine voluntary nature of restraint*?	**Limited relevant evidence.** Here, Germany faced an audience that wanted it to use military force and sought to encourage this.
5.	**Reference others' lack of restraint**: *do leaders respond by doubling down on restraint? frame it in relative terms?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** German opposition to the intervention was framed as a repudiation of US unilateralism and lack of restraint.
6.	**Investment in presentation**: *do states toe the line? cry foul?*	**Mixed support for "holding back to rise above."** When the US questioned the sincerity of German motives for non-intervention, the Schröder government doubled down on the rhetoric of German moral exceptionalism ('crying foul'). Yet Germany relied on *past* demonstrations of military capabilities to lend credence to its position (no 'toeing the line').
7.	**Sensitivity to social costs**: *do leaders react to perceived disrespect or humiliation?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** The perceived lack of respect from the US in expecting blanket German support for the Iraq intervention motivated Berlin's policy of "saying 'no'" and endowed it with symbolic significance. (Additionally, when military restraint in the early 1990s threatened Germany's international respectability, its leaders departed from the policy of absolute non-intervention).
8.	**Material consequences:** *do leaders adjust to changing material cost-benefit calculus?*	**Minimal support.** Germany's core national interests were mostly not at stake in this case. The potential exception is that German leaders had long viewed a close military alliance with the US as crucial for German security. Schröder appeared willing to mortgage that relationship for the expressive effect of being seen to stand on equal footing with the US, which had traditionally been the senior alliance partner.
9.	**Social appropriateness:** *do leaders rule out alternative policies?*	**Minimal support.** German leaders deployed morally strident language to critique the Bush Administration's interventionism. By 2002, Berlin no longer condemned the use of force for humanitarian interventions per se, but rather objected to US unilateralism. German officials and intellectuals used moral rhetoric to present Germans as, in relative terms, the "better Americans."
10.	**Parochial interests:** *does restraint have narrow partisan support?*	**Some support for "holding back to earn credit."** There is some evidence that strong public opposition to intervention in Iraq tied the government's hands. However, insofar as the public demanded that the government assert its equal standing vis-à-vis Washington, these pressures may be consistent with the prestige motive.

Second, social norms and the "culture of restraint" present another potential explanation for Germany's Iraq policy. "While unconditional pacifism had lost the moral high ground, German anti-militarism has not disappeared, and there remain[ed] a distinct aversion to the early resort to military force."[218] Schröder and Fischer were both skeptical of intervention in general, especially absent an urgent humanitarian objective. Large majorities of the public also held that it was "right" for Berlin to reject sending troops to Iraq, in multiple surveys expressing this opposition in moral—rather than strategic—terms.[219] Yet given the evolution of Germany's security policy during the 1990s, its non-intervention in Iraq cannot be simply attributed to a culturally-ingrained, long-standing, reluctance to use force, as per the "holding back out of habit" mechanism. Major policy documents published in 2002 and 2003 reaffirmed the Bundeswehr's ability and duty in certain circumstances to operate out-of-area, removing any geographical limits.[220] The Defense Policy Guidelines from May 2003 were clear that "[i]t may be necessary for the Bundeswehr to participate in multinational operations everywhere in the world and on short notice. It may involve the whole spectrum of missions, including operations with high intensity."[221] This followed the previously mentioned restructuring of the Bundeswehr in 2001, including 35,000 forces for "intervention." [222] Moreover, the "policy of vocal opposition…became complemented by a tacit, although not secret, cooperation in the war effort. Germany's assistance even went further than that of most countries of the 'Coalition of the Willing.'"[223] Schröder's government ultimately agreed to provide all of the non-combat support requested by Washington besides the two items, military police and participation in reconstruction, which would have required Bundestag authorization.[224] Germany also took over leadership of the ISAF mission to relieve pressure on US forces. And on 28 September 2005, 535 of 553 members of the Bundestag voted to further expand the mandate of troops in ISAF from 2,250 to

[218] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2003, 110.
[219] Johnston 2012, 152; Kaim 2004, 136.
[220] Overhaus 2005, 28.
[221] This document also seemed to endorse the key War on Terror premise that "defence can no longer be narrowed down to geographical boundaries, but contributes to safeguarding our security wherever it is in jeopardy." Quoted in Longhurst 2004, 114.
[222] Overhaus 2005, 35.
[223] Joetze 2010, 154–5.
[224] Ibid., 154.

3,000, which constituted the second largest contribution after the United States.[225] The "high drama" at the United Nations "tended to overshadow … [that] Germany has adjusted to and supported the American war on terror in a way that few analysts would have dared predict… It was a Social Democratic defence minister who in December 2002 declared: 'Our security is be defended on the Hindukush.'"[226] This is further evidence that Berlin's Iraq policy reflected dramaturgical imperatives of self-presentation rather than principled imperatives from internalized norms.

Third, perhaps no factor has received more attention in this case than domestic politics. Schröder and Fischer knew they would struggle to secure the necessary majority in the Bundestag to send German troops to Iraq.[227] "Back at the end of 2002, in the run-up to the war, Fischer had even tried to anticipate whether the German public and his own party would accept a German yes-vote in the UN Security Council. But his refusal to exclude such an option in a newspaper interview caused an outcry in the national media and among his fellow party members."[228] The performance of restraint subsequently played out against the backdrop of electoral politics. In the face of persistent unemployment and economic malaise, polls during the summer of 2002 showed the SPD trailing the CDU.[229] This informs the "diversionary peace" hypothesis, namely, that Schröder used Iraq to distract voters from the economic issues on which he fared poorly.[230] "To be sure, Chancellor Schröder expressed doubts about the wisdom of invading Iraq long before Germany's election campaign got under way in the summer of 2002. But his need to recapture elements of his political base soon pointed irresistible toward taking an especially strong stand on the issue."[231] The US Iraq policy was extremely unpopular in Germany, especially in the East, where Schröder had to "win votes from… [supporters of] the openly anti-American and pacifist" Party of Democratic Socialism.[232]

Yet "holding back to earn credit" cannot fully account for Schröder's actions.

[225] Szabo 2004b, 45; Bergstrand and Engelbrekt 2016.
[226] Rudolf 2005, 138–9.
[227] Hansel and Oppermann 2013, 19.
[228] Ibid., 21.
[229] The impending election plays a key role in this explanation. While two-thirds of Germans opposed intervention under any circumstances, there was similar opposition in countries such as Italy (75% opposed) and Spain (80% opposed) that "expressed solidarity" and made both symbolic and material contributions. See Johnston 2012, 146; Kole 2003.
[230] Dalgaard-Nielsen 2006, fn. 35.
[231] See Brooks and Wohlforth 2005, 94.
[232] Walker 2002, 38.

Not merely constrained by public opinion, he exploited the Iraq issue and made it the center of the campaign, "repeatedly announc[ing] his foreign policies during election rallies directed at the domestic public…"[233] Moreover, given that Stoiber and the CDU also opposed preemptive war in Iraq, the difference between the candidates which Schröder exploited centered on style.[234]

> If a conservative politician such as Edmund Stoiber… had governed the republic at this moment, he or she probably would have tried to escape direct participation in the Iraq war—but without openly taking a position against the United States… The majority of the members of their party and of its voters, however, felt themselves better represented by Schröder's resounding no, formulated with unmistakable national pathos, than by the conservative party leaders' attitudes, which they felt to be halfhearted and vacillating.[235]

For German voters, as well as elites, the Iraq issue was tied to national standing and the dynamics of the bilateral US-German relationship.[236] On the eve of the election, voters trusted the SPD over the CDU to deal with the United States by a margin of 13 points (40 percent to 27 percent), the largest lead of any issue area and mirroring a result that a majority of Germans though that Schröder, better than Stoiber, would be able to "represent German interests" given the "gratuitous unilateralism of the Bush Administration…[the] flaunting of international law, the sense of Gulliver unbound…"[237]

> Schröder used this mood for an election campaign with *strongly nationalist inflections*. He spoke of 'a German way' and maintained that German foreign policy was crafted in Berlin, not in Washington. With this point, he implied that it had been merely because of a lack of sovereignty and national strength that Germany so far had never openly resisted US policy. The Iraq war now gave Schröder the occasion to demonstrate to the entire world that this newly won sovereignty would be able to stand up even in an open conflict with the United States.[238]

[233] Eberle 2019, 86; Hansel and Oppermann 2013.
[234] See Dettke 2018, 166.
[235] Herzinger 2005, 239–40.
[236] For public opinion on this point, see Kaim 2004, 140.
[237] Szabo 2004a, 33.
[238] Herzinger 2005, 237.

While the SPD had originally seen the Iraq issue as a "wild card" in the campaign, the "hard no" emerged as a symbolically potent expression of German "stature" that resonated with voters.[239] This also accounts for why Schröder continued to oppose the US so strongly *after* he won reelection.[240] "Had Schroder merely used the Iraq issue to win reelection, he could have abandoned his opposition once he was returned to office... Yet, he maintained Germany's noncooperative stance, fully aware that it might find itself alone among [US] allies."[241]

CONCLUSION

Table 5.1 summarizes the evidence for contending logics in this case. If the reason for German non-participation had been material, normative, or political constraints, one might have expected Schröder to play down the conflict with Washington. In fact, he amplified it, picking a diplomatic fight even as he approved meaningful forms of support that the US had sought: transit and overflight rights for US forces, use of American bases in Germany, protection of these installations by Germans, delivery of anti-missile systems to countries at risk of Iraq retaliation, units of military police for the occupation of Iraq and participation in reconstructing the country.[242] As a "non-coalition but cooperating" country,[243] "Germany was... simultaneously retaining her sovereign 'principled position' by opposing the war and trying to prevent it, while sticking to her 'alliance obligations' by facilitating the war effort."[244] The logic of "holding back to rise above," which positions expression of principle in the context of claims for social status, can explain this Janus-faced quality of Germany's policy.

My theory also accounts for the longer-term evolution of Germany's foreign and security policy from reunification to the Iraq war. This evolution tracked German leaders' ongoing efforts to reconcile the culture of restraint with their desire for international prestige. In the years following reunification, Germany's legal and logistical inability to contribute to peacekeeping operations was seen as

[239] Baltrusaitis 2010, 132, 115–6; Dettke 2009, 162; Forsberg 2005.
[240] The most active counter-diplomacy was undertaken in early 2003, well after the election and even after Schröder's "efforts to increase voter support using the Iraq card proved ineffective" in February 2003 state elections. "Thus Schröder and the SPD gained no lasting electoral benefit from their position on the Iraq War." Johnston 2012, 147.
[241] Karp 2005, 66.
[242] Overhaus 2005, 29. Pond 2005, 38
[243] Baltrusatis 2010, 131.
[244] Eberle 2019, 76.

deeply embarrassing; the desire to safeguard Germany's standing and prestige vis-à-vis its allies led even the traditionally pacifist parties of the left to support "out-of-area" operations.[245] Yet by 2003, Germany had already demonstrated its capacity to send troops abroad and to meet its moral, humanitarian, obligations.[246] German anti-militarism no longer seemed so absolute and paralyzing that it might precipitate a new Sonderweg.[247] In place of this anxiety was a reinvigorated sense of exceptionalism grounded in Germany's commitment to international law and "non-violent forms of conflict management." [248] The fact that the Bush Administration so abrasively violated these values provided Schröder's government with an opportunity to assert Germany as their champion.[249]

Beyond the policies discussed in this chapter, the logic of performative restraint can make sense of the seemingly paradoxical ethic of "self-confident modesty" that is often attributed to German foreign policy in the twenty-first century.[250] German non-intervention epitomized a "foreign policy [that was] far from passive, as its demands for a UN Security Council seat, its increasing presence in Asia and the Arab world, its leadership in negotiations over Iran's nuclear potential, and its reform proposals for NATO show." [251] Returning to the normalization debate discussed at the start of this chapter, since 1990 Germany has "increasingly behave[d] in this realm [security policy] like other powers of similar size and stature," but "even more noteworthy than these signs of normalization are the many ways in which German security policy has remained exceptional." [252] Normalization—the development of military capabilities and the demonstration of willingness to use them—created opportunities for exceptionalism—through performances of restraint that would accordingly appear volitional and supererogatory.

[245] Duffield 1998, 158, 173-180, 198-9.
[246] Wittlinger 2010, 132.
[247] Wittlinger and Larose 2007, 486-8.
[248] Harnisch 2001, 37.
[249] Karp 2005, 69–73.
[250] CDU Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier, quoted in Miskimmon 2009, 571. See also Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 447.
[251] Karp 2005, 61–2.
[252] Hampton 2000, 196. Indeed, this debate remains live. It was reinvigorated during the 2011 Libya crisis, by the presidency of Donald Trump in the US (which re-introduced familiar antagonisms and tensions from the Bush era), and most recently by Russia's invasion of Ukraine reintroducing major war to the European continent. See Koenig 2020; Szabo 2017; Schieder 2020.

CHAPTER 5

PRESTIGE AND NON-PROLIFERATION: INDIA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICIES, 1964 – 1998

Following independence from Britain in 1947, India's leaders sought to position their country both at the frontier of civilian nuclear technology and in the vanguard of anti-nuclear weapons activism. Under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-1964), the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) was founded in 1948 and its director, Homi Jehangir Bhabha, secured cooperation agreements for research reactors with the United Kingdom, as well as with the United States and Canada. These reactors went critical in 1956 and 1960, respectively.[1] This emphasis on nuclear technology reflected Nehru's broader efforts to enhance India's international standing and his conviction that India "should not willingly be treated like a second-rate nation."[2] Nuclear energy promised a shortcut to modernity and, by extension, to parity with the Western powers whose imperialism had impeded India's development and imposed poverty.[3] By the mid-1960s, India boasted a relatively advanced nuclear program: a US intelligence report from 1964 judged that "[t]he Indians are now in a position to begin nuclear weapons development if they choose to do so."[4] And yet India publicly refrained from building "the bomb" for three more decades. This period witnessed mounting security threats on its borders, including from nuclear-armed rivals, and the consolidation of a global non-proliferation regime that denied its right to possess nuclear weapons. For their part, Indian leaders consistently presented their nuclear policies in terms of a "discourse of restraint," part of a "status-seeking strategy" to mark India as a "nuclear responsible."[5] In short, "India emphasized its technical capacity to engage in nuclear weapons proliferation alongside its moral decision to refrain from doing so."[6]

The framework of "holding back to rise above" explains key aspects of India's

[1] Chengappa 2000, 73–87; Malik 2010, 37.
[2] Nehru 1972, 440; Pardesi 2010, 112; Ollapally 2011.
[3] Cohen 2001, 158; Malik 2010, 39–45; Rajan 1975, 300.
[4] Hughes 1964, ii.
[5] Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018, 32; see also Malik 2010, 32.
[6] Sullivan 2014, 653; Nymalm and Plagemann 2019, 26.

nuclear program that have puzzled prior studies. According to George Perkovich's authoritative account, two "vital norms" shaped Indian national identity and foreign policy after independence: "one, India should achieve major power status in the international system and, two, India should demonstrate moral superiority over the world's dominant states, which have been perceived as exploitative, overly militarized, and insensitive to the needs and aspirations of the world's majority of poor people."[7] Yet Perkovich, like most observers, views this "great Indian duality" as hard to reconcile.[8] He describes as "ambiguous" and "contradictory" that Indian leaders "sought the power and prestige associated with nuclear weapon capability, while insisting that India preferred nuclear disarmament and would not build nuclear weapons."[9] This apparent tension dissolves once we recognize that Indian leaders used the performance of nuclear restraint to seek prestige. They believed that conspicuously holding back from the nuclear threshold would signal their underlying material capabilities—in the form of advanced scientific achievements—and moral exemplarity—in the form of a principled commitment to anti-imperialism and non-violence.

The strategy of performative nuclear restraint entailed two imperatives. First, New Delhi had to periodically emphasize its advanced nuclear capabilities, underlining the volitional nature of its restraint. Second, it had to oppose international norms that would undermine the supererogatory basis for its restraint. Both imperatives were at play when, on 19 May 1974, the government of Indira Gandhi performed a "peaceful nuclear explosion" to demonstrate India's advanced capabilities and to repudiate the obligations imposed by the nascent Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). While Indira Gandhi denied that this demonstration had any "political or foreign policy implications," it alarmed the international community and fostered a widespread assumption among the nuclear powers that India harbored the ambition of joining their club.[10] Thus, this chapter highlights how shifting standards can diminish the credibility and appeal of states' performances of restraint. As India became increasingly isolated from the non-proliferation regime in the late 1980s and 1990s, its leaders determined that performative restraint had failed as a pathway to prestige. This set the stage for its

[7] Perkovich 1999, 6, 448–9.
[8] Chengappa 2000, 59; Ogden 2014, 75.
[9] Perkovich 1999, 448-9.
[10] Bidwai and Vanaik 2000, 63.

nuclear weapons tests in 1998.

The chapter proceeds in five sections. First, it discusses how the preference for performative nuclear restraint emerged from beliefs about India's post-independence national identity, namely, that India was a great power that deserved international prestige and respect but that it was also a different kind of power with anti-imperialist, non-violent, and anti-nuclear values. The second section focuses on India's restraint in the face of China's 1964 nuclear tests and its attempts to leverage resulting prestige to shape the non-proliferation regime. The third section analyzes the 1974 "peaceful nuclear explosion" as a performance—a dramatic demonstration of India's opposition to the NPT—that defies the logics of material consequences and social appropriateness. The fourth section charts the post-1974 process whereby India's primary audience, the nuclear powers, came to doubt the sincerity of its performance, which undercut the rationale for nuclear restraint. The final section concludes, highlighting the counterintuitive finding that the NPT attenuated the link between prestige-seeking and nuclear restraint.

NUCLEAR POLICY IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

The desire for status shaped central aspects of India's post-independence foreign policy, including the overall strategy of "nonalignment" with the superpowers' Cold War blocs.[11] Science policy—and the development of advanced nuclear technology in particular—held pride of place within the pantheon of prestige-seeking strategies.[12] An advanced nuclear program signaled that Indians were "a scientifically adept, multicultural people, capable of achieving great things with a minimum of resources…"[13] The IAEC received significant investments of funding and manpower, and prioritized projects that were "completely Indian."[14] The government undertook these investments in an era of severe underdevelopment because they permitted "the attainment of a maximum degree of economic self-

[11] Edwardes 1965, 49; Bhushan 1976, 27; Nehru 2008, 540; Nehru 1950, 205.
[12] Cohen 2000, 158; Ollapally 2001, 927; Ollapally 2011, 212; Marwah 1977, 98–100; Bhatia 1979, 114; Ganguly 1999, 151.
[13] Cohen 2001, 176; Abraham 2010, 54; Abraham 1998, 17–54. In general, on nuclear weapons and "techno-nationalism," whereby states treat "technological advancement as a means to advance the state's status," see Haynes 2020, 37.
[14] Jaipal 1977, 45. The IAEC's nuclear research center in Mumbai had 7,000 scientists in the years after independence and 30,000 by the time of Nehru's and Bhabha's deaths in 1964 and 1966, respectively. Between 1951 and 1973, India spent $370 million, or $16.8 million per year, on the IAEC's Department of Atomic Energy.

reliance," in keeping with nonalignment and the vision of India as an independent, equal, actor on the world stage.[15] Similarly, Indian officials bristled at any conditionalities on transfers of nuclear technology and fuel from other states.[16] Restrictions "imposed by Western countries on the supply of nuclear fuel [were said to] 'devalue India's national prestige' by asking for 'humiliating terms and conditions.'"[17] As early as the 1950s, Indian officials refused to guarantee to other powers that they would not develop nuclear weapons. When France and the Soviet Union refused to transfer nuclear fuel as a result, the Indian Parliament demanded the development of an indigenous fuel supply. By 1964, the United States intelligence community assessed that India had "put themselves in a position to" proliferate and was only one year away from a nuclear explosive device.[18]

At the same time, Nehru adopted anti-nuclear activism and leadership of the burgeoning global disarmament movement as main tenets of India's diplomacy in the Non-Aligned Movement and vis-à-vis the nuclear powers themselves.[19] Nehru pledged that India would "awaken the conscience of the world to the evil effects of atomic explosion," and "whatever the circumstances, we shall never use this atomic energy for evil purposes."[20] India's "vociferous advocacy of global disarmament" during this period included championing early versions of treaties at the UN to ban testing and limit proliferation and signing the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963 without reservations.[21] These policies were framed in terms of dismantling global imperialism.[22] Since nuclear weapons were concentrated in the hands of the Western powers, they represented "the fundamental corruption of Western modernity, which India should not merely reject for itself but teach all humanity to spurn."[23] Nehru served as a particularly effective identity entrepreneur whose

[15] Ibid., 46; Thakur 1998, 40.
[16] See, e.g., Nehru 1961, 194. There is some evidence that India's nuclear scientists resisted international conditionalities and safeguards, even during the first decade after independence, with a view to preserving the option of building nuclear weapons. As discussed below, this established a pattern of policy hedging on the "nuclear option" that would continue for decades. For example, the plutonium ultimately used for India's 1974 "peaceful nuclear explosion" was taken from the CIRUS reactor. Bidwai and Vanaik 2000, 61.
[17] Foreign Minister Narashima Rao quoted in Rao 1982, 773; see also Epstein 1983.
[18] Central Intelligence Agency 1965; Central Intelligence Agency 1964.
[19] Nymalm and Plagemann 2019, 26; Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018; Larson and Shevchenko 2010a; Malik 2010, 48–9; Rajan 1975, 300; Rana 1976, 50.
[20] Narlikar 2006, 66.
[21] Fair 2005, 25–6; Marwah 1977, 114; Moshaver 1991, 110.
[22] Nehru 2008, 416; Nehru 1961, 279-80.
[23] Hymans 2006, 176; Kennedy 2011a, 142–7; Cohen 2000, 18; Sullivan 2014.

"pacifist and antipower themes were never completely exorcised over the following decades, because in some sense the legitimacy of India's foreign policy rested on their continued evocation." [24] As one scholar summarizes, the "dominant narrative of post-colonial Indian foreign policy has been one of India as a world class leader of the normative kind, abjuring power politics and resisting global hierarchies."[25] As "moral policeman" of the Third World and promotor of an alternative world order, India's leaders believed, New Delhi could broadcast its unique intellectual and civilizational characteristics.[26]

In sum, the twin pillars of the Indian nuclear policy that emerged after independence were, first, enthusiasm for nuclear energy and pointed refusal to assent to perceived external limitations on the civilian nuclear program, and second, equally enthusiastic opposition to nuclear weapons and frequent championing of the cause of disarmament. As Nehru put it in 1958: "We have the technical know-how for manufacturing the atom bomb. We can do it in three or four years if we divert sufficient resources in that direction. But we have given the world an assurance that we shall never do so."[27] Indian leaders "framed control over the development and management of nuclear weapons with reference to 'internal restraints' and 'ethical limits', in implied (and sometimes explicit) contradiction to the nuclear postures of existing nuclear states." [28] Any impulse towards weaponization was restrained by an ethical opposition to the indiscriminate destructive power of nuclear weapons, which violated the Gandhian commitment to non-violence.[29] "By claiming the technical capacity to build the bomb, India (and its scientists) would win international prestige on scientific-technical grounds, while the resistance to the temptation actually to build the bomb would earn moral prestige."[30]

[24] Nayar and Paul 2003, 115, 145. See also Sullivan 2014, 646; Perkovich 1999, 450. The Nehruvian worldview may have proved especially enduring given that he was succeeded as Prime Minister by other committed Gandhians such as Lal Badhur Shastri, Morarji Desai, and Narasimha Rao, and by his family, including his daughter, Indira Gandhi, and grandson, Rajiv Gandhi.
[25] Ollapally 2011, 206–11.
[26] Couper 1969, 191; Malik 2010, 46; cf. Kapur 1970 (for a critical assessment).
[27] Quoted in Perkovich 2002, 28.
[28] Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018, 25; Nandy 1974, 966–70.
[29] So credible were Nehru's anti-nuclear convictions—and, too, his desire for autonomy—that in the early 1960s the US State Department assessed with 90 percent confidence that Nehru would reject US aid in building nuclear weapons if it were offered. Bidwai and Vanaik 2000, 58; Rajan 1975, 301.
[30] Perkovich 2002, 28.

China Tests India's Commitment to Restraint

The first major test of this policy came in 1962 when Indian forces were routed in a border war with China, calling into question the wisdom of decentering military power from foreign policy.[31] Convinced that going nuclear would diminish India's standing in the Non-Aligned Movement, Nehru refused to authorize a nuclear test after this defeat, even when it became clear that China would likely perform one in 1963 or 1964.[32] When, several months after Nehru's death in 1964, China conducted its first nuclear test, this augured, in the words of one Indian official, that "China may subject a non-nuclear India to periodic blackmail, weaken its people's spirit and self-confidence, and thus achieve… its major political and military objectives in Asia."[33] Even within the Congress Party, many officials feared that Beijing's tests threatened, not only India's security, but also its "prestige in the Third World [which] had declined in relation to China's…"[34] Indeed, "most Indian legislators and bureaucrats viewed China's bomb in political terms—as a resource for Chinese political hegemony," and thus "only a few Indians originally advocated nuclear weapons as a solution to the problem."[35] The response to the tests hinged on how to preserve Indian prestige, as a careful parsing of the ensuring parliamentary and governmental debates reveals.

Following the Chinese tests, Indian elites defended their anti-nuclear stance by appealing to the conception of India as an international moral authority. Debates over India's nuclear program occurred not only in the lower house of Parliament (Lok Sabha) and within the Congress Party, but more generally among elites in the media and civil society.[36] While "arguments for rejecting nuclear arms were made mostly along moral and ethical lines," proponents of restraint also "argued that India's credentials for boosting the nuclear disarmament agenda would be strengthened if the country *refrained from developing nuclear weapons* even in the face of potential aggression by a nuclear-armed adversary."[37] Several leaders stated this explicitly. During a Lok Sabha debate, Prime Minister Lal Badhur Shastri called upon members to consider "what burden will [proliferation] impose

[31] Ganguly 1999, 152; Cortright and Mattoo 1996, 58.
[32] Couper 1969, 192.
[33] Quoted in Gupta 1966, 62.
[34] Couper 1969, 195.
[35] Lavoy 1993, 201.
[36] See, e.g., Brady 1964.
[37] Ganguly 1999, 154 (emphasis added); Gupta 1966, 57–8.

on the country? And whether at the same time would we be able to work more for peace or to raise a strong voice against nuclear warfare and nuclear weapons, as India has been doing till now?"[38] In a later speech in Parliament, Shastri reiterated that "[w]e cannot think at present in terms of making atomic bombs in India. We must try to eliminate the atomic bombs in the world rather than entire into a nuclear arms competition."[39]

This view extended beyond the Prime Minister. Former Defense Minister Krishna Menon was even more pointed in a 1965 editorial: "Having asked everybody not to manufacture the bomb, can we go for it now? *India's prestige would go down if it went for an atom bomb…"*[40] Morarji Desai, the Minister of External Affair who would later become Prime Minister, maintained that "India will be playing right into the hands of China if because of fear or emotional reaction or prestige considerations, it enters into a nuclear race with China." For a nuclear weapons program would sap India of material and moral capital and thereby "eliminate it as a political factor in Asia and Africa."[41] These leaders believed that "[c]ontinued abstention from nuclear weapons would solidify India's claim to a special place in the world…"[42] The desire for prestige served as a politically salient motive for maintaining the policy of restraint even under the shadow of China's bomb.[43]

The 1964 debate also permitted proponents of proliferation to publicly made their case. The pro-bomb camp drew primarily from the Hindu nationalist movement and from right-wing parties, including from the Bharatiya Janata Sangh (BJS), which had called for acquiring nuclear weapons in their election platform as early as 1962.[44] While some offered arguments grounded in security logic, most proponents of the bomb also appealed to prestige.[45] Put simply, the Indian right

[38] Quoted in in Bidwai and Vanaik 2000, 192; Mirchandani 1968.
[39] Quoted in Perkovich 1999, 74. While Shastri did not deny the China threat, he maintained that "[f]rom a purely practical point it is more important that we build up our own conventional weapons and strengthen ourselves." Quoted in Central Intelligence Agency 1965.
[40] Quoted in Lavoy 1993, 198 (emphasis added).
[41] Quoted in Betts 1979, 1058.
[42] Reiss 1988, 211.
[43] Krishna 1965, 121.
[44] Couper 1969, 197. There was also support on the left. The Samyukta Socialist Party also called for India to "actively consider acquiring a nuclear deterrent of its own" after the Chinese tests. Perkovich 1999, 66.
[45] For example of a security-based argument, see Subrahmanyam 2018, 293–4. Yet even security rhetoric was inflected with prestige concerns. For example, a common concern was that "limited nuclear armament has now become an inescapable requirement for the

was motivated by an "enduring and deep-rooted aspiration…for the role of a major power, and the related belief that the possession of an independent nuclear capability is an essential prerequisite for achieving that status."[46] An anonymous editorial in the BJS official party organ, *The Organizer*, asserted that "India has to have the bomb if it is to hold sway in the world…Not to make it would be to let the whole world treat us as some third-rate country."[47] In contrast to the Congress Party's foreign policy, which it derided as "obsessed with international morality," the Indian right appealed to the "nationalist desires of Indians to be regarded as a world power—not a world *moral* power, but a world *atomic* power."[48] Arguments that a nuclear bomb would undermine India's moral authority failed to sway right-wing nationalists, for whom "only India seemed to regard [the Chinese tests] as a breach of international morality. Many African and Asian countries seemed to regard it as a sign that an Asia nation could be as powerful as one of the major Western powers, [which inspired] awe and admiration, not…revulsion and consternation."[49]

While pro-bomb arguments failed to carry the day, political pressure did shift Shastri's position. In the Lok Sabha on 27 November 1964, to little fanfare, the Prime Minister endorsed research on "peaceful nuclear explosions."[50] According to an officials' later account, Shastri approved this step at IAEC Director Bhabha's request but refused to authorize any research—let alone tests—that would jeopardize India's non-nuclear status.[51] Shastri reported to Parliament: "Dr. Bhabha has made it quite clear…that as far as we can progress and improve upon nuclear devices, we should do so… [to] reap its peaceful benefits and we can use it for the development of our nation," illustrating this point with the examples of excavation and mining projects.[52] The goal of this program was to reduce the time required for construction of a nuclear explosive device to six months.[53] This step

preservation of our real independence which constitutes the core of our non-alignment." Krishna 1965, 129; Nehru 1965, 4–5. As discussed previously, the doctrine of nonalignment had as much to do with India's standing as with its security, given that it ruled out security-enhancing policies such as alliances.

[46] Nayar and Paul 2003, 3.

[47] Quoted in Lavoy 1993, 198.

[48] Couper 1969, 194, 198; Ogden 2014, 59.

[49] Ibid., 195; Ogden 2014, 70; Erdman 1966, 12.

[50] Malik 2010, 55; see also Shastri in Lok Sabha Secretariat 1964, 2286–99.

[51] Subrahmanyam 2018, 294.

[52] Quoted in Perkovich 1999, 83.

[53] Ogden 2011, 290–1.

towards the nuclear threshold reflected Bhabha's influence and the IAEC's bureaucratic clout,[54] as well as political pressure to mollify nationalist elements of the Congress Party.[55] But Shastri likely saw this step as consistent with his opposition to nuclear weapons.[56] While he believed that, to "preserve India's moral standing, any work on nuclear explosives had to be peaceful," research on a PNE could be "reconciled with India's normative rejection of nuclear weapons…on which some of India's world prestige depended."[57]

PRESERVING THE NUCLEAR OPTION

Whatever their personal beliefs, Shastri and other Indian officials presented their response to the Chinese tests as restraint. The nuclear policy that emerged after 1964 entailed "keeping the option open" of building nuclear weapons but "not developing a deployable nuclear force."[58] Officials repeatedly emphasized India's proximity to the nuclear threshold.[59] As Foreign Minister Swaran Singh informed the Lok Sabha in 1964, "the policy (of making a bomb) is kept under constant review…In the matter of peaceful development of atomic energy we are pushing ahead and giving it top priority. As the House is aware, the world recognizes that we are one of the countries which are capable of being an atomic power within a reasonably short time."[60] Even officials who staunchly opposed outright weaponization maintained, like Krishna Menon in 1965, that "[i]t is not in our interests to permit doubts to be engendered in regard to our declared policy and integrity in respect of the nuclear weapons."[61]

Such statements sought to telegraph that India "*could* go nuclear by tearing up undertakings and scrapping understandings with the United States, Canada," and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), founded in 1957 to monitor the use of sensitive nuclear technologies.[62] As mentioned above, Nehru had

[54] Marwah 1977, 98–100; Ganguly 1999, 151; Reiss 1988, 213–5.
[55] Ogden 2014, 9; Nayar and Paul 2003, 3; Couper 1969, 194–8; Krishna 1965, 135–7.
[56] Perkovich 2000, 56.
[57] Perkovich 2002, 28-30.
[58] Betts 1977, 1057; Ganguly 1999, 154. Specifically, India possessed the "checklist" of "technological, industrial, and natural resource 'components'" needed for a high degree of nuclear latency. Kitano 2016, 475; Fuhrmann and Tkach 2015, 444–5.
[59] Wohlstetter et al. 1978, 60–71; Virnave 2001, esp. 109-28.
[60] Quoted in Noorani 1969, 496; see also Paranjpe 1997.
[61] Quoted in Gupta 1966, 65.
[62] Rajan 1975, 300–1; King 1971, 198. At the same time, exercising the nuclear option was acknowledged to entail consequences. For example, anticipated sanctions would jeopardize

established this discursive model as early as 1961, insisting that "if India's atomic energy policy were intended for weapons it could almost certainly have the atomic bomb in 1962."[63] The year after the Chinese tests, R. K. Nehru, India's former chief diplomat, laid out this script in particularly plain terms, stressing the volitional and prosocial nature of India's restraint: In the early 1960s, India's nuclear capabilities had been "higher than those of China... But inspite [sic] of our higher capabilities, we decided from the very start, because of our larger interests as a member of the world community, not to use our capabilities for the production of nuclear weapons."[64]

Notably, both bro-bomb and anti-bomb parties tended to offer optimistic estimates of nuclear weapons' cost. Shortly after the Chinese tests, Bhabha publicly offered what officials would later privately call a "ridiculously low" estimate: only $368,000 for a 10-kiloton bomb.[65] While some analysts have interpreted this statement as an effort to pressure political leaders into testing, it was in keeping with the tradition of officials—both scientists and politicians—invoking a nuclear weapons capability.[66] Pronouncements about the feasibility of going nuclear also enhanced the clout and standing of the nuclear scientists, who continued to push for incremental advances in India's capabilities. In late 1967, for instance, Bhabha's successor, Raja Ramanna, directed his subordinates to begin the calculations necessary for the explosion of a plutonium device.[67]

Other states could not directly observe such developments, but they took note when Indian officials broadcast the contingent nature of their restraint. As a correspondent in the *Statesman* put it, "India's self-abnegation in relation to nuclear weapons could not be considered a commitment for all times."[68] When

international cooperation on projects such as the American-built enriched uranium reactor at Tarapur and the Canadian designed natural uranium reactor in Rajasthan

[63] Quoted in Marwah 1977, 101.

[64] Nehru 1965, 4.

[65] Lavoy 1993, 201. Dr. Vikram A. Sarabhai, Bhabha's successor, came out strongly against the weapons program, saying it would require a "total commitment of national resources." Indira Gandhi herself characterized Bhabha's estimate of Rs. 1,800,000 as "ridiculously low." See Noorani 1967, 501. There is some debate, based on divergent assessments of India's technical prowess at the time, whether Bhabha was bluffing. US intelligence estimates, since declassified, assessed that this capability became viable in 1961, though later accounts suggest it was not until the later 1960s. To some extent, this is beside the point as India's nuclear restraint included the conscious policy decision to hold back development of the technologies needed for this capability.

[66] Malik 2010, 58–60; King 1971, 199–200.

[67] Perkovich 1999, 125.

[68] Quoted in King 1971, 203.

Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, became Prime Minister in 1966, she "reaffirmed India's opposition to the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons, and… reiterated that India ha[d] no intention of manufacturing them…"[69] But in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde* less than a year later, she was more qualified: "We for our part may find themselves having to take a nuclear decision at any moment, and it is therefore not possible for us to tie our hands…"[70] These statements fueled suspicions that India intended to proliferate. Yet for Indian officials, restraint was only practically possible insofar as India occupied a position of relative strength. As Gandhi had stated:

> What am I to advise a man to do who wants to kill but is unable owing to his being maimed? Before I can make him feel the virtue of not killing, I must restore to him the arm he has lost…A nation that is unfit to fight cannot from experience prove the virtue of not fighting. I do not infer from this that India must fight. But I do say that India must know how to fight.[71]

Likewise, India should champion nuclear disarmament from a position of strength. Per one commentator, India would be "more, not less, effective in pressing for disarmament if we arm ourselves for our defence than if we are helpless…"[72] Or, per a Congress minister: "It's no use becoming a puny member of the nuclear club; that won't impress anyone. We must acquire the capability and then we will have ample time to decide what to do with it."[73] This logic reconciled India's policy of approaching the nuclear threshold with its desire to lead the global disarmament movement. For a "country, which when it is exposed to a threat, refuses in the interests of world community to develop nuclear weapons has the right to demand some progress should be made in the direction of arms control and disarmament."[74]

New Delhi, the Nuclear Powers, and the NPT

The decade after 1964 tested Indian leaders' belief that there was "political value in India's restraint in not producing nuclear weapons."[75] After China's nuclear tests,

[69] Jaipal 1977, 46.
[70] Quoted in Popp, Horovitz, and Wenger 2016, 151.
[71] Quoted in Erickson 1969, 374.
[72] Krishna 1965, 135–7.
[73] Betts 1977, 1057; Ganguly 1999, 158; Subrahmanyam 1974.
[74] Gupta 1966, 58.
[75] Kapur 1976, 163 (emphasis added); Quester 1970a.

officials cited their restraint when seeking concessions from the nuclear powers.[76] B. K. Nehru, India's Ambassador to the United States, emphasized the

> great pressure on the Indian government to explode a nuclear bomb. This pressure has come after the Chinese nuclear explosion. The Indian government has so far resisted this pressure, but obviously India or any other self-denying non-nuclear power, if it does deny itself the position of an independent nuclear capability, must call upon the international community to defend itself against a nuclear attack.[77]

Anxious that the extension of a nuclear umbrella over India would compromise its nonalignment and formalize its subordination to a nuclear patron, New Delhi sought a "dual guarantee" from both superpowers.[78] When the superpowers spurned this idea, New Delhi turned to pursuing a *global* pledge that all nuclear weapons states would promise to refrain from attacking or coercing all non-nuclear weapons states.[79] Beginning in 1965, Indian leaders began campaigning for a "universal non-proliferation treaty…based upon those states with nuclear arsenals giving them up in order to inspire 'would-be nuclear' states not to attempt development."[80]

The nuclear powers rejected this framework, and as negotiations for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) progressed, India found itself on the defensive. At the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and at the UN General Assembly, India fought to preserve its right to conduct "peaceful nuclear explosions" (PNEs) for industrial and developmental purposes.[81] Not only India, but also other countries with advanced nuclear programs, such as Japan, Brazil, and Sweden, were loath to surrender their right to conduct PNEs as a condition of acceding to the treaty, as the Johnson Administration proposed in Geneva. When the NPT opened for signature in 1968, Article II elided any distinction between nuclear "weapons" and "explosive devices," while Article V provided that only recognized nuclear weapons states (NWSs) could conduct nuclear explosions, framing this activity as

[76] Bhagavan 2019, 131–45.
[77] Quoted in Noorani 1967, 495.
[78] Ogden 2011, 290–1.
[79] Noorani 1967, 492-3. For example, see Indian Congress Heads Call for Nuclear Arms 1966; Finney 1967.
[80] Ogden 2011, 290–1.
[81] Mirchandani 1968, 121–50.

incompatible with non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) status.[82] Moreover, the treaty recognized the possession of nuclear weapons by all states that had previously declared them while obligating all other states to abjure proliferation.[83]This created a two-tiered regime in which the five legitimate nuclear weapons states—the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China—were also the permanent members of the UN Security Council, reinforcing the perception that nuclear weapons were a great power prerogative.

Indian diplomats had strenuously objected to this framework because of its "unequal and discriminatory character and lack of mutually balanced obligations and responsibilities," which fueled fears of "technological colonialism" whereby India would have to "beseech[] the nuclear powers, cap in hand, for permission to buy or borrow advances in nuclear technology."[84] Since Nehru, Indian leaders had seen restrictions on their access to nuclear technology as "an infringement of sovereignty and status."[85] Unreciprocated restrictions violated the tenets of "equality, independence, and self-sufficiency" that guided India in the negotiations.[86] Said one right-wing politician of the NPT, "[t]hey are all Brahmins, we are all pariahs."[87] In even more pointed terms, the NPT regime was dubbed "nuclear apartheid" – an epithet that was intended to call attention to its injustice but also to India's principled opposition to its allegedly racist and imperialist dynamics.[88] This bitterness resonated beyond the far-right, and was echoed by India's Minister for External Affairs.[89] A consensus coalesced in Indira Gandhi's cabinet that India should not join the NPT.[90] For doing so would obviate the nuclear option and ratify India's second-tier status in nuclear matters.[91]

THE "PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION"

Indian leaders appealed to this logic in justifying the decision to explode a nuclear

[82] Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 1968, Art. V.
[83] Quester 1970b.
[84] Rajan 1975, 303; Thakur 1998, 41; Jaipal 1977, 48.
[85] King 1971, 210.
[86] Reiss 1988, 219; Perkovich 1999, 127–36.
[87] Quoted in King 1971, 205; but see Harkavy 1981, 135–6.
[88] Subrahmanyam 2002; Fey et al. 2013.
[89] Rao [1982] 1995, 165–72.
[90] Thakur 1998, 41; Paranjpe 1997, 36; Weiss 2010, 261-2; Perkovich 1999, 127-36
[91] On the obligations imposed on the non-nuclear weapon states, see Müller, Fischer, and Kötter 1994, 20.

device in 1974.[92] Conducted by the civilian IAEC using plutonium from the civilian nuclear program, the underground test had a declared yield of 10 kilotons. These parameters were carefully managed to preclude any violation of India's international agreements or treaty obligations.[93] The test—allegedly codenamed "Smiling Buddha," officially "Pokhran I," after the test range in the Rajasthan desert—had been authorized a year earlier as a PNE.[94] Officially, what distinguished a PNE was that it "had few or no military implications and was simply part of India's ongoing attempts to harness the peaceful uses of nuclear energy."[95] But by New Delhi's own admission, the technology required for a PNE was identical to that required for a nuclear weapon.[96]

Given this technological isomorphism, there is surprisingly little evidence that security considerations were sufficient, or even salient, for motivating Pokhran I. From an extensive analysis of official discourse surrounding the PNE, Karsten Frey concludes that "international standing" served as the primary motive while "the actual applicability of nuclear explosions, peaceful or military, [remained] secondary in relevance."[97] Many Indians felt that "the world has never given India enough credit for the courage and firmness shown by the Indian government, when, in the light of the 1962 debacle and continuing Chinese hostility, and of the substantial progress made by Indian nuclear scientists in the development of nuclear technology, it refused to be pushed into exercising its theoretical option to manufacture nuclear weapons."[98] Indian leaders also resented that Beijing had seemed to gain prestige by joining the nuclear club.[99] This motivated the PNE as "a show of our restraint."[100]

As a performance of restraint, the PNE served two purposes. First, it demonstrated the exact extent of Indian nuclear technology, which had remained unapparent. Writing in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in 1970, George Quester had noted that "[f]ew Americans or Europeans today know that India is capable of making nuclear weapons… the explosion of a rudimentary Indian bomb

[92] Marwah 1977, 99.
[93] Jaipal 1977, 44.
[94] Perkovich 1999, 67.
[95] Ganguly 1999, 160; Weinraub 1974.
[96] Rajan 1975, 312-3.
[97] Frey 2006, 129.
[98] Rajan 1975: 302; Mirchandani 1978, 62–7.
[99] Patil 1969, 71.
[100] Quoted in Chengappa 2000, 46.

or peaceful explosive would… make editorial writers and citizens all around the world sit up and take notice…"[101] Meanwhile, the Indian economy had continued to struggle. It was felt necessary to demonstrate that "despite the modesty of industrial and economic progress, in the nuclear field India is first class."[102] Indira Gandhi explicitly framed the PNE as just such a "demonstration.[103] India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations emphasized that the PNE "device was fabricated by Indian scientists, and facilities and materials used in the experiment were also Indian…"[104] Furthermore, the official stated, the test reflected India's "inherent obligation…with its tradition of scholarship, original thinking and cultural heritage to participate fully in the march of science, which is probably mankind's greatest enterprise today."[105]

On one hand, the explosion of a bulky and relatively low-yield device did not radically alter India's security situation. Yet on the other hand, it signaled that New Delhi "possessed the technological capacity to develop nuclear weapons if security interests required it," perhaps within weeks.[106] "By irrefutably proving that it could develop nuclear weapons, and then choosing not to do so, India could even claim a moral superiority over the nuclear weapons states."[107] As Perkovich recognizes, [t]he explosive technology demonstrated that India was among the world's leading technological powers and could become a major military power if it chose to."[108] After 1974, it was clear that "India unquestionably disposes of the technical knowledge with which to produce a nuclear explosive, having proven that by exploding one… [India] has celebrated its nuclear status by declaring it to the world, by way of actual explosion, that it not only can explode a nuclear device but dared to and did."[109]

Second, as alluded to above, Indian leaders desired to reassert their "opposition against perceived Western dominance and discrimination" in the nonproliferation regime.[110] Following the NPT's entry into force, tacit acceptance

[101] Quester 1970, 16.
[102] Betts 1979, 1054.
[103] Abraham 2010, 55; Moshaver 1991, 109.
[104] Jaipal 1977, 44.
[105] Ibid., 45.
[106] Perkovich 1999, 189; Thakur 1998, 42; Marwah 1977, 97.
[107] Reiss 1988, 227.
[108] Perkovich 2002, 34.
[109] Schelling 1976, 77.
[110] Frey 2006, 129.

of its framework would have amounted to surrendering the nuclear option: In conducting the PNE the "real decision was not to relinquish a demonstrable military capability."[111] At the same time, a *peaceful* nuclear explosion demonstrated "self-restraint in declining to become a nuclear-weapons power," which repudiated the NPT's division of "the world into... two exhaustive categories..." of haves and have-nots.[112] The PNE served as a "symbolic act of opposition against a colonialist world order, manifested in the NPT, that denied India its merited status."[113] Opposition to nuclear weapons and opposition to the NPT—seen as contradictory by most scholars—were two sides of the same coin in India, where 53 percent opposed building nuclear weapons but 82 percent opposed ratifying the NPT.[114]

Similarly, the PNE was justified as safeguarding India's position as a champion of disarmament. Commentary from India's Ambassador to the United States in *The Indian Express* reasoned that

> [n]othing would be so detrimental to the cause of non-proliferation as the evolution of a system which divides the world into nuclear weapons and second-class countries; which penalizes non-weapons countries by placing discriminatory restrictions on their peaceful developmental aspirations; ...which underestimates the forces of nationalism, pride and self-respect in other countries merely because they are today poor or vulnerable; and which ignores the energy needs, philosophical traditional, international record, and geopolitical contexts of individual countries by seeking to clamp one uniform regime of restrictions on all non-weapon powers.[115]

India could maintain its position of moral authority, it seemed, only by violating the nonproliferation norms that threatened the source of such authority—*supererogatory* nuclear restraint. The PNE also magnified the salience of India's subsequent decision not to proceed with additional testing or the development of a nuclear arsenal. As one observer put it, "if India continues to show exemplary self-restraint and a wholly new path in harnessing nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes, may it not earn as much prestige among other nations as it would by

[111] Marwah 1977, 105–6; Rosecrance 1966, 3–4.
[112] Rajan 1975, 325; Marwah 1977, 116.
[113] Frey 2006, 128.
[114] Nandy 1972.
[115] Nani Palkhivala, Indian Ambassador to the United States (1977-9), quoted in Frey 2006, 130.

manufacturing nuclear weapons?"[116] Indian diplomats doubled down on "stak[ing] out the moral high ground by proclaiming India's restraint in not developing nuclear weapons when it had both the technical capacity to do so and an obvious threat to spur it on."[117]

International Reactions to the PNE

International reactions to the PNE were initially mixed.[118] Many developing states "congratulated India on its achievement. One of their own had demonstrated that it could master the technology that previously only the advanced, industrialized nations possessed."[119] Among the nuclear powers, France sent a congratulatory message.[120] "The Soviet news agency Tass called the test a 'peaceful explosion' and said India was 'striving to keep up with the world technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions."[121] China's reaction was muted.[122] Canada and the United States expressed skepticism of the "peaceful" framing, with Canada maintaining that an explosion of any kind violated the CIRUS agreement.[123] Both governments cut off supplies of nuclear fuel but did not terminate other aid, a reaction seen as relatively mild. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited India in the fall of 1974 and acknowledged that "[t]he size and position of India give it a special role of leadership in South Asian and world affairs. They confer on it at the same time the special responsibility for accommodation and restraint that strength entails."[124] Behind the scenes, US intelligence officials noted that "the simple knowledge that India can resume testing in the near future serves several important political purposes" by "reminding others that India is a significant Asian actor whose views count in the calculus of power relations in Asia."[125] The chief goals of the PNE were assessed to be "greater respect abroad for India's power" and "correct[ing] the inequities of the [NPT] to induce other states to give greater consideration to India's stand on disarmament."[126]

[116] Rajan 1975, 322.
[117] Malik 2010, 66.
[118] For an overview, see Seshagiri 1975.
[119] Ehrlich 1985, 334.
[120] Weiss 2010, 263.
[121] Quoted in Central Intelligence Agency 1974a.
[122] U.S. Department of State 1974b.
[123] Central Intelligence Agency 1974b.
[124] Kissinger 1974, 741. See also Kux 1992, 181.
[125] U.S. Department of State 1981, 4; Albright 1998; Perkovich 1993, 87–8.
[126] U.S. Department of State 1974a.

In the aftermath of the tests, Indian elites noted with some anxiety the "need for international recognition of a new category of nuclear-capable, but non-weapons states."[127] Instead, the PNE's use of plutonium from a civilian reactor quickly emerged as a major source of concern in the non-proliferation regime.[128] The Nuclear Suppliers Group adopted more restrictive guidelines and legislation passed in the US between 1976 and 1978 required full-scope safeguards for recipients of US nuclear technology, even those not party to the NPT.[129] These developments had the effect of "placing [India] in nuclear isolation" while also consolidating the new conventions of a post-NPT era.[130] This response reflected the somewhat quixotic nature of India's policy in the face of evolving conventions of NNWS status. Performative restraint required India to convince the world that it remained a NNWS. But the markers of this status were responsive to normative and technological developments. For instance, while in the 1960s, the IAEA had acknowledged potential industrial uses of nuclear explosions, a scientific consensus later emerged that the commercial promise of PNEs had been vastly overstated.[131] The lack of plausible non-military use cases reinforced the perception that nuclear explosions of any kind should be taken to confer de facto nuclear weapon state status.[132] India could defy this convention embedded within the NPT, but not demolish it. As most states came to accept the NPT, they increasingly interpreted the PNE as having placed India "already partly over the threshold."[133] Merely stopping short of building nuclear weapons no longer appeared supererogatory. "Due to India's fierce opposition to the [NPT]... the international audience increasingly viewed India's continued calls for total nuclear disarmament as an empty phrase that was only applied as a discourse strategy to legitimize India's quest for the bomb."[134]

[127] Ibid.
[128] Washington's concern over India's potential misuse of ostensibly peaceful technology and nuclear fuel supplied by the United States escalated with the Carter Administration beginning in 1976. See Power 1979, 577–90.
[129] Reiss 1988.
[130] Weiss 2010, 264.
[131] Weiss 2010, 261-4; cf. Long 1976, 18–28.
[132] Hymans 2010, 164–6; Schelling 1976, 77. For an illustrative assessment, see Ehrlich 1985, 319.. Even staunch defenders of India's "unparalleled restraint" in the post-1974 era were, by 1998, prepared to recognize the 1974 explosion as India's "first nuclear *test*." Subrahmanyam 1998, 12 (emphasis added).
[133] Harkavy 1981, 136; Reiss 1988, 230; Ganguly 1999, 165.
[134] Frey 2007, 379.

Alternative Explanations for the PNE

Given the central significance of the PNE to India's nuclear strategy, it is worth considering alternative explanations in some detail. The timing of the PNE—after a decade of conflicts with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965, 1971-2)—has led many scholars to emphasize a security motive.[135] Ostensibly, the PNE was intended to have the same effect as a traditional nuclear test—that is, to serve as a kind of "latent" or "existential" deterrent.[136] In a widely noted radio broadcast after the Chinese tests, Bhabha twice emphasized that "[t]he only defence against [a nuclear] attack appears to be a *capability* and threat of retaliation.... *Capability* of retaliation appears to be the most powerful deterrence."[137] In keeping with this logic, there is some evidence that, since a full-fledged nuclear program would have been prohibitively expensive, Indira Gandhi's cabinet sought deterrence on the cheap by demonstrating only that it could build nuclear weapons in relatively short order if pushed to do so.[138]

This explanation also encounters serious problems. In terms of timing, the 1974 PNE did not directly follow the 1962 border conflict with China; China's first nuclear test in 1964; subsequent Chinese tests, five of which followed by 1968; nor Beijing's successful launch of a ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead in 1968.[139] Rather, New Delhi waited for a decade, until shortly after the Indian military won a resounding *victory* against Pakistan.[140] If security was the paramount motive, it is unclear why India would have stuck with restraint after defeat but jettisoned it upon victory.[141] It is true that India was deeply concerned in the early 1970s by US policies of engagement with Pakistan and opening to China.[142] But Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had already bolstered India's security situation before the test, signing a twenty-year treaty of "peace, friendship, and cooperation"

[135] Nayar and Paul 2003, 164; Betts 1979, 1056; Tiwari 1988, 31; Thomas 1990, 140.
[136] Ganguly and Hagerty 2005; Debs and Monteiro 2016, 256–7; Ogilvie-White 1996.
[137] Quoted in Noorani 1969, 490 (emphasis added).
[138] Perkovich 1999, 143.
[139] Ibid., 126.
[140] The record on other steps to mitigate military threats is mixed. After the 1962 border war, New Delhi increased its army from 400,000 to 860,000, but as we have seen, it declined to seriously pursue extended deterrence guarantees after China's 1964 tests. In any event, the outcome of the 1971-2 conflict would seem to motivate nuclear weapons development not in India but rather in Pakistan, whose conventional capabilities had been shown to be inadequate; indeed, there is evidence that it did.
[141] Sagan 1996, 65.
[142] Ogden 2011, 292.

with the Soviet Union in August 1971, which included a virtual Soviet security guarantee.[143] The years after 1971 had also seen a slight détente between New Delhi and Islamabad. In the words of a senior Indian official, the provocative PNE "could not have come at a worse time" for Indo-Pakistan relations.[144]

Even more strikingly, the PNE did not actually demonstrate that India had a functioning nuclear deterrent. Despite the urgings of IAEC scientists, Indira Gandhi refused to authorize the follow-on tests that were required to collect necessary data and make technical refinements.[145] Moreover, India made no effort to develop effective delivery capabilities—such as long range bombers—until the 1990s and did not begin to seriously invest in a missile program for another decade after the test, undermining its ability to adopt an effective posture of "assured retaliation."[146] The Indian Defense Minister, K. B. Lall, was informed of the test only a week beforehand and later recalled that it "did not arise out of the Defense Ministry or on security grounds" because "if it was a defense project, there would have been some discussion."[147] Defense officials feared that "an Indian nuclear bomb effort would *decrease* Indian security" by increasing the likelihood of a rival's preemptive attack.[148] Nor was the security motive salient for India's leaders, including Indira Gandhi, who in 1968 had argued that "[n]othing will better serve the interests of those that are hostile to us" than for India to proliferate, due to the economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation that this would trigger.[149] After the PNE there was "a conscious Indian effort *not* to speak of a military doctrine envisaging the use of nuclear weapons."[150] In 1977, recently elected Prime Minister Morarji Desai went so far as to insist that "[e]ven if the whole world arms itself with the bombs we will not do so."[151]

In the absence of a clear security rationale, it is puzzling why India would have undertaken any test at all. The logics of social appropriateness—with the attendant mechanisms of "holding back to blend in" and "holding back out of

[143] Müller 1991, 320.
[144] Quoted in U.S. Department of State 1974a.
[145] Marwah 1977, 114; Fair 2005, 24.
[146] Narang 2014, 95–8.
[147] Quoted in Sagan 1996, 65.
[148] Hymans 2006, 173, 179 (emphasis added).
[149] Ibid., 180. There were dissenters, mostly, again, on the right. See, e.g., Subrahnanyam, Director of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, a government-supported think tank in New Delhi, quoted in King 1971, 207.
[150] Marwah 1977, 121 (emphasis added).
[151] Perkovich 2002, 35.

habit"—would have motivated New Delhi to refrain from testing and perhaps even to accede to the nascent NPT, giving up its nuclear option. In fact, even if Indian leaders went to great lengths to ensure the PNE did not technically violate any international obligations, the test was explicitly intended to defy and delegitimize the NPT regime. Indira Gandhi anticipated, correctly, that the PNE would invite international consternation, economic sanctions, and diplomatic consequences. Likewise, any explanation that refers to moral principles in isolation, without connecting them to prestige considerations, cannot comprehend why Indian leaders would have supported any test, even a peaceful one.[152] Harald Müller explains the relationship between principles and prestige as follows: "There is an insatiable desire of developing countries to establish equality among nations. This elusive goal is strongly placed in doubt by the possession of the mightiest weapons by a few to the detriment of the many... For the well-armed major regional powers [such as India] the elimination of such inequality would result in a considerable rise in their own importance... Joining the group of proponents of global nuclear disarmament therefore serves the national interest under the cover of moral virtue."[153]

Other scholars have turned to domestic factors of parliamentary and bureaucratic politics to explain the PNE. A crucial question is why Indian leaders would have been more susceptible to pressures from the nuclear establishment in the mid-1970s than they were in the mid-1960s. It is true that Indira Gandhi's political position was threatened in 1974 due to a prolonged recession, food riots, and the government's plummeting popularity.[154] At best, though, these domestic political factors explain the specific timing of the PNE rather than its overall occurrence, since scientific and diplomatic preparations long predated the crises of the 1970s.[155] Moreover, the political calculus is far from obvious. The PNE risked emboldening the far-right nationalist camp, to which Indira's Congress Party was most in danger of losing support, without fully mollifying the most vocal

[152] Reflecting the importance of such principles, opinion polling of Indian elites before the PNE suggested that an outright majority—64.4 percent—opposed producing nuclear weapons under all circumstances because of their "ideology." In contrast, 6.8 percent supported proliferation as a means of "security if in war"; 15.1 percent, "when economically feasible"; and 11.0 percent, "if other nuclear powers do not disarm." At the same time, a majority also opposed signing the NP. Nandy 1972.
[153] Müller 1991, 330-1.
[154] Nayar and Paul 2003, 170; Bidwai and Vanaik 2000, 64; Dyson and Maharatna 1992, 1325.
[155] Marwah 1977, 105; Perkovich 1999, 171-2.

proponents of a full nuclear weapons program. And it promised international sanctions that would further harm the economy. While, retrospectively, the PNE secured approval from 90 percent of the adult literature population, it also failed to reverse the Prime Minister's fortunes; she went on to lose the next election in 1977.[156]

India's PNE confounds alternative explanations because it was insufficient for deterrence but still conspicuous enough to attract international opprobrium. The rationale for the test, however, becomes clear when considered in light of my account of performative restraint. Indira Gandhi and her advisors intended the PNE to enhance the conspicuousness and credibility of India's nuclear restraint and, by extension, to bolster its international prestige. They believed that

> possessing a robust nuclear capability was required for India to be taken seriously in the international community and possibly even a means by which India could attain a permanent seat on the United Nations security council. Thus the foreclosure of this option was not acceptable given India's great power aspirations and the centrality of nuclear capabilities to that objective. Nonetheless, as long as this option was available there was no compelling reason to test...[157]

The PNE obviated, for the time being, the most intense pressures to further advance towards weaponization. It was successful in demonstrating India's capabilities but less so at convincing other states that unhindered acquisition of nuclear technologies—even dual use technologies with weapons applicability—was New Delhi's sovereign right. Under the NPT, retaining the nuclear option ceased to register as a form of supererogatory restraint and instead appeared to amount to asserting Indian opposition to the nonproliferation regime. This eroded the moral credibility with which India, as a non-signatory of the NPT, could lead the global disarmament movement.

INDIA AT THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD

After 1974, officials continued to "simultaneously emphasiz[e] India's moral exceptionalism (with regard to nuclear self-restraint) and prais[e] the

[156] Sagan 1996, 68.
[157] Fair 2005, 24.

sophistication of India's nuclear weapons capabilities."[158] The "long nuclear threshold period," lasting until at least the mid-1990s, was "characterized as a time of [non-nuclear] technology demonstrations… with strong symbolic significance for the credibility of the latent nuclear option" but also by "public self-restraint."[159] Such demonstrations included the initiation of indigenous space and missile programs, culminating with the development of the nuclear-capable *Prithvi* short-range ballistic missile in 1988. Throughout the 1980s, the scientific establishment applied increasing pressure on the government to authorize further research into nuclear weapons as well, especially as evidence mounted of Pakistan's progress towards the bomb. Indira Gandhi, along with her son and political heir, Rajiv, resisted this urging until late in the decade.[160]

Against Nuclear Apartheid

India's performance of nuclear restraint was undermined by its increasingly contentious relationship with the global non-proliferation regime and the states that upheld it. During the 1980s, efforts to restrict India's access to nuclear technology and fuel convinced many Indians that the "cartel" of nuclear powers was intent on foreclosing India's nuclear option in order to secure its own "monopoly."[161] For practical reasons, these restrictions led to an increasingly indigenous nuclear program, which only enhanced its salience in terms of demonstrating India's scientific creativity and political resiliency.[162]

Indian leaders grew further embittered due to the failure of their attempts to champion an alternative nuclear order in the 1980s.[163] After Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister in 1984, he continued to link India's status to its moral exemplarity. Addressing the US Congress in 1985, he expressed his "dream of an India strong, independent, self-reliant in the front rank of the nations of the world in the service of mankind."[164] He declared "no intention to produce a nuclear

[158] Frey 2007, 201.
[159] Ollapally 2001, 930.
[160] In 1982, some sources suggest, Indira approved a second PNE before quickly reversing herself. Preparations were made for further tests, but none was seriously considered for more than a decade.
[161] The international response to the PNE was formalized by the London Suppliers' Group and, in the US, by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act. See Rajan 1975, 316 n.20; Fair 2005; New York Times 1974.
[162] Malik 2010, 71.
[163] Chacko and Davis 2018, 352.
[164] Quoted in Nayar and Paul 2003, 199.

weapon. We don't want a nuclear weapon. We think it is wrong, it is bad, it would not help the total world system."[165] In 1988, Rajiv unveiled an "Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order" at the UN, which proposed eliminating all existing nuclear arsenals by 2010. Like in the NPT negotiations, this plan sought to leverage India's near-nuclear status to secure *universal* disarmament. Yet the superpowers ensured that their allies would not give the Action Plan a sympathetic hearing. Its failure proved deeply humiliating to the Indian government and to Rajiv personally; though opposed to nuclear weapons, he subsequently adopted the view that India would only have diplomatic leverage if it developed its nuclear option.[166] Indian elites increasingly felt that they could "play an effective role in multilateral nuclear disarmament at the global level only when the world comes to believe that India is a nuclear weapon power and therefore it is not an ignorable factor in respect of disarmament negotiations."[167] In this context, Rajiv for the first time authorized research on weaponizable nuclear devices, which could be theoretically delivered by aircraft or missiles.[168] After this decision in 1988, and given the weapons-grade plutonium stockpiled by IAEC scientists, India progressed to the point that it was "weeks away" from building a bomb.[169]

This marked a remarkable inversion of the previously dominant view that India's influence in the non-proliferation regime was contingent upon its *restraint*. Two further developments during the 1990s, interpreted as rank humiliations by the Indian government, fed disillusionment with this prior rationale for performative restraint.[170] The first was the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. Many hold-out states joined the regime at this stage, including France, China, and Japan.[171] This exposed the contrast between India's erstwhile reputation and self-concept for "good international citizenship on arms control," and the fact that only Cuba, North Korea, Israel, and Pakistan remained outside the NPT alongside it.[172] Moreover, New Delhi felt that the indefinite extension "converted a Cold War arms

[165] Quoted in Healy 1989, 32.
[166] Subrahmanyam 2018, 305.
[167] Quoted in Frey 2006, 132. See also Malik 1998, 204; Thakur 1998, 42, 54.
[168] Perkovich 1999, 294-5; Ganguly 1999, 165.
[169] Ibid., 268.
[170] Khan 1990, 83–91; Singh 2002; Kennedy 2011b.
[171] Yost 2007, 556; Mistry 2003; Potter 2010; Fair 2005. Note that China had also opposed the NPT's indefinite extension for the same reasons as China. See Johnston 2008, 115–33.
[172] Thakur 1998, 39; Narlikar 2011, 1615.

control treaty of 25 years duration into a perpetual nuclear apartheid treaty."[173] The nuclear powers were perceived as eager to "sustain the Yalta-Potsdam dispensation, and their privileged position as permanent members of the Security Council" by making "nuclear weapons the primary currency of power in the international system."[174] The nuclear powers' rhetoric surrounding the NPT invoked standards of responsibility and a (sometimes thinly veiled) "standard of civilization" that diminished India's moral authority and delegitimized its supposed restraint.[175]

The second development that exacerbated India's isolation on arms control matters was the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). While India had championed the CTBT until the mid-1980s,[176] it came to oppose the treaty as threatening the "nuclear option" without meaningfully advancing disarmament.[177] Crucially, India was not equipped to develop an effective nuclear weapons capability without conducting additional tests, which the CTBT foreclosed.[178] The treaty did not ban computer simulation tests, which were only practical for nuclear powers that had already accumulated sufficient data from live tests; this reinforced the nuclear powers' monopoly.[179] As an Indian defense advisor put it, the CTBT "was neither comprehensive nor related to disarmament but rather devoted to ratifying the nuclear status quo... India had to ensure that its nuclear option, developed and safeguarded over decades, was not eroded by self-imposed restraint." [180] To make matter worse, the CTBT negotiations revealed the international community's intense distrust of India's motives.[181] Led by the United Kingdom and Australia, nuclear weapons states and their allies introduced an amendment to the CTBT that made its entry into force contingent upon its adoption by India. Though the procedures of the Conference on Disarmament, where the CTBT was drafted, required unanimity, the treaty was reported to the United Nations over New Delhi's objections, where the text targeting India was approved

[173] Subrahmanyam 2002, 66-7.
[174] Ibid., 71.
[175] Chacko and Davis 2018, 356; Walker 2007.
[176] Mohan 2007, 154.
[177] Ghose 1997.
[178] Albright 1998; Koch 1996.
[179] In fact, China and France both conducted a flurry of live tests before signing the CTBT in order to acquire this necessary data. This "further underlined the privileged status of the nuclear weapons states—and their desire to maintain that status." Kennedy 2011b, 148.
[180] Singh 1998, 41; Fair 2005, 30–8.
[181] Ghose 1997, 256-8.

by the General Assembly.[182] The Indian government for its part framed opposing the CTBT as an "act of nonviolent resistance to the West" and a principled stand, on behalf of other states, against the "nuclear hegemons."[183]

The NPT and CTBT negotiations crystallized how far Indian influence had ebbed, especially vis-à-vis its traditional rivals.[184] "China, with its abysmal human-rights and proliferation record, [was] regarded as a responsible and trustworthy power, and all the obloquy [was] reserved for democratic India, a traditional model of restraint."[185] The crux of the problem was that, by 1995, the "presumption that India had embarked on a covert nuclear program from 1974 dominated international analyses. India found itself in a position where its expressed policy of restraint was met with deep skepticism from the major powers, who could see no other end for a nuclear program-cum-explosion than an effort to build nuclear weapons."[186] This led to the "moral currency India acquired by exerting voluntary restraint on nuclear testing since 1974 [being] under-valued by the US" and the other nuclear powers.[187] These powers consequently withheld symbolic respect. "After its [PNE], India did not benefit in terms of seats on important international bodies; it received neither admission nor special privileges nor rights in the exclusive organizations of the industrialized West. Neither did it gain anything by way of regional prestige."[188] It seemed that "India's quarter-century of nuclear restraint [had] won it no rewards."[189]

Indian elites' concern for international prestige was filtered through a logic of performativity, including a grudging acknowledgement that their nuclear policies no longer appeared supererogatory. Full restraint within the NPT framework meant surrendering the nuclear option, which India had never been prepared to do.[190] The NPT and CTBT negotiations demonstrated that "no option can be kept open indefinitely without degrading... What should have been an asset began looking like a burden in the 1990s. By not weaponising and testing its nuclear

[182] Thakur 1998, 50-2.
[183] Cohen 2001, 176; Ollapally 2011, 218.
[184] Pant 2007; Saksena 2006; Malik 2010, 212; Chellaney 1999, 168.
[185] Singh 1999, 18–9; Malik 1998, 198; Rublee 2009, 152.
[186] Abraham 2009, 127.
[187] Gidwani 1998: 1313; see also Paul 2002, 95.
[188] Saksena 2006, 215.
[189] Chellaney 1998, 96.
[190] Subrahmanyam 2018, 69; Subrahmanyam 2002, 69. See also Popp, Horovitz, and Wenger 2016, 224; Thakur 1998, 53–4.

capability," India had "tacitly observing the terms of the treaties it despised…"[191] It was being "forced into a corner," for "if India did not take the drastic step of testing… the long-held nuclear option would *no longer be a real option*…" [192] Consequently, thinking about the nuclear option had to evolve. "The choice was no longer between 'peaceful' and 'military', but between 'military in principle' and 'weaponized.'"[193] As Perkovich puts it, Indian leaders "were walking a fine, ethically tenuous line distinguishing between possessing nuclear weapon capabilities and the overt assembly and deployment of a nuclear arsenal."[194]

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

In 1994, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao authorized preparations for a nuclear test but called it off after US spy satellites identified preparations and President Clinton intervened diplomatically. [195] This only delayed India finally declaring its membership in the club of nuclear weapons states with a series of tests on 11-13 May 1998, shortly after the BJP government of A. B. Vajpayee assumed office. The tests of one fusion bomb and four fission bombs were collectively codenamed Operation Shakti, a Vedic term for the triumphant liberation of trapped energy.[196] After the tests, Vajpayee explained matter-of-factly that "India is now a nuclear weapons state… We have the capacity for a big bomb now. Ours will never be weapons of aggression."[197] Predictably, Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold soon after.

In explaining the decision to test, Indian leaders again emphasized their desire to upend the discriminatory nuclear order and thereby elevate "where we were going to be slotted in the family of nations."[198] While also citing security concerns, Vajpayee justified the Pokhran II nuclear test as necessary to "achieve the [BJP's] longstanding objective of major-power status for India." [199] He

[191] Chellaney 1999, 165.
[192] Ollapally 2001, 933 (emphasis added).
[193] Frey 2006, 201.
[194] Perkovich 1999, 449.
[195] Perkovich 1999, 353; Fair 2005, 36-7.
[196] Sondhi and Nanda 1999, 28.
[197] Quoted in Burns 1998.
[198] Quoted in Frey 2006, 138. On the prestige motive for the test, see Mehta 1998. On the link between proliferation and prestige in public opinion, see Ahmed, Cortright, and Mattoo 1998; Kampani 1998.
[199] Nayar and Paul 2003, 27; Perkovich 1999, 6; Cohen 2000, 17. On security considerations, see Malik 1998, 194.

maintained that "[t]he greatest meaning of these tests is that they have given India *Shakti*, they have given India strength and they have given India self-confidence." The bomb was "India's due, the right of one-sixth humankind."[200] Some proponents of the tests suggested that they would bolster India's quest for a permanent seat on the Security Council.[201] US officials, while maintaining that they would not confer status upon India as a result of the tests, recognized that this had been the primary objective.[202]

In fact, Operation Shakti elicited significant international criticism.[203] This despite the fact that New Delhi "took care to redefine restraint in line with India's newly weaponized status: restraint shifted away from non-possession to focus on non-use and minimalism…" India "voluntarily commit[ted] to the standards of responsibility expected of NPT signatories, by forgoing the proliferation of nuclear technology to non-nuclear states…[and] pledging and upholding a voluntary moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons."[204] This included an "about-face on the NPT"—Indian leaders promised compliance with its main tenets now that India was a "nuclear weapon state."[205] To be sure, the distinction remained between acceptable, voluntary, restrictions and unacceptable, imposed, ones; the government rejected "any restraint in perpetuity on our freedom of action."[206] But by 2006, the US had relaxed its punitive sanctions and recognized India as a "responsible state with advanced nuclear technology."[207]

It is striking that New Delhi continued to invest in presenting itself as a responsible member of the international community committed to the principles of non-violence and anti-imperialism even after proliferating.[208] Proliferation did not herald a radical change in this moralistic policy. Rather, it reflected a determination that nuclear restraint had failed as a means of expressing responsibility because its performance, outside of the NPT, was no longer seen as

[200] Quoted in Hymans 2006, 200.
[201] Ghosh 1998; Paul 2002, 96.
[202] Talbott 1999, 114–5.
[203] Fair 2005, 40.
[204] Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018, 17; Wojczewski 2017, 5, 10.
[205] Mohan 2007, 160. Cf. Narlikar 2013, 607–8 (noting the persistent gap between Indian commitments and those of other nuclear powers).
[206] O'Donnell and Pant 2014, 602–8.
[207] Rublee 2009, 215; Mohan 2007, 153; Sasikumar 2007.
[208] For an analysis of India's overall strategy of military "restraint," characterized by "arming without strategic purpose," see Cohen and Dasgupta 2013.

morally credible.[209] This logic was carefully elaborated in a 1998 *Foreign Affairs* article by Jaswant Singh, an advisor to the BJP government on foreign policy, which severed as a semi-official apology for the tests. Entitled "Against Nuclear Apartheid," the article framed the tests as an "inevitable…*continuation* of policies from almost the earliest years of independence. India's nuclear policy remains firmly committed to a basic tenet: that the country's national security in a world of nuclear proliferation lies either in global disarmament or in exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security for all."[210] While recognizing that India's "restraint is a unique example," Singh maintained that "restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or hesitancy. Restraint is valid only when it removes doubts, which is precisely what India's tests did…"[211]

Alternative Explanations for Operation Shakti

Several alternative explanations have been offered for India's abandonment of nuclear restraint. Many studies have attributed Operation Shakti to a security-based logic.[212] Particularly threatening to India was the development of a nuclear weapons program in its archrival, Pakistan, which was acknowledged as early as 1979 and seen to progress rapidly in the late 1980s.[213] Particularly threatening was Chinese support for—and, some officials charged, US permissiveness towards—Pakistan's bomb program. On 6 April 1998—little more than a month before the Pokhran II test—Pakistan successfully launched its first Ghauri missile, which had a maximum range of 1,500 kilometers and could strike 26 cities within India.[214] This may have been reason enough for New Delhi to announce its nuclear deterrent.

Yet, as above, the security-based explanation is undermined by crucial factors of timing and consistency. The deteriorating security environment in the 1980s did not trigger proliferation.[215] In 1988, Rajiv Gandhi reiterated that "[j]ust the fact that Pakistan made a bomb would not make us change our policy… A nuclear arms race in the subcontinent would only subject both our peoples to the

[209] O'Reilly 2014: Ch. 4; Kumar 2016; Mattoo 1999, 192.
[210] Singh 1998, 41.
[211] Ibid., 51; Abraham 2009, 125–7.
[212] See, e.g., Cohen 2000, 22; Tellis 2001.
[213] Subrahmanyam 2018, 299; Hagerty 1995.
[214] Ganguly 1999, 170-1.
[215] Hymans 2006, 101.

worst possible fate on earth."[216] While this rhetoric did bely some secret steps towards developing nuclear bombs, the key steps of testing and assembly were not undertaken. During the 1990s, "India appeared to be following a two-track strategy. To strengthen its capabilities, it was preparing the test site in case Pakistan would detonate a nuclear explosive, which India would then counter with a blast of its own. To show its moderate intentions, [the government privately expressed to the US] that India would not move 'towards PNE activity' in the 'current time-frame.'"[217]

During this period India possessed, at best, a several-steps-removed "latent deterrent," ostensibly meant to deter Pakistan from getting too close to the nuclear threshold by signaling that India could dart across it first. But if Indian leaders were pursuing such a strategy in 1988, it is not clear why they would have stopped doing so in 1995 or 1998, as the basic balance of threat between India and Pakistan remained unchanged.[218] Hence the problem of logical consistency: either Indian leaders did not put much stock in latent deterrence, in which case security-seeking logic suggests that they should have proliferated earlier; or they did, in which case the logic suggests they should have proliferated later (if there were signs that latent deterrence had failed) or not at all (absent such signs). The proximate causes of Operation Shakti were symbolic, social, and political—but not straightforwardly material. Additionally, like the PNE, Operation Shakti marginalized military officials in planning and execution. Though some civilian officials invoked a security motive to justify the tests, military officials downplayed their significance.[219] It appears that security was a "political rationalization for latent military capabilities developed for other reasons."[220] Prestige remained chief amongst these reasons even vis-à-vis Pakistan, whose intelligence director also a nuclear weapons capability as a "symbol of national honor."[221] The competition

[216] Gupta 1985.
[217] Perkovich 1999, 229.
[218] Perkovich 1993, 89; Hagerty 1998, 171–95; Ganguly and Hagerty 2005.
[219] Cohen 2001, 182; Narlikar 2006, 62. Like the 1974 PNE, the 1998 tests were of somewhat questionable military utility. See Perkovich 2002; Basrur 2001. Many military officials had believed that a small nuclear arsenal, lacking redundancy and survivability, generated instability and diminished India's security to the point of being "self-deterring and unusable." Perkovich 1993, 89-90. On the limitations imposed by lack of investment in delivery systems, see Albright 1998. More generally, questioning the security logic of India's nuclear strategy, see Cohen and Dasgupta 2013, chap. 5; Thomas 1986.
[220] Sagan 1996, 68; Hymans 2006, 173; Frey 2009, 208; Frey 2006, 125.
[221] Quoted in Perkovich 1993, 92. The United States also assessed the India-Pakistan rivalry in the nuclear realm to center on India's bid for "leadership of the subcontinent." See National

between these rivals was not limited to the military realm.

Explanations grounded in the logic of social appropriateness also fare poorly.[222] If it had been "holding back to blend in," India would have abandoned its nuclear option because maintaining it led "moral opprobrium to be heaped on India."[223] Given its "increasingly isolated in its nuclear stance," some elites did feel that "India would do better to bend a bit with the winds of nuclear change than risk being cast as a nuclear pariah."[224] Yet in the face of consolidating non-proliferation norms, "[t]he option that India took instead was defiance" because most elites believed that "[s]aying 'no' to the NPT [gave] them power."[225] There are also key instances in which leaders' pursued policies seemingly at odds with their normative convictions and perceptions of appropriateness. Prime Minister Rao, who authorized the 1995 test, was personally opposed to nuclear weapons, having directed India's disarmament diplomacy as Minister of External Affairs during the 1970s and 1980s. More generally, "Indian conceptions of the kinds of state behaviour deemed appropriate and legitimate continue[d] to be set in *contrast* to those of the 'Western powers.'"[226] It is not that international norms were unimportant for shaping India's nuclear policies, merely that they did not have the kind of influence predicted by logics of social appropriateness. Indian leaders did not seek to conform with non-proliferation norms, but rather reacted against them.

Nor can Operation Shakti be fully explained by the BJP coming to power, as accounts based in domestic politics argue.[227] It is true that the BJP and its predecessors on the Hindu nationalist right had been the most consistent advocates for proliferation since the 1960s, and that the BJP had openly declared its intention to go nuclear before joining the government in 1998.[228] In 1995 Rao had been

Foreign Assessment Center 1981.

[222] The desire to fit in may explain some states' nuclear policies during this era, notably Japan's, which abandoned its concerns with the NPT's legitimation of nuclear weapons states' arsenals and signed on to its indefinite extension. Rublee 2009.

[223] Thakur 1998, 48; Müller and Schmidt 2010.

[224] Quoted in Ibid., 52.

[225] Perkovich 1993, 93.

[226] Basrur and Estrada 2017, 93 (emphasis added)..

[227] Cf. Ganguly 1999, 148; Couper 1969, 192; Narang 2014, 94-98. Another domestic politics argument—which I do not discuss at length here—emphasizes the influence of India's nuclear scientists. While the IAEC exercised crucial influence over maintaining a nuclear weapons option, as discussed above, India's civilian leaders retained ultimate authority and frequently rejected IAEC proposals. See Ramana 2013.

[228] The BJP's "National Agenda for Governance" suggested that "[t]o ensure the security, territorial integrity and unity of India we will take all necessary steps and exercise all available options. Towards that end we will re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to

"under pressure to adopt a strong pro-nuclear posture to co-opt the BJP's pro-weaponization position."[229] Support for rightist parties coincided with increased support for proliferation among the Indian public.[230] But it is a mistake to conflate right-wing nationalism with support for nuclear weapons, as opposed to the staunch advocacy of India's right to maintain a nuclear option. India's first right-wing government held power from 1977 to 1980 under the Janata Party. JP PM Morarji Desai was a committed Gandhian who staunchly opposed nuclear weapons.[231] Under Desai, nuclear restraint was seen as consistent with "...India's moral self-image, a desire to express and demonstrate internationally India's moral superiority to the Cold War powers... Leaders of the pro-bomb Jana Sangh, including then Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, went along with this nuclear policy despite the fact that Pakistan was gearing up construction of the Kahuta uranium enrichment plant."[232] Thus, what changed was not merely the influence of rightist parties and politicians in India's domestic politics, but the gradual migration into the mainstream of what had once been a fringe position—that nuclear proliferation rather than nuclear restraint constituted India's pathway to international prestige.

CONCLUSION

More than five decades ago, Richard Rosecrance posited that "prestige may be the signal operative motivation for the acquisition of a nuclear capability." [233] Subsequent studies have associated prestige with the outright acquisition of nuclear weapons.[234] In contrast, explanations of nuclear restraint have highlighted a variety of material, normative, and domestic factors, while mostly neglecting the possibility that states with a "capability to go nuclear can gain...prestige by a deliberate decision based on moral grounds to refrain from doing so."[235]

Prior studies of India's nuclear program have disclosed a similarly blinkered perspective with respect to prestige. Lacking the framework of performative

induct nuclear weapons." Discussed in Rajain 2005, 226–7.
[229] Flair 2005, 38.
[230] Mattoo and Cortright 1996.
[231] Perkovich 1999, 201.
[232] Perkovich 2002, 35.
[233] Rosecrance 1966, 35.
[234] Husbands 1982; O'Neill 2006.
[235] Epstein 1977, 22. For other partial exceptions, see Prosser 2017; Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018; Frey 2007; Hymans 2000, esp. 17 n150; Rublee 2009.

restraint, scholars have often seen prestige as motivating India's advancement towards the nuclear threshold, while overlooking how prestige also motivated the holding back from that threshold.[236] "India's seemingly inexorable search for nuclear status" has accordingly seemed full of "contradictions, ambiguity, and opposing sentiments."[237] Two seemingly contradictory elements stand out. On one hand, India sought to equal the nuclear powers in prestige by diverging diametrically from their policies. In their "quest to join the major powers' exclusive club… India's nuclear strategists tried to maintain the country's self-image as the primus inter pares of the majority of have-nots."[238] On the other hand, the policies that Indian leaders associated with restraint evolved considerably over time. They initially "presented nuclear restraint in terms of a complete material renunciation of an immoral nuclear weapons programme… [but l]ater restraint claims related to the decision to develop nuclear weapons until the 1980s, and not to test them until 1998."[239] In short, nuclear restraint has seemed inconsistent with India's broader foreign policy objectives, and inconsistent in its own right.

Yet the logic of "holding back to rise above" resolves these apparent contradictions and inconsistencies, reconciling the shifting contours of India's nuclear program with its steady quest for prestige (see Table 5.1). In the 1960s and early 1970s, nuclear restraint appeared as a *volitional* and *supererogatory* performance, therefore expressing both India's technological parity with the nuclear powers and its unique moral example as leader of the non-nuclear ones. But this performance could only be sustained so long as the prevailing norms and conventions of non-nuclear weapon status permitted India to "toe the line" at the nuclear threshold. In the late 1970s and especially in the 1980s, the solidification of the NPT regime rendered uncredible the association of India's "peaceful nuclear explosion" with restraint, and more generally, threatened India's right to maintain a contingent nuclear option. These developments consolidated the skepticism of the nuclear powers and their allies vis-à-vis New Delhi's restraint, which in turn eroded the prestige rationale for its continued performance. By the 1990s, it was clear that performative nuclear restraint had failed to secure India's influence over the non-proliferation regime or other forms of international respect, causing

[236] Chellaney 1991.
[237] Ollapally 2001, 925.
[238] Frey 2006, 133.
[239] Sullivan 2014, 652–3.

TABLE 5.1. Summary of Evidence of Indian Performative Non-Proliferation, 1964 – 1998.

1.	**Framing**: *voluntary? principled*?	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** Indian leaders' public statements and diplomatic initiatives included these elements.
2.	**Underlying capability:** *demonstrated? claimed by actor? accepted or assumed by audience?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** Indian leaders emphasized the development of an advanced civilian nuclear program. The 1974 "peaceful nuclear explosion" proved that India could construct a nuclear explosive device and dramatized its proximity to the nuclear weapons threshold.
3.	**Prestige motive:** *referenced by actor? attributed by other analysts?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** In key debates (e.g., after China's nuclear test), Congress Party leaders gave decisive weight to prestige considerations when choosing nuclear restraint.
4.	**Keeping the option open:** *do leaders resist commitments that undermine voluntary nature of restraint*?	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** While initially supportive of nuclear arms control initiatives such as the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which it signed without reservations, India shifted its posture towards nonproliferation norms once it became clear that these would effectively preclude maintaining a viable "nuclear option."
5.	**Reference others' lack of restraint**: *do leaders respond by doubling down on restraint? frame it in relative terms?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** New Delhi used restraint to distinguish itself from the nuclear powers, linking proliferation with imperialism and doubling down on restraint after China's nuclear tests in order to claim moral superiority to Beijing.
6.	**Investment in presentation**: *do states toe the line? cry foul?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** The 1974 "peaceful nuclear explosion" is a paradigmatic example of "toeing the line." Subsequent efforts to champion disarmament principles (e.g., the 1988 Action Plan at the UN) amounted to "crying foul," since New Delhi accused the nuclear powers of hypocrisy and insufficient commitment to disarmament.
7.	**Sensitivity to social costs**: *do leaders react to perceived disrespect or humiliation?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** Each step in the evolution of India's nuclear program was responsive to audience reactions, and specifically, to perceptions of India's treatment at the hands of the nuclear powers. Highly symbolic displays of disrespect for India in the nuclear realm (e.g., NSG restrictions, 1988 Action Plan failure, indefinite extension of the NPT) undermined elite support for restraint.
8.	**Material consequences:** *do leaders adjust to changing material cost-benefit calculus?*	**Minimal support.** "Latent deterrence" cannot account for key factors such as timing, the lack of military involvement in the nuclear program, the lack of delivery vehicles, etc.
9.	**Social appropriateness:** *do leaders rule out alternative policies?*	**Minimal support.** Indian leaders shifted from championing to contesting the non-proliferation regime and its constitutive norms as suited their prestige interests.
10.	**Parochial interests:** *does restraint have narrow partisan support?*	**Mixed support.** Nuclear scientists within the IAEC scientists encouraged Shastri and Indira Gandhi to keep the nuclear option open, though their specific suggestions were often ignored. Domestic politics did not straightforwardly determine nuclear policy. Though far-right supporters of proliferation came to power in the 1990s, by that time, the government had already soured on restraint; this evolution transcended partisan lines.

Indian leaders to pursue an alternative pathway to prestige. While prestige-seeking cannot explain every aspect of the case, the logic of performativity shows how it remained a primary motive throughout.

Alternative explanatory logics and their respective shortcomings have been discussed above. But the contrast with the logic of social appropriateness merits special consideration. This contrast is stark because New Delhi deliberately defied the non-proliferation regime, fashioning itself as the "strongest critic of major-power moves to institute an unequal nuclear arms control regime in the world."[240] This dynamic contravenes both "holding back to blend in" and "holding back out of habit." Instead, the case demonstrates the distinct framing effects of international norms according to the logic of performativity. The non-proliferation regime disclosed evolving standards of nuclear restraint. Mitchell Reiss cites the advent of "the IAEA safeguards system, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and the NPT" as "mechanisms with which countries could advertise their nonnuclear intentions" and provide "evidence of nuclear restraint."[241] Technological diffusion also played a role, condensing the "critical time" between the decision to go nuclear and assembly of an explosive device and leading analysts to "modif[y] the previous benchmark for defining proliferation—the detonation of a nuclear device—to a 'ladder of capabilities' more accurately expressing how close a country was to possessing a bomb."[242] Formal renunciation of the nuclear option, the acceptance of full-scope safeguards, and ratification of the NPT became increasingly indispensable signals that a state had chosen NNWS status.[243] Especially after the NPT's indefinite extension in 1995, most observers assumed that non-parties intended to build nuclear weapons.[244] In short, scholars have amply recognized the conventional nature of nuclear restraint. The novel dynamic discussed in this chapter is how evolving conventions effectively *raised the bar* for supererogatory—and therefore prestigious—nuclear restraint.[245] Strict non-proliferation norms that commanded widespread compliance made it *more difficult* for states to distinguish themselves by simply not building the bomb.

[240] Marwah 1977, 115. On the oppositional character of Indian diplomacy more generally, see Narlikar 2006.
[241] Reiss 1988, 263.
[242] Ibid., 29-30.
[243] Sagan 1996, 55-6, 76; Reiss 1988, 262; Hymans 2010, 161–7; Müller 1991, 301–7.
[244] Khan 1990, 33–45.
[245] Levite 2002, 65.

This implicates a wider universe of cases.[246] In the late 1950s and 1960s, "scores of countries were toying with, and in some cases actually pursuing, nuclear weapons capabilities."[247] After 1968 the NPT elevated five nuclear weapons states as gatekeepers to nuclear technology; ratifying the NPT as a NNWS meant accepting a subordinate place in the technological hierarchy.[248] Four paths followed from this critical juncture. States such as Brazil, Argentina, Egypt, Turkey, and Indonesia objected to the NPT on prestige grounds while continuing to broadcast *contingent* NNWS status.[249] Like India, these states saw their prestige ambitions frustrated; unlike India, they ultimately accepted subordinate status to the nuclear powers by ratifying the NPT, if grudgingly.[250] Conversely, states such as Canada, Sweden, and Australia—allies of the nuclear powers—had a high degree of latency but used their accession to the NPT to "build a world role" for themselves as "strong opponent[s] of [nuclear weapons'] development and spread."[251] States in yet a third category—comprising Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and especially South Africa—have managed more recently to reap prestige through nuclear *reversal*, an exceptional circumstances not contemplated by the NPT.[252] Finally, a fourth category of states—India, Pakistan, North Korea, and arguably Iran—have refused to accept the NPT framework and insisted on their right to go nuclear.

Important factors distinguishing these types of states fall beyond the theory of "holding back to rise above," which analyzes states' expressive strategies while taking their desire for prestige and their underlying self-concept as given. For instance, if India prized prestige to a greater extent than most other near-nuclear powers, or if it was unique in indexing its prestige to *parity* with the nuclear powers, my theory cannot fully account for why.[253] The theory can, however, explain why opportunities to perform nuclear restraint have diminished over time and why

[246] Theoretically, the argument also addresses major unresolved questions in the literature on non-proliferation norms, especially regarding the dynamics of norm contestation and the limits of logics of appropriateness. Rublee and Cohen 2018.
[247] Levite 2002, 85, 60.
[248] Ritchie 2014, 605; Bailey 1991, 48; Fikenscher, Jaschob, and Wolf 2015, 510–4.
[249] Husbands 1982, 113-4.
[250] For instance, on Brazil's orientation the NPT, which was similar in many ways to India's, see Spektor 2016.
[251] Hymans 2000, 17, 23; see also Jonter 2016.
[252] Long and Grillot 2000; Prosser 2017.
[253] This is not to suggest that such questions are inscrutable. Analysts point to India's history, population, economic heft, and leadership of the post-colonial and non-aligned powers as factors that have instilled a deep sense of national pride and reinforced the sense that India deserves recognition as a peer of the great powers. See Nayar and Paul 2003.

conformity seems to have supplanted prestige as a major motive for restraint, with consequences which states have been willing to act as leaders of the non-proliferation regime.

CHAPTER 6

PRESTIGE AND NON-EMISSION: CHINA'S CLIMATE CHANGE DIPLOMACY, 1992—2017

On 5 January 1993, China became the first country to ratify the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).[1] Adopted at Río de Janeiro the previous year by more than 190 states, the Convention sought to address "dangerous human interference with the climate system" resulting from the emission of greenhouse gases, chiefly carbon dioxide (CO_2).[2] Such emissions were, and remain, "deeply embedded in the central aspects of the world's economic and social activity…and in the very growth of populations and economies."[3] In light of widespread concerns about the costs of climate change mitigation, the Framework Convention sought to establish and distribute international legal obligations for states to restrain of their carbon emissions.[4] It assigned primary responsibility for climate change to developed states and exhorted them to "take the lead" on mitigation.[5] Developing states such as China bore few commitments, retaining poverty eradication and development as their "overriding priorities."[6]

In the decades leading up to Río, Beijing had pursued "least-cost development paths" of burning coal and other fossil fuels for power generation, heavy industry, and manufacturing.[7] Mao declared that "man must conquer nature," and Maoist officials insisted that "[w]e must not give up eating for fear of choking, nor refrain from building our own industry for fear of pollution and damage to the environment."[8] In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping's policy of "reform and opening-up" inaugurated a period of rapid economic growth characterized by "high energy

[1] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [FCCC/INFORMAL/84] [hereafter "UNFCCC"]. *Note on citations:* To ensure accuracy when referencing submissions or other documents published by the UNFCCC Secretariat, I provide the official document identification numbers alongside the year of publication. Abbreviated titles or brief explanations for each document may accompany these references in brackets at first use.
[2] Carbon dioxide contributes more than 75% of the total warming impact of all greenhouse gasses. Sandalow 2019, 10.
[3] Sebenius 1991, 121.
[4] Haas 2002, 80; Bodansky 1993, 483; Lewis 2007, 164–6; McKibbin and Wilcoxen 2004, 471; Falkner 2016b, 1109–11; Mitchell and Carpenter 2019, 417.
[5] UNFCCC Art. 3, sec. 1.
[6] Ibid. Article 4, sec. 7, see also Article 1, sec. 3.
[7] Sebenius 1991, 129.
[8] Sternfeld 2017, 1; Morgan 1972, 149; Feinerman 1995.

consumption, [and] high emissions."[9] Already the second largest emitter (and largest developing economy) at the time of the Río conference in 1992, China surpassed the United States for the top spot in 2006.[10]

These soaring emissions were followed, belatedly, by increasing contributions to global climate change mitigation.[11] In 2007, Beijing agreed in principle to undertake and report voluntary climate change "mitigation actions." In 2009, it formally registered targets for decreasing carbon intensity, or the amount of carbon per unit of GDP. And in 2015, before the landmark climate conference in Paris, it announced the first absolute limit on its CO_2 emissions, which it said would reach their peak "around" 2030. For both China and international observers, such commitments promised *emissions restraint*: if fulfilled, they would lead to significantly lower emissions than would otherwise occur under a least-cost development strategy.[12] This departed from the nationalist stance of asserting China's right to an "emissions space" for development equal to that which Western powers had historically exploited.[13] Thus, the evolution of Chinese climate policies presents a puzzle. Why would China, originally exempted from obligations in the international climate regime, voluntarily surrender its free ride by committing to costly emissions restraint?[14]

A common answer to this question foregrounds China's domestic situation, especially its rapid economic growth in the first decade of the twenty-first century. As emissions boomed after 2006, Beijing invested in green energy and clean infrastructure, shuttered coal-powered factories, taxed energy usage by businesses and consumers, and—reflecting its state-led development model—reoriented industrial policy away from the carbon-intensive manufacturing sector.[15] These policies had "co-benefits" for mitigating air pollution, which boosted the CCP's legitimacy, and for facilitating the transition to a high-tech and services-oriented economy, which obviously served China's development.[16] "Environmental and energy targets became a tool first and foremost for staving off economic stagnation

[9] Yang et al. 2019, 2; Wang 2013a; Shapiro 2001, 3–4.
[10] Data compiled by the The Guardian 2012.
[11] For a similar periodization, see Wu 2013.
[12] Keohane and Victor 2016; Sandalow 2019, 5.
[13] Huang 2020, 81.
[14] See Bestill 2000, 210. Framing international climate negotiations as a collective action problem, see Ward 1993; Young 1997; Grundig 2006; Levin et al. 2012.
[15] Sandalow 2019, 146.
[16] Wang 2018, 756.

and minimizing social unrest."[17]

Yet this argument overlooks several key factors that have intervened between China's domestic climate policies and its international commitments related to them. First, Chinese negotiators faced pressures not only to adopt substantive steps for emissions restraint, but to present such steps in terms of formal international commitments. Second, international commitments imposed their own costs by requiring accountability and transparency and concomitantly reducing domestic policy flexibility. Given these first two factors, participants in UNFCCC negotiations came to treat "inputs [in the form of commitments] as outputs themselves."[18] And third, the presentational or performative aspect of climate diplomacy brought non-economic, political and social, benefits into play.[19] Climate change is, for many, the "single greatest public policy challenge of our time"—and an inherently *global* challenge.[20] In light of its salience, scholars recognize, "[t]he climate change issue has provided an unprecedented opportunity for China to boost its prestige and shore up support from developing countries as well as enhance its relationship with developed countries…"[21] This chapter explores how the desire for international prestige shaped Beijing's evolving performance of emissions restraint to its international audiences.

The argument—in brief—is that China pursued a strategy of "holding back to rise above" once widespread perceptions among both developing and developed countries that it had the capability and responsibility to help mitigate climate change intersected with changes to the climate regime that equipped it to perform volitional and supererogatory emissions restraint. In the decade after Río, Beijing staked its standing in the UNFCCC regime to its leadership of the developing countries, a role that was consistent with its economic interest in disclaiming both the capability and responsibility for emissions restraint. Soaring emissions made

[17] Wang 2013a, 393.
[18] Wang 2018, 715. Given the opaque connection between policy interventions and mitigation outcomes, *even at the domestic level*, the CCP has "performed" climate governance to symbolically legitimate its rule for domestic audiences. See Wang 2018, esp. 726; Ding 2020.
[19] Robert Keohane has proposed that an "economy of esteem" centered on climate change mitigation. Keohane 2010, 21; see also Mitchell and Carpenter 2019, 414; Busby 2010, 139. Also relevant are studies on the EU's quest to become an ''environmental superpower.'' Hale 2011, 98; Brenton 2013, 543; Gupta and Ringius 2001.
[20] Brunnée and Toope 2010, 126. For an overview of literature on global environmental governance, see Giddens 2009; Helm and Hepburn 2009; Held, Fane-Hervey, and Theros 2011.
[21] Zhang 2003, 78. See also Johnston 1998, 559–60; He and Feng 2018, 80–5; Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 206–14. On status and prestige in China's foreign policy more broadly, see Deng 2008; Pu 2017; Pu 2018.

this position untenable as developing countries—especially those most vulnerable to climate change—began to argue alongside the West that Chinese restraint was indispensable for the global effort to avert climate catastrophe. China's early concessions, especially after the disastrous Copenhagen conference in 2009, aimed to deflect diplomatic pressure and prevent its marginalization within the regime. A more dramatic change of strategy began around 2012 in response to three intersecting trends. The success of its economy equipped China to undertake mitigation policies that, while still costly, also displayed technological and institutional capacity to transcend the dirty phase of development. The evolution of the climate regime from a "top down" system of international targets to a "bottom up" system of national contributions allowed Beijing to frame its emissions restraint as proactive and voluntary. And diplomatic outreach from Western powers, especially the United States, presented an opportunity for Beijing to play a leading role in this revamped regime, broadcasting responsibility at a key moment in its international rise. These trends culminated in 2015 when Beijing performed restraint by championed the Paris Agreement, even though this entailed accepting the same level of commitments as developed countries.

The chapter proceeds in five sections. The first three analyze successive phases of China's pursuit of prestige in the climate regime. In the first phase, from roughly 1992 to 2007, China positioned itself as leader of the developing countries in rejecting any responsibility for climate change mitigation. In the second phase, from 2007 to 2011, Beijing negotiated new pressures from both developed and developing countries to restrain its booming emissions. In the third phase, from 2011 to 2017, Beijing sought to recover prestige in the climate regime by performing restraint. The fourth section discusses China's championing of the Paris Agreement after the Trump Administration announced U.S. withdrawal in 2017. The final section evaluates alternative explanations for this case grounded in materialist, normative, and domestic-political logics.

REJECTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Alarm over climate change mounted in developed Western countries during the 1980s, as scientists attributed potentially dangerous levels of global warming to the emission of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) such as CO_2 from the burning of fossil fuels. In 1988, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) to review scientific evidence of human-caused climate change and appropriate policy responses.[22] The General Assembly also called for a United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held at Río de Janeiro in June 1992. The Conference would agree on a treaty to define and divide responsibilities for climate change mitigation.

Hard-line officials in China opposed participation in the emerging climate regime, fearing an "imperial invasion" of their sovereignty and a conspiracy to constrain their growth.[23] In negotiations leading up to Río, Beijing insisted upon "Three Nos"–"no obligations on China, no voluntary commitments by China, and no future negotiations to bind China."[24] Even in the absence of constructive objectives, participation in the regime carried benefits. Diplomatically isolated after the Tiananmen Square crackdown, Beijing was eager to bolster its credentials as a "responsible" global citizen that contributed to formulating international rules.[25] Contributing to environmental governance was, as the State Council put it in 1992, a means to "establish a positive international image, expressing our country's sincere willingness to contribute to the common interests of mankind."[26] Thus, impression management existed alongside negotiators' primary instructions to ensure that mitigation responsibilities fell solely to developed countries and not to China.[27] Premier Li Peng personally attended the summit and stressed China's support for the Framework Convention on Climate Change.[28]

As negotiators finalized the Convention, three quarters of annual global GHG emissions originated in the developed world, with the United States alone contributing a quarter.[29] Historical emissions were even more lopsided.[30] The Convention reflected this divide. Article 3, section 1, established that "Parties should protect the climate system... on the basis of equity and in accordance with

[22] Bodansky 1993, 453.
[23] Kobayashi 2003, 87 n.1. On several occasions in the pre-UNCED meetings, and at the initial COPs, Chinese delegates questioned the scientific basis of climate change. See Yoon and Jeon 2006, 853; Interim UNFCCC Secretariat 1991, 3, 49, 56–7 (Chinese submissions).
[24] Zhang 2003, 66.
[25] Economy 1998, 269; Johnston 1998, 559, 563; Xia 2001, 17; Harrington 2005, 110; Conrad 2012, 438.
[26] Quoted in Johnston 2008, 133-134; see also Kobayashi 2003, 92.
[27] Jeon and Yoon 2006, 850-1. For instructions from China's National Coordination Committee on Climate Change, see Wang 2009, 88 n. 2.
[28] Li 1992.
[29] Bodansky 1993, 457.
[30] Sandalow 2019, 11-2.

their *common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities…*"[31] Developed countries pledged to "take the lead in combating climate change" by "limiting [their] anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases" with the "aim of returning… to their 1990 levels" of emissions.[32] Developing countries did not take on any comparable commitments. Their "responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner with a view to avoiding adverse impacts on the latter…"[33] Large developing countries such as India and China avoided even the minimal pledge—dropped from the final text—that they aim to keep further net growth of GHG emissions to the lowest level necessary for development.[34] Moreover, the list of developed countries—comprising the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Russia, and most of Europe—was enshrined in Annex I to the Convention and did not automatically update with states' economic growth. A state could not be added to the Annex, with the obligations that entailed, without its consent.

The Framework Convention did not establish legally binding targets and timetables for developed countries to reduce their emissions, largely due to US concerns about the anticipated economic costs.[35] However, the negotiation of more demanding commitments—in the form of "quantified, economy-wide, reduction/limitation targets"—was put on the agenda at the First Conference of Parties (COP 1) held in Berlin in 1995. There Parties agreed to negotiate a binding agreement by COP 3 in 1997 that included limitation targets for Annex I Parties but no new commitments for developing Parties.[36] The resulting Kyoto Protocol to the Convention required Annex I Parties to collectively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 5 percent below 1990 levels during the 2008 to 2012 commitment period.[37] Annex I Parties were assigned individual targets and obligated to

[31] UNFCCC Art. 3, sec. 1. This principle was repeated in the UNFCCC Preamble and Principle 7 of the 1992 Río Declaration, published as United Nations 1993.
[32] Ibid., Art. 4, sec. 2(a); Article 2. See also Susskind 1994, 64.
[33] Ibid., chapeau.
[34] Bodansky 1993, 508 n. 330. Developing countries could voluntarily take on these obligations on a purely voluntary basis. UNFCCC, Art. 4, sec. 2(g).
[35] Bestill 2001, 214.
[36] FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1/1/CP.1 ["Berlin Mandate"], sec. 2(a), see also 1(a)-(d).
[37] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1 ["Kyoto Protocol"], Art. 3, sec. 1. This baseline produced varied commitments depending upon countries' emissions trajectories since 1990: 8 percent reduction in CO_2 emissions from the EU and 7 percent from the US, with comparable reductions from Canada and Japan, while New Zealand and Russia had to maintain their emissions at current levels and Australia was permitted to *increase* theirs by 8 percent. Kyoto Protocol, Annex B.

periodically report mitigation steps and emissions inventories.[38] Despite a weak compliance mechanism,[39] the top-down imposition of binding targets met with strong resistance from the United States, which did not ratify the Protocol, citing the exemption of China (and other large developing countries) from restraint commitments.[40] Canada, Russia, and Australia initially ratified the Protocol but later announced they would not meet their targets. With the EU anchoring the Protocol, it covered only 33 percent of global emissions, undermining its legitimacy and efficacy.[41]

The Baseline of "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities"

Nonetheless, the climate regime that emerged from Río and Kyoto had important and enduring framing effects. The principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" (CBDR) served as the linchpin of the Convention.[42] In fact, the principle left several issues unresolved, including whether the source of developed countries' responsibility stemmed from their greater share of historical emissions or from their greater capacity to mitigate climate change in the present.[43] China strongly preferred the former interpretation, since the West had risen to its position of wealth and power on the basis of historical emissions. Communist Party officials blamed climate change on the "luxury emissions" of Western citizens as opposed to Chinese "survival emissions."[44] They believed that emissions restraint required zero-sum trade-offs with economic growth that China could not—and should not have to—bear given its relative poverty and lack of development.[45] Reflecting this view, environmental regulation originally fell to the Ministry of Energy and the State Planning Commission, whose primary remit was ensuring steady growth. Emissions restraint

[38] Ibid., Art. 7, secs. 1-3.
[39] Parties found not to be in compliance were required to make up their emissions reduction shortfall in future commitment periods and to submit a compliance action plan. Ibid., Art. 3, sec. 13. See also Agarwala 2010, 187.
[40] United States Senate 1997; Bush 2001. See also Haas 1993, 165–71; Hoffman 2011, 15; Bodansky et al. 2008, 24.
[41] Eckersley 2007, 307.
[42] Falkner 2021, chap. 5.
[43] On this debate, see Brunnée and Toope 2010, 154–5; Bodansky 1993, 480–1. The main US negotiator for the treaty has stated that this reflects "constructive ambiguity" for the purposes of securing wide assent to the language. Biniaz 2016, 39–40.
[44] Carpenter et al. 1998, 3.
[45] Wu 2018, 39.

policies were only considered when they incurred "no regrets," that is, were justified in terms of benefits for economic efficiency or managing specific environmental problems.[46]

In the 1990s, at least, most countries seemed to accept that China lacked the capacity to effectively mitigate climate change. The UNFCCC made available a stream of financing—almost $4 billion of which China had received in loans and grants by 1998[47]—for projects to address environmental problems.[48] In the following decade, 80 percent of China's budget for environmental projects was funded by foreign sources.[49] International support for afforestation and upgrading inefficient coal plants proved highly effective.[50] A 19 percent decline in China's GHG emissions from 1997 to 1999 led the World Bank to applaud it for reducing the energy intensity of its economy more than any other developing country.[51]

Notably, despite the clear value of such programs for China's development, its negotiators originally opposed them. At Río, Chinese opposition had been instrumental to defeating "flexibility mechanisms," which would have allowed developed countries to account for emissions reductions achieved by projects they financed in developing host countries.[52] Beijing worried this would undermine equity in the climate regime by tying hosts to emissions restraint.[53] Other developing countries desired this means of attracting foreign investment, however, and at Kyoto several supported the US proposal for a flexible "Clean Development Mechanism" (CDM).[54] China threatened to veto the entire Protocol over this provision, only relenting under pressure from fellow developing countries.[55] By 2005, China was capturing fully 50 percent of the CDM market.[56]

[46] Zhang 2003, 70; Kobayashi 2003, 87.
[47] Ibid., 73.
[48] Bjørkum 2005. On technology and finance flows, see Kyoto Protocol, Art. 11, sec. 2(b).
[49] Economy 1998, 278.
[50] Capannelli and Shrestha 1993, 7.
[51] Harris 2003, 57; Zhang 2003, 80.
[52] The UNFCCC allowed for flexible "joint implementation" only among Annex I Parties, while calling for further consideration of expanding the system. See Article 4, sec. 2(a), (d).
[53] See Johnston 1998, 575; Chayes and Kim 1998, 515; Stalley 2013, 6; Agarwala 2010, 183. Other concerns centered on the environmental effectiveness of these measures in producing marginal emissions reduction. See Boyd, Corbera, and Estrada 2008, 99–101; Dolšak and Dunn 2006.
[54] Kyoto Protocol Art. 12, sec. 3(b); see also Art. 12, sec. 2; Art. 12, sec. 5(c).
[55] Downs, Danish, and Barsoom 2000, 492–3.
[56] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2008, 49; Zhang 2006; Hepburn 2010.

Leading the Less Developed

As the CDM example illustrates, in this early stage of the climate regime, China's primary diplomatic imperative was balancing the influence it accrued from being seen to lead the developing country bloc, with the demands on its negotiating position that leadership of the bloc entailed. For the most part, China shared interests with other developing countries in the UN's "Group of 77" (G77).[57] Though only an associate member of the G77, China was a natural champion of their common interests because, as the largest developing country, it enjoyed outsized economic heft and diplomatic visibility.[58] For China, leading the less developed countries conferred negotiating leverage. Before Río, Beijing had sought to "gather some developing nations together" in order to "strengthen China's status and let [it] speak for the peoples in the third world."[59] This strategy culminated in the Beijing Symposium on Developing Countries and International Environmental Law, hosted by China in August 1991.[60] The Beijing Declaration added developing countries' weight and moral authority to Beijing's priorities for the Framework Convention, including recognition of a right to development,[61] and the main responsibility of developed countries to mitigate climate change.[62] While the G77 and China failed to insert their preferred language on developed countries' "main responsibility" into the UNFCCC, they secured a favorable compromise in the form of CBDR.[63] The early tenets of the regime embodied the bloc's preferences to a considerable degree.[64]

Yet China's conservative stance at times threatened its standing with the G77 bloc. Beijing's acute sovereignty concerns led it to originally advocate a climate regime based solely on scientific and technical cooperation and aid for developing

[57] Williams 2005; Klöck et al. 2020, 187–216 (for an overview of China's coalitional membership in climate negotiations).
[58] Najam 2005, 307.
[59] He 2010, 14; Kopra 2019, 51, 101
[60] Johnston 1998, 574. See also Ross 1999, 299; Economy 1998, 272; Anderson and Aldhous 1991.
[61] UNFCCC/A/46/293 ["Beijing Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development," 6 June 1991], paras. 3-4.
[62] Ibid., para. 8. See also A/AC.237/INC/FCCC/NONE No.40 ["Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Environment and Development," 1 May 1992], para. 3.
[63] Bodansky 1993, 502 n. 310; see also Magraw 1990 (for a legal analysis); Yamin and Depledge 2004, 69; Kasa, Gullberg, and Heggelund 2008, 116; Brunnée and Toope 2010, 151.
[64] UNFCCC, Art. 3, sec. 1; Río Declaration Principle 2 (on sovereignty) and Principle 6 (on the "special needs" of the developing countries). In general, see Chayes and Kim 1998; Economy 1998.

countries.[65] It therefore opposed binding targets *even for developed countries*, and sought to block their inclusion on the negotiating agenda at COP 1.[66] Only under significant diplomatic pressure from other G77 members did China agree to an Indian compromise that paved the way for the Kyoto Protocol.[67] And China still ruled out its own non-emission commitments, even in the form of voluntary targets, before achieving middle-income status.[68] These issues caused fissures within the G77 as early as the preparatory meetings for the UNFCCC; the bloc had briefly splintered over the question of commitments for large developing countries.[69] Proposals from several developing countries at the early COPs—Mexico and South Korea at COP 3; Argentina and Kazakhstan at COP 4—broke with China in supporting a means for developing countries to register their voluntary mitigation actions.[70] China stalwartly rejected all such proposals because they undermined CBDR and because they would entail some kind of international reporting or accountability, which the CCP saw as an unacceptable infringement upon its sovereignty.[71]

But on other issues—like binding commitments for developed countries and flexibility mechanisms—Chinese leaders revealed that they valued leadership of the G77 enough to justify compromise with its more ambitious members. By "casting itself as the defender of the developing world's interests," China "boosted its image among the political leaders of developing countries…"[72] This position appeared, at least for a time, to minimize the trade-off between reaping status from active regime participation and pursuing highly conservative, regime-limiting, aims. But it was a precarious position. Standing between the states most vulnerable to climate change and the states most responsible for mitigating it, China would face pressure from both sides.[73]

[65] A/AC.237/MISC.1 ["Compilation of Possible Elements for a Framework Convention on Climate Change," June 1991], 4-28 (Chinese proposals).
[66] Yoon and Jeon 2006.
[67] Wu 2013, 782–3.
[68] Zhang 2003, 66-9.
[69] Bodansky 1993, 488.
[70] Kobayashi 2003, 90; Brenton 2013, 544; Wu 2013, 788–93; Wu 2018, 196–8.
[71] Ibid., 92; Zhang 2003, 76; Stalley 2013, 3; Milkoreit 2015; Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014; Mitchell and Carpenter 2019, 416.
[72] Kopra 2019, 132; Hurrell and Sengupta 2012, 466; Hoffman 2011, 14–5; DeLisle 2000, 272–3.
[73] Zhang 2003, 81.

SOARING EMISSIONS, SINKING STATURE

The rapid increase of China's GDP, which had quadrupled between 1978 and 2000, surged to double digits following its accession to the WTO in 2001. The implications for emissions were initially moderate because energy consumption lagged GDP growth.[74] This trend reversed between 2000 and 2005, leading to booming emissions and the acute worsening of air pollution.[75] Chinese absolute emissions surpassed those of Europe in 2002 and of the United States in 2007, while per capita emissions surpassed the world average in 2008 and matched the EU per capita level in 2011.[76] Chinese officials noted with concern the increasing costs of environmental degradation and pollution for the economy.[77]

Soaring emissions also introduced new pressures on China to break the gridlock that had beset negotiations since the Kyoto Protocol's entry into force in 2005.[78] Most developed countries outside of the EU suggested that they would not fulfill their costly Protocol obligations absent some contributions from large developing states.[79] The IPCC's landmark Fourth Assessment Report, released in 2007, projected that 66 to 75 percent of the increase in carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumption by 2030 would come from developing countries. In light of this finding, effectively mitigating climate change would require "developing country emissions… to deviate below their projected baseline emissions within the next few decades."[80] Meeting outside of the UNFCCC process, the major industrial economies attempted to enlist the major "emerging economies," namely, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa.[81] This campaign seemed to yield modest progress. For example, invited to attend the G8 summit in June 2007, President Hu Jintao conceded that "developing countries should also take measures within their capabilities based on their own situation to make some positive contributions to

[74] Zhang 2011, 81; Ye Qi et al. 2008. In general, two factors influence the relationship between economic growth and carbon emissions: energy intensity (i.e. energy needed to produce unit of GDP) and carbon intensity (i.e., amount of CO2 emitted per unit of energy). See Hu 2016.
[75] Conrad 2012, 436; Economy 2011.
[76] Wu 2018, 181; Olivier, Janssens-Maenhout, and Peters 2012. This reflected a broader trend in which developed country emissions surged. According to the International Energy Agency (2016, 10-11), between 1990 and 2014, emissions from developing states increased by 200 percent while developed states' emissions declined by 8 percent.
[77] Economy 2007, 38.
[78] Lewis 2007, 159; Yu 2011, 82; Victor 2011, 105.
[79] Keohane and Oppenheimer 2016, 146; Baumert and Kete 2001, 7; Chasek 2021, 28.
[80] Metz et al. 2007, 90, 776.
[81] Rajamani 2008, 919; EU Presidency 2007, 19.

promote global sustainable development."[82]

Yet China found itself on the defensive at COP 13, held at Bali in December 2007, where the future direction of the climate regime was on the agenda. Not only did the United States lead developed countries in insisting that "the notions of 'responsibilities' and 'capabilities' evolve as the circumstances of countries evolve in the global economy.'"[83] But this interpretation gained support among *developing* countries as well.[84] Bangladesh, for instance, stressed the "vast differences" among developing countries and called for greater differentiation among them.[85] Other vulnerable developing countries in the Association of Small Island States emerged as a voice with significant moral authority in the negotiations, demanding more ambitious climate action.[86] This undermined solidarity within the G77 and, by extension, China's negotiating position vis-à-vis the Western powers.[87]

Under pressure, China agreed when India stepped in to broker a series of compromises for the conference's outcome document, the "Bali Roadmap."[88] For the first time, China acknowledged a role, in principle, for "nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner."[89] These "NAMAs" would at least be voluntary, and correspond to more demanding emissions reductions for developed countries.[90] China also agreed to a "second track" of negotiations, proceeding alongside those for a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol, that would cover the post-2012 period. This second track would aim to produce a binding treaty by COP 15 in 2009, which would enlist all Parties in the "long-term global goal for emission reductions."[91] Moreover, the Roadmap endorsed a "shared vision for long-term cooperative action" that took into account "social and economic conditions and other relevant factors," thereby suggesting

[82] Quoted in Wu 2018, 190.
[83] FCCC/ AWGLCA/2008/MISC.1 [Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, March 2008], 87 (U.S. submission).
[84] Brunnée and Toope 2010, 158-9.
[85] Rajamani 2009, 924-925.
[86] Betzold 2010; Betzold, Castro, and Weiler 2012; Genovese 2020.
[87] Renjie 2021, 401; Wu 2016, 201.
[88] Sterk et al. 2010, 140, 143,154; Yu 2011, 82.
[89] FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1*/1/CP.13 ["Bali Action Plan"], 1(b)(ii). See also Wu 2018, 199-200; Burleson 2008.
[90] Wu 2013, 789.
[91] Bali Action Plan, 1(a).

that "CBDR can accommodate differentiation amongst…developing countries…."[92] This represented a modest but important crack in the firewall between Annex I and non-Annex I countries.

While bowing to pressure to moderate its position, China evinced clear discomfort with several of the more radical implications of the Bali Road Map. China would undertake mitigation actions only "in conformity with the legitimate and prior needs of developing countries for sustained economic growth and eradication of poverty."[93] And any such actions would be conditioned upon "Annex I Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Kyoto Protocol" accepting Kyoto-style commitments.[94] On the key issue of CBDR, Beijing averred that "[a]ny further sub-categorization of developing countries runs against the Convention itself…"[95] To strengthen its negotiating position on these points, China joined with the other major emerging economies—Brazil, South Africa, and India—as the BASIC group.[96]

Along with other members of the BASIC group, China undertook a two-pronged strategy in advance of COP 15. On one hand, they sought to demonstrate good will with coordinated announcements of mitigation actions. China's pledge, announced by the State Council as a "voluntary action" in November 2009, amounted to a legally binding—under Chinese law—target for reducing CO_2 emissions per unit of GDP to 40-45 percent of 2005 levels by 2020, a policy estimated to cost $30 billion over "business as usual."[97] This was China's most substantial commitment for emissions restraint to date.[98] It aimed to demonstrate that China "ha[d] taken the lead in setting an example for developed countries" in advance of COP 15.[99] On the other hand, Chinese negotiators played down the prospects of the COP producing a legally binding agreement covering the post-2012 period, as envisioned at Bali.[100] BASIC released a proposed text for COP 15 which included binding emission reduction commitments for developed countries subject

[92] Brunnée and Toope 2010, 155, 165; Bodansky 1993, 506 n.135.
[93] FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/MISC.1 ["Ideas and proposals on the elements contained in paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan," 13 March 2009], 19 (Chinese submission).
[94] FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/MISC.1, 18-9 (Chinese submission); Pan 2012, 1–4.
[95] FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/MISC.5 ["Submissions from Parties," 27 October 2008], 34 (Chinese submission). See also Chasek 2021, 28.
[96] Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014, 227; Qi 2011, 302–7; Reuters Staff 2009a.
[97] Wu 2018, 201; Yu 2011, 85; Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018, 198–9.
[98] Hurrell and Senguta 2012, 471; Lewis 2007, 163; Sandalow 2019, 57.
[99] People's Daily 2010; Wong and Bradsher 2009.
[100] See Chinese submission in UNFCCC 2008, 33; UN News 2009.

to international reporting and verification, and voluntary mitigation actions for developing countries subject only to domestic accountability.[101] This disagreement did not bode well for constructive negotiations. For while the newly elected US President Barack Obama had also announced U.S. emissions reduction targets in advance, his Administration continued to insist that any agreement include "symmetric" obligations for both developed countries and large developing ones, which would adopt differentiated but *equally binding* commitments.[102]

The "Kidnapper of Copenhagen"

Verification, along with financial assistance, emerged as the two main sticking points at Copenhagen.[103] China claimed that developed countries had failed to keep their commitments of financial assistance to developing countries, and thus had no right to expect greater contributions from them.[104] However, in light of its rapid economic growth, Chinese negotiators also had to concede that funding should flow to needier countries than China.[105] The issue of verification, which evoked an "invasion" of China's sovereignty, did not permit any such concessions from the Chinese delegation.[106] Beijing would support a process of domestic "report and review" to the international community, but it would not make itself accountable to an international process with the authority to judge its performance against national policy targets.[107] Any such process would violate the "principle of 'voluntariness' in emission reduction."[108] Because they were "comfortable with the default Kyoto status quo," Chinese negotiators resolved "not to relinquish any ground."[109]

Last-minute negotiations between Obama and BASIC representatives yielded an informal political document known as the Copenhagen Accord. Developed countries promised future binding commitments and large amount of financing in exchange for developing nations taking on mitigation actions subject

[101] Qi 2011, 308; Haites, Yamin, and Höhne 2009, 4–7; Biermann 2015, 520; Wang 2021, 80.
[102] Stern and Antholis 2008, 179; Broder 2009b.
[103] Bodansky 2010, 236; Broder and Rosenthal 2009; Broder and Kanter 2009.
[104] Victor 2011, 89. See UNFCCC Art. 4, sec. 3; Kyoto Protocol, Art. 11.
[105] Harvey 2009; Conrad 2012, 451.
[106] Broder 2009c.
[107] Wu 2018, 184-5.
[108] He 2010, 23.
[109] Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018, 176, 196. See also Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014, 227; Kopra 2019, 107; Christoff 2010; Reuters Staff 2009b.

to "international consultancy and analysis," a vague term describing a lesser standard of accountability.[110] Under a compromise again brokered by India, only mitigation actions receiving international funding would be subject to international verification.[111] The Copenhagen Accord was notable for including the goal of limiting the global temperature increase to below 2 °C.[112] It also represented the first pledge by all major economies to restrain their emissions.[113]

Neither of these incremental advances prevented the Accord from being widely panned as a meager stand-in for a universal, binding, emissions restraint agreement. The lofty vision for "Hopenhagen" crashed into geopolitical realities at just the moment when climate change negotiations reached unprecedented levels of international visibility.[114] Beijing bore much of the blame.[115] China was castigated as the "bad COP" that had "wrecked" the negotiations and labeled the "kidnapper of Copenhagen."[116] Chinese leaders themselves recognized that COP 15 had precipitated a sharp drop in China's standing within UNFCCC negotiations and a "serious impact on its international image" more broadly.[117] Critics focused on China's "emergence as a global power" and concomitant influence in the negotiations, which it was seen as deploying to selfish ill-effect.[118] Before COP 15, the emerging powers, especially China, had "come to see themselves as defenders of the status quo and of established international norms rather than as revisionist states seeking to challenge the dominant norms of the system."[119] Yet defense of the status quo became increasingly untenable as it "failed to capture 'observed changes in emissions trajectories over the pre- and post-Kyoto periods.'"[120] Rather than a principled champion of developing countries' rights, China appeared to be hiding

[110] On funding, see FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1/2/CP.15 [Copenhagen Accord], para. 8; on developed country emission reduction commitments, see para. 4.
[111] Ibid., para. 5.
[112] Ibid., para. 1. China had previously objected to this target as imposing an "implicit reduction obligation," since the goal was only achievable assuming China's future contributions. While seemingly far-fetched, this same logic had led China—alone among the emerging economies—to oppose an EU proposal for non-binding language highlighted *developed* countries' goal of collectively reducing their emissions 80 percent by 2050. Conrad 2012, 445.
[113] Bodansky 2010, 240.
[114] Keohane and Victor 2011. COP 15 included 250,000 participants compared to less than 10,000 at COP14. On the issue's visibility, see Wolf and Moser 2011.
[115] For example, see reporting in Kanter 2009 (EU); Bryson 2009 (South Africa).
[116] Wang 2021, 66; Ivanova 2016, 411; Savaresi 2016, 18; LaMotte et al. 2010, 540.
[117] Chen 2012, 17; Parker, Karlsson, and Hjerpe 2015, 442–4; Karlsson et al. 2011.
[118] Bodansky 2010, 240; see also Hulme 2010, 16; Hurrell and Sengupta 2012, 463; Lynas 2009.
[119] Hurrell and Sengupta 2012, 469; Hilton and Kerr 2017, 50.
[120] Wu 2018, 182.

behind the "crumbling shield of its developing nation status."[121]

China's "newly attained status as a high emissions country" had placed it "squarely into the camp of the climate culprits in the eyes of many developing countries."[122] At COP 15, China had once again fended off calls from small developing countries to accept some form of binding mitigation commitments.[123] Its intransigence distinguished China even among emerging economies.[124] Between 2010 and 2011, Brazil, South Africa, and eventually India broke with China, independently announcing their openness to some sort of binding commitments.[125] This rupture within BASIC caused the bloc to decline in importance for subsequent negotiations, which were characterized by notably more diverse coalitions.[126] In short, the fallout from COP 15 threatened China's ability to present itself as a "responsible" participant in the climate regime.[127] Future negotiations would more clearly require "balancing the tradeoffs between international reputation and domestic economic development."[128]

The Divergence of China's Foreign and Domestic Climate Policies

China's recalcitrance at Copenhagen was particularly notable given the increasing divergence of its foreign and domestic climate policies.[129] By 2006, "China had become, bar none, the most polluted country on earth. Its economic growth was built on extremely inefficient use of resources. Environmental and energy problems had become a source of declining legitimacy for the regime."[130] Government reports increasingly noted China's vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change.[131] In this context, the 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP) period from 2006-10 represented a

[121] Conrad 2012, 455; Rachman 2010 (charging that 'China can no longer plead poverty').
[122] Ibid., 450, 442.
[123] Pearson and Rector 2019, 201.
[124] Ibid., 210-3; Brunnée and Toope 2010, 190-2; Rajamani 2008, 107-8; Qi 2011, 207-9; Kasa, Gullberg, and Heggelund 2008, 113.
[125] Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014; Menon 2010.
[126] Ibid., 231-2; Moosmann et al. 2015, 65. For instance, the aftermath of COP 15 spawned both the conservative "Like Minded Developing Countries" coalition, as well as the High Ambition Coalition, which comprised both developed and developing countries. See Yamin 2021.
[127] Ibid., 231; Hurrell and Sengupta 2012, 467.
[128] Qi 2011, 309.
[129] See the chief U.S. climate negotiator, Todd Strine quoted in Broder 2009a. See also Victor 2011, 106.
[130] Wang 2013, 395-6.
[131] See, e.g., Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2008; Antholis and Talbott 2011, 83; Moore 2011, 149; Sandalow 2019, 26.

turning point in the ambition and priority of environmental protection.[132] In addition to its pre-Copenhagen pledge to roughly halve the carbon intensity of its GDP, Beijing implemented the first binding energy intensity reduction target—20 percent below 2005 levels by 2010.[133] Just as importantly, it incorporated these targets into its evaluation of local cadres.[134] Failure to meet the targets "would require county leaders to 'admit responsibility and resign,' state-owned enterprise heads to be fired, and private corporations to stop production to remedy violations."[135] Most reductions were achieved by shuttering older, inefficient, coal power plants—some of which local officials dynamited live on TV.[136] Some officials also resorted to "draconian (and often illegal) actions, such as forced power outages to enterprises, residences, and city services."[137] At least some others fabricated data.[138]

Attention to localized environmental issues did not initially correspond to new commitments for overall emissions restraint, however.[139] The government's 2008 report on climate change reinforced "economic development as the core objective" and emphasized China's limited capacity for mitigation as a "low-to-middle income country" with a "relatively low level of science and technology and weak capacity of independent innovation."[140] The government officially maintained that "there is no historic precedent for achieving high per capita GDP with low per capita energy consumption."[141] Its priority in the climate regime remained preserving "emission space" for further industrialization, urbanization, and growth.[142]

The opprobrium and attendant risk of isolation that it faced after Copenhagen pressured Beijing to bring its domestic and international policies into

[132] Wang 2013, 365; Sandalow 2019, 32.
[133] Energy intensity declined 19.1 percent during the period, narrowly missing this target. Xu, Fan, and Yu 2014; Yang et al. 2019..
[134] Wang 2013, 386-90, 399. Cf. Antholis and Talbott 2011, 89 (reporting that "most local officials still regard meeting GDP growth as their primary objective").
[135] Wang 2013, 400.
[136] Qi and Li 2013, 386–90,399; Sandalow 2019, 32.
[137] Wang 2013, 421; Yang et al. 2019, 5-8; Li 2016, 32.
[138] Sandalow 2019, 32.
[139] Hu 2016; Rong 2010, 4588.
[140] State Council PRC 2008, sec. 1.
[141] Quoted in Wortzel and Bartholomew 2008, 214. See also Brockway et al. 2021.
[142] See, e.g., Premier Wen Jiabao quoted in Catterjee 2007. See also State Council PRC 2008, sec. 7.

greater alignment.[143] After the disastrous conference, China duly registered its "nationally appropriate mitigation actions"—anchored by the 40-45 percent reduction in carbon intensity by 2020—in time for COP 16 in Cancún.[144] Beijing reiterated that it would not support any future deal that impeded their economic growth.[145] But it also clarified it would make "contributions to global emissions reductions," if matched by binding emissions reduction commitments for developed countries.[146] An emerging consensus held that both developed and developing countries should play an internationally negotiated role in mitigating climate change, with the latter contributing according to their "social and economic conditions and other relevant factors."[147]

This paved the way for a grand bargain at COP 17 in Durban. The EU agreed to a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol,[148] in exchange for China and the other developing countries endorsing symmetrically binding commitments after 2020.[149] The "Durban Platform for Enhanced Action" called for an "agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention *applicable to all Parties*."[150] China "seemingly reversed its longstanding opposition to legally binding commitments" at least partly in "response to withering criticism it faced after its confrontational stance at Copenhagen two years earlier, combined with pressure on China by small-island states and large developing countries such as Mexico and Argentina."[151] The international community—both developed and developing countries—pushed Beijing to ground its moral responsibilities in its increasing capacity for emissions restraint.[152]

[143] Wang 2013, 395-7; Wu 2018, 217; Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018, 177; Wang 2021, 66, 47; Halkyer 2021, 171.
[144] FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/INF.1 [Compilation of information on nationally appropriate mitigation actions...," 18 March 2011], paras. 43-44 (Chinese submission).
[145] See FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/CRP.14 (submission from India behalf of China and other countries); FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/MISC.8, 99-100 (submission of China and other countries).
[146] FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/CRP.5, 2, esp. para. 3; see also AWG/LCA/15-informal [submission by China and other countries, 5 September 2012].
[147] FCCC/AWGLCA/2012/L.4 (7 December 2012), Art. 1. See also FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1/2/CP.17 (comparing II.A with II.B); AWG/LCA/15-informal [draft decision on shared vision by China and other countries, 23 November 2012], 3.
[148] Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018, 205.
[149] The Doha Amendment required an 18 percent reduction in CO_2 emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. FCCC/KP/CMP/2012/13/Add.1/1/CMP.8 [Doha Amendment], 1-4.
[150] FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1/1/CP.17 [Durban Platform for Enhanced Action], paras. 2-4 (emphasis added). See also Pan 2012, 2–4, 12–4.
[151] Stalley 2013, 1–2.
[152] Biniaz 2002, 359–60.

PRESTIGE, RESTRAINT, AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Chinese leaders did not initially view the Durban Platform as a concession to renegotiate key pillars of the climate regime or to assume leadership alongside the developed countries.[153] Yet China subsequently proved instrumental to the evolution of the climate regime towards a system of universal, symmetrically binding, commitments, culminating in the 2015 Paris Agreement at COP 21. This period coincided with Xi Jinping's tenure as paramount leader, beginning in 2012, which heralded a much more prestige-conscious conception of China's international role.[154] In 2011, a landmark government report noted that "China's overall strength has grown considerably," such that it played "an important role in safeguarding world peace and meeting global challenges."[155] Confident in China's relative economic success, Chinese leaders came to believe that a "foreign policy that insists merely on keeping China's profile low cannot cope effectively with the multi-faceted challenges facing the country today."[156] This conviction also seeded a desire for recognition that, as Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in 2013, "China is already standing under the world's limelight."[157] For the CCP under Xi, China's response to climate change was intimately linked to its "prestige and influence in the international arena."[158]

Two trends aligned to orient Beijing's pursuit for prestige towards performative emissions restraint. First, the 12th FYP (2011-15) expanded the rubric of "no regrets" climate policies to include investments in high technology and the development of a service sector, which could broadcast the relative success of China's development model. Second, the shift to a bottom-up climate regime, anticipated by the Copenhagen Accord's system of pledge and review, rendered China's potential mitigation commitments supererogatory. Beijing could claim moral authority for performing non-emission without incurring additional binding obligations.

[153] Wang 2021, 73; Su 2012; Like-Minded Developing Countries 2014, 3; People's Republic of China 2014.
[154] Dong 2017, 34; Xuetong 2014; Johnston 2013.
[155] State Council PRC 2011.
[156] Quoted in Wang 2016, 354.
[157] Wang 2013c; Wang 2019, 16–7.
[158] He 2010, 5; Yang et al. 2019; cf. Wang-Kaeding 2018.

China's Economic Transition Sets the Stage for Performative Non-Emission

At the Eighteenth Party Congress in November 2012, outgoing President Hu Jintao elevated "[p]romoting ecological progress" as a "long-term task of vital importance to the people's wellbeing and China's future." "Faced with increasing resource constraints, severe environmental pollution and a deteriorating ecosystem," Hu declared, "we must raise our ecological awareness of the need to respect, accommodate, and protect nature." [159] The term "ecological civilization," incorporated into the Party constitution that same year, became closely associated with Hu's successor as paramount leader, Xi Jinping.[160] Alongside this political change, the 12th FYP introduced a headline target of reducing carbon intensity by 17 percent.[161] Legislation passed by China's national congress in 2014 enhanced environmental agencies' enforcement authority and increased financial and criminal penalties for industrial polluters.[162] In September 2014, the NDRC released a *National Plan on Climate Change* (2014-2020), delineating a suite of policies intended to reduce GHG emissions, from afforestation to limiting the growth of the especially "dirty" steel and cement sectors.[163] Overall, the annual growth rate of CO_2 emissions fell by 75 percent between 2012 and 2014, largely due to decreasing reliance on coal.[164]

More so than in previous eras, officials linked these policies to an economy-wide transition away from heavy industry and manufacturing towards more advanced sectors.[165] China was entering a "New Normal" phase of economic development, which would be characterized by consistently slower growth, the development of internationally competitive technology firms, and the increasing importance of a service sector comprised of the urban middle class.[166] The 12th FYP prioritized the development of "strategic industries" such as electric vehicles and renewable energy, with investments that dwarfed those of Western countries.[167] China achieved not only the highest installed wind capacity but also the largest

[159] Hu 2012, sec. 7.
[160] Wang 2018, 733 n. 164; Wang-Kaeding 2021, chap. 5.
[161] Sandalow 2019, 33.
[162] Wang 2018, 716.
[163] State Council PRC 2014.
[164] People's Republic of China 2018b, 100; Hu 2016, 222–4.
[165] Li and Wang 2012.
[166] Hilton and Kerr 2017, 48–51; Hu 2016, 224–5; Kopra 2019, 62; Green and Stern 2017. The World Bank designated China with middle-income status in 2013. See Stefan 2014.
[167] Ong 2012.

production of solar panels, 90 percent of which were exported.[168] By 2015, it had become a "world leader in green energy."[169] "[L]ow-carbon development was increasingly seen as part of a strategy for investing in industries of the future and enhancing China's capacities for innovation."[170] Many of these policies incurred significant costs.[171] But Beijing's "preoccupation with GDP growth [was] slowly giving way to concerns about economic efficiency, product quality, environmental protection, the creation of a social safety net, and technological innovation."[172]

These technological changes had an important discursive effect. Chinese leaders had long hedged about whether they had the capability to mitigate climate change, lest this entail a responsibility to do so.[173] Yet with the economic transition, a "low-carbon economy" came to symbolize a "more efficient, competitive economy."[174] Emphasizing the development of "indigenous" capabilities, Beijing could "occupy the commanding heights in the new round of competition that is centered on green technology and economy."[175] Climate technologies were increasingly framed as a realm of geo-economic competition between China and the West, with success conveying influence within the climate regime.[176] "As far as China is concerned, developing [a low carbon economy] is both an indication of a responsible China and a historic opportunity for sustainable development and transformation of China's economic development pattern."[177] Its leaders could present the Chinese economy as a model for the world in terms of "disconnecting economic growth from carbon emissions."[178] In the words of Beijing's chief climate negotiator, exemplary restraint of emissions was a means to "provide Chinese wisdom and make [a] Chinese contribution to the ecological civilization and

[168] Never 2013, 227–9.
[169] Malcomson 2020.
[170] Sandalow 2019, 33.
[171] For instance, increasing the carbon efficiency of power plants alone required $1 trillion which could not be recouped in energy efficiency savings. Antholis and Talbott 2011, 88.
[172] Wang 2016, 354. See also Chai and Zhang 2013, 54.
[173] Brunnée and Toope 2010, 182; Wang and Gao 2018; Harris and Yu 2005, 53. For example, see FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/MISC.9/Add.1 ["Ideas and proposals on the elements contained in paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan," 22 November 2011], 24-30 (China's proposed edits); FCCC/AWGLCA/2011/CRP.25/Rev.1 [revised submission by India, China and Brazil on historical responsibility, 27 November 2011].
[174] Moore 2011, 155; Hilton and Kerr 2017, 51; People's Republic of China 2018b, 105–6..
[175] He 2010, 18; Wang 2018, 722.
[176]Sivaram and Saha 2017; Teske 2019, xv–xx.
[177] Chen 2011, 48.
[178] Hu 2016, 226.

sustainable development in the world."[179] In a speech at the UN in September 2014, Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli emphasized that "China was the first among developing countries to formulate and implement a national climate change program." Thus, China was at the vanguard of "a revolution in energy production and consumption" and would "blaz[e] a path of sustainable development that leads to both economic growth and effective tackling of climate change."[180] The notion of a distinctly Chinese model of sustainable development meshed with the broader notion of "socialism with Chinese characteristics," which, according to President Xi, offered "Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind."[181]

Shifting the Frame for Climate Commitments: Bilateral and "Bottom-Up"

In addition to broadcasting its economic strength, Beijing came to view the performance of emissions restraint as a signal of its moral authority. After 2012, Xi Jinping and other leaders increasingly emphasized that China would embrace "international responsibilities and obligations as a new type of major country."[182] Chinese officials interpreted "major country diplomacy" as "aimed at reforming international order and [the] international system rather than just focusing on economic development."[183] Foreign Minister Yi elaborated that addressing common international concerns will at times require China to subordinate narrow national interests to acting as a "responsible major country."[184] China would "enhance… the 'cultural soft power of the nation' and improve China's international image" by championing "common values in the global arena, such as good governance and transparency."[185] Foreign policy would be guided by the "intention to build an image of a responsible power and elevate its international status."[186]

Other states explicitly appealed to China's desire for recognition as a "major

[179] Xie 2020, 7. See also Yu and Zhu 2015, 63–5; Pan 2012, 16.
[180] Zhang 2014.
[181] Xi 2017a; see also State Council PRC 2015; Kopra 2019, 90.
[182] Wang 2013d; Xi 2015a. Analyzing this rhetoric, see Swaine 2015; Foot and King 2021, esp. 214; Kivimäki 2014.
[183] Wang 2019, 18. Cf. Byun 2016, 493 ("China's major power model reinforced [1] peaceful intentions rather than hegemonic aspirations, [2] the primacy of advancing China's domestic development rather than its international position, and [3] tensions between China's dual identities as a rising power and developing country.").
[184] Wang 2013b.
[185] Wang 2016, 355.
[186] He 2010, 15.

country" to enlist it as a co-leader of the climate regime.[187] In the lead-up to COP 21 in Paris, President Obama frequently referenced China's "special responsibility to lead" on climate alongside the United States given their economic heft and emissions profiles: "That's what big nations have to do." [188] The Obama Administration attempted to tie acceptance of China's greater international role to its responsibility in addressing climate change.[189] Xi proved a willing partner, leading to a string of bilateral advances between the United States and China, as well as China and the European Union.[190] In September 2013, Washington and Beijing reached an agreement to phase out HFCs, a potent category of greenhouse gases. In November 2014, Xi and Obama held a joint summit in Beijing to announce their countries' most ambitious mitigation actions to date.[191] For China, this included the first absolute commitment to restraint its emissions, with a target year for "peaking" emissions by 2030.[192] Both countries also pledged to support an agreement at COP 21 that was "ambitious" and reflected CBDR.[193] And in a symbolic gesture, China also agreed to match the US pledge of $3.0 billion to the UNFCCC's Green Climate Fund with $3.1 billion (RMB20 billion) for its Global South-South Climate Cooperation Fund.[194]

Constructive bilateralism complemented the "bottom-up" approach to climate governance emerging within the UNFCCC process since Durban. Modeled on earlier proposals for "pledge and review," states would collectively determine goals but individually determine contributions.[195] COP 19 in Warsaw called for "all Parties to initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended nationally determined contributions" (INDCs).[196] By COP 20 in Lima, it was clear that these INDCs would form the basis of the agreement at Paris the next year.[197] Beijing submitted its INDC to the UNFCCC Secretariat on 30 June, 2015. It largely comprised existing policy goals: peaking carbon emissions by 2030, reducing carbon intensity by 60-5 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 increasing its forest

[187] Kopra 2019, 89; Shi and Tweed 2014.
[188]Obama 2014.
[189] Kopra 2019, 72-80; Bodansky 2010, 232; Garrett 2010, 29.
[190] Falkner 2016a, 87; Brenton 2013; Hale 2011; Eckersley 2007; Nordhaus 2015.
[191] The White House 2014a.
[192] Sandalow 2019, 34.
[193] The White House 2014b.
[194] China Daily 2015.
[195] Victor 2011, 6; Hoffman 2011, 4–5; Biermann 2015; Falkner, Stephan, and Vogler 2010.
[196] FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1/1/CP.19 ["Further advancing the Durban Platform], 2(b).
[197] FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.1/1/CP.20 ["Lima Call for Climate Action"], para 14.

carbon stock volume by 2.5 billion cubic meters from 2005 levels, and deploying 800 to 1,000 gigawatts of non-fossil fuel capacity (equal to US total current capacity) by 2030.[198] State media noted that "China [was] the first large emerging economy to set itself a hard target for carbon emissions. China's approach has been praised by the governments of developed countries such as France and Germany, and has formed a relationship with the United States' emission reduction targets."[199] In fact, China had conceded what developed and developing countries alike had long sought: that it would be internationally accountable for restraining its economy-wide emissions by a specified date. Beijing had, in short, "helped to transform the climate governance model from a top-down to a bottom-up approach, which improved confidence in future global climate agreements."[200]

Joint diplomatic announcements with China and the United States, France, India, Brazil, and the European Union, respectively, were an important factor in paving the way to COP 21 at Paris. The COP 20 President specifically cited these "historic" pledges as "good signals" for concluding an agreement the following year, while the UNFCCC Executive Secretary described them as a source of "unprecedented optimism and achievement."[201] Neither bilateral back-patting nor the bottom-up system removed all roadblocks to the elusive post-2020 agreement, however.[202] The Lima Call for Action at COP 20 had not settled whether verification would be legally symmetrical for developed and developing countries' respective NDCs.[203] And it had qualified the application of CBDR "in light of different national circumstances" and "in light of national circumstances."[204] China still insisted on strict differentiation and condemned the effort to skirt CBDR and "create a new international climate regime."[205] In the days before COP 21 commenced in Paris, Xie Zhenhua, Vice Chair of the NDRC and China's chief climate negotiator, alluded to the "pressure" on China to "graduate from the ranks of developing nations and commit to the same emission cuts as the developed nations." He maintained that

[198] Su 2015.
[199] Global Times 2015; see also Falkner 2016b, 1112.
[200] Xie 2021, 98.
[201] Quoted in Chasek 2021, 34.
[202] Clark 2015; Chasek 2021, 37.
[203] Moosmann et al. 2015, 23, 41.
[204] Lima Call for Action, para. 14. Draft language had even referenced states' "*evolving* common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities." FCCC/CP/2014/10/1/CP-20/Annex ["Elements of a draft negotiating text"], 6.
[205] FCCC/ADP/2013/3 ["China's Submission on the Work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action"], 7-8.

"China is a developing country. Even if we maintain this dichotomy, it will not stop developing countries from doing more, better."[206] Developing country status would not preclude China from voluntarily restraining its emissions, but such restraint would be supererogatory, whereas for developed countries it was an obligation stemming from historical responsibility and related legal commitments.

Performing in Paris

In the Paris Agreement, finalized on 11 December 2015, states pledged to collectively restrain their carbon emissions in order to achieve a global emissions peak as soon as possible and keep global temperatures increases "well below" 2 °C, preferably below 1.5 °C.[207] Every Party agreed to "prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions" corresponding to domestic mitigation policies.[208] Developed countries "should" undertake economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets, while developing countries are "encouraged to move over time" towards the same format of commitments "in light of different national circumstances."[209] This language reflected the advance work of Chinese and US negotiators.[210] And Chinese support proved critical to securing this compromise when a "transcription error" in the final text introduced language that implied binding commitments for developed countries (which the US could not accept). The Chinese delegation successfully lobbied developing countries at this crucial moment to save the agreement.[211]

Crucially, even the qualified differentiation that applied to emissions reduction timelines did not extend to Parties' reporting requirements.[212] NDCs were to be recorded in a public registry and reviewed periodically in a "global stocktake" beginning in 2023 and carried out every five years subsequently.[213] All Parties were required to provide a national inventory report of emissions by sources, as well as

[206] Quoted in Zhang 2015.
[207] UNFCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Annex ["Paris Agreement"], Art. 2, sec. 1
[208] Ibid., Art. 4, sec. 2.
[209] Ibid., Art. 4, sec. 4.
[210] Xie 2021, 99, 108.
[211] Ibid., 106-7; Chasek 2021, 42-3. Indeed, other developing countries did not share China's enthusiasm for the agreement. In the Plenary of COP 21, the Malaysian representative accused developed countries of "trying to freeze the development pace of developing countries." Quoted in Halkyer 2021, 167.
[212] In contrast to the UNFCCC (Art. 12) and the Kyoto Protocol (Art. 7-8), the Paris Agreement's "transparency framework" (Art. 13) applied equally to Annex I and non-Annex I countries.
[213] Paris Agreement, Art. 4, sec. 4, Art. 14.

information necessary to track progress towards NDCs, which would be subject to technical expert review.[214] The Agreement makes no reference to the UNFCCC's original Annexes.[215] The Paris Agreement thus bypassed the firewall that had protected China and other large developing countries from binding commitments to restrain their carbon emissions.[216]

The symmetry of commitments was most striking with respect to the verification procedures, which, given the bottom-up nature of the treaty, accounted for states' only binding commitments.[217] This constituted a major concession, since Beijing had long resisted international accountability as a costly infringement upon its sovereignty.[218] The ability to set its own targets mitigated many of these concerns.[219] The bottom-up system "not only dispel[led] China's fear of failure but also allow[ed] it to easily exceed global expectations and thus gain face."[220] Yet it also subjected China to future pressure to take on more costly mitigation responsibilities.[221] The Paris Agreement depends upon states increasing the ambition of their contributions over time due to a "virtuous process of cooperation, if not an outright race-to-the-top."[222] Hence the enhanced legal status given to reporting and transparency procedures.[223] States must justify why their contributions to restraining carbon emissions are "fair" and "ambitious," with reference to metrics like absolute or per capita emissions.[224] This enables a dynamic of "name and encourage" among Parties.[225]

Why would China—or any other state, for that matter—compete to perform ambitious (i.e., costly) emissions restraint? By 2015, negotiators and observers alike perceived a norm whereby "great powers should commit to stabilizing climate

[214] Ibid., Art. 13, sec. 7(a)-(b), sec. 11. Cf. Keohane and Oppenheimer 2016, 147. The non-punitive measures to ensure compliance with these requirements (Art. 15) also applied equally to all Parties.
[215] Odell 2021, 308.
[216] Yu and Zhu 2015, 60.
[217] Wang and Gao 2018, 255; Zhang 2017, 5.
[218] Odell 2021, 307.
[219] Hilton and Kerr 2017, 53; Wang 2021, 70–7.
[220] Kopra 2019, 132.
[221] Even before COP 21, the UNFCCC Secretariat released a synthesis report of states' INDCs finding that, collectively, they fell far short of stated goal of averting 2 °C warming. FCCC/CP/2015/7 ["Synthesis report on aggregate affect of the intended national contributions"], esp. 204; Figueres 2016.
[222] Hilton and Kerr 2017, 54; Rogelj et al. 2016; Keohane and Oppenheimer 2016, 147; Mitchell and Carpenter 2019, 423.
[223] Slaughter 2015; Falkner 2016b, 1109.
[224] FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1 ["Adoption of the Paris Agreement"], para. 27.
[225] Quoted in Falk 2015. See also Bodansky 2015, 155–65.

change."[226] According to the EU climate commissioner, "All of a sudden, the debate was about the willing versus the unwilling. And no one wanted to be seen as unwilling."[227] "No responsible Great Power wanted to be left out of the newly emerged climate consensus."[228] Such statements reflected an emerging logic of appropriateness.[229] At the same time, the norm of constructive participation in the climate regime also served as a *baseline* framing states' supererogatory restraint. Championing the Paris Agreement served dual expressive purposes for Beijing, demonstrating economic vibrancy and signaling "moral restraint."[230] First, in his speech to open COP 21, President Xi declared that "China tops the world in terms of energy conservation and utilization of new and renewable energies" and has "foster[ed] a new pattern of modernization featuring harmony between man and nature…" China's contributions reflected its "technological and institutional innovation."[231] Referencing CBDR, Xi hailed Paris as a "new start" for the climate regime in which "each country [made] contribution[s] to the best of its ability."[232] This principle now "highlighted more about capabilities of nations than responsibilities for emissions."[233] The state-run *Global Times* similarly noted that, "[a]lthough it is and will still be a developing country for a long time to come, China has pioneered the world's emission reduction effort by ranking first on several fronts such as wind power…"[234] This link between Chinese climate leadership and technological innovation received validation from the United States and other countries, which joined China in a "Mission Innovation" pledge to double their investment in clean energy research and development over a five-year period.[235]

Second, Xi's speech attributed Chinese support for the Paris Agreement to Beijing's broader efforts to "enhance the standing and role of international law in global governance, ensure effective observance and implementation of international rules, uphold democracy, equity and justice, and build international

[226] Wu 2018, 219–22; Hadden and Seybert 2016; Pettenger 2007.
[227] Quoted in Ivanova 2016, 414. Suggesting the desire for status as a motive for EU ratification, see European Commission 2016.
[228] Falkner 2016b, 1114.
[229] See, e.g., Ezroj 2011.
[230] Wang 2021, 119.
[231] Xi 2015b.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Wang and Gao 2018, 254.
[234] Xinhua 2015.
[235] Odell 2021, 304; see also U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group 2016.

rule of law."[236] Beijing made a point to symbolically transcend the failure of Copenhagen; Xi travelled personally to Paris, the first Chinese head of state to attend a climate conference.[237] The symbolism was plain:

> In only six years… China completed the transition from passive follower to active leader, successfully shaping an image in global climate governance. This is the first time that China moved to the center of the world stage at the fastest speed in the past 40 years since engagement in global climate governance.[238]

A Foreign Ministry spokesman declared that championing the Paris Agreement demonstrated "China's sense of responsibility as a major country in tackling climate change."[239] State media reported that Beijing's leadership role at Paris had won international approval; international observers generally concurred.[240] China and the United States both formally joined the Agreement in September 2016 during the G20 summit in Hangzhou, the first major economies to do so.[241] In a joint Sino-US statement on the occasion President Xi pledged: "China, a responsible developing country and an active player in global climate governance, will implement its development concepts of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared growth; fully advance energy conservation, emission reduction and low-carbon development; and embrace the new era of ecological civilization."[242] Or, as China's chief climate negotiator would later, rather colorfully, put it, "China [had] made a historical, fundamental and indispensable contribution with its determination, ambition, wisdom and solutions towards the adoption, signing, entry into force and implementation of the Paris Agreement."[243]

CODA: TRUMP CEDES THE LIMELIGHT

The Paris Agreement entered into force in November 2016, days before Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election having vowed to withdraw from it.

[236] Xi 2015b. See also Ginsburg 2020, 250; Zhao 2018, 24, 24–30.
[237] Dong 2017, 32.
[238] Wang 2021, 1.
[239] Quoted in Kopra 2019, 110.
[240] Dreyfus 2015; Li 2016, 50; Browne 2015 (Wall Street Journal); Assosciated Press 2015; Flitton 2015 (Sydney Morning Herald).
[241] Reuters Staff 2016; The White House 2016.
[242] Geall and Ely 2018, 1179.
[243] Xie 2021, 97.

Addressing the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, shortly after Trump's election, Xi defended "the authority and efficacy of multilateral institutions. We should honor promises and abide by rules. One should not select or bend rules as he sees fit."[244] Chinese negotiators clarified that they would not abandon the Paris Agreement even if Trump did so.[245] Observers viewed this as a "high-profile bid to bolster China's image as a reliable and dedicated climate leader."[246] Stepping into the "leadership vacuum"[247] created by Trump's retreat from international cooperation permitted China to take on a system-shaping role that served its dual interests of "international prestige and domestic economic system reform."[248] State media lambasted the Trump Administration for standing outside of the Agreement as part of a "questionable minority" along with Nicaragua and Syria: "[T]he US' selfishness and irresponsibility will be made clear to the world, crippling the country's world leadership."[249]

Meanwhile, China's 13th FYP (2016-20) purported to double down on ambitious climate action, elevating the goal of ecological protection to the same level as economic growth. Alongside the pledge to peak emissions by 2030, the Plan set a shorter-term goal of reducing carbon intensity by at least 60 percent 2005 levels by 2020.[250] It also announced the first target for overall energy consumption.[251] At the 19th National Party Congress in 2017, Xi broke with longstanding tradition by not announcing national growth targets, instead heralding a shift from "quantity first" to "quality first" growth and promising China's international leadership on sustainable development.[252] The Congress reaffirmed that China would "continue to play the role as a responsible big country, actively participate in the reform and construction of the global governance system, and continuously contribute China's wisdom and strength."[253] China's 2018 update report to the UNFCC presented the image of a state that was "vigorously promoting eco-civilization" by "trying to accelerate green low-carbon development and

[244] Xi 2017b; see also Xi 2017c.
[245] Quoted in Reuters Staff 2017.
[246] Phillips 2017.
[247] Stinson 2017.
[248] Dong 2017, 35.
[249] Global Times 2017.
[250] Hu 2016, 226.
[251] Seligsohn and Hsu 2016.
[252] Xiao and Zhao 2017, 1008–9.
[253] Wang 2021, 9.

actively controlling greenhouse gas emission…"[254]

These claims to climate leadership are far from unimpeachable.[255] At times Beijing has taken draconian measures to meet emissions restraint targets. In 2017, after coal consumption rose slightly following a three-year decline, the government widely banned its use for residential heating.[256] The central government's plan to shift away from coal calls for the shuttering of two coal plants a week.[257] By 2019 Beijing announced that carbon intensity had dropped 45.8 percent on 2005 levels, exceeding the goal set in 2009.[258] The Chinese press heralded this report as evidence of "China solutions" to climate change.[259] Commentators hoped that innovative measures, such as a national carbon trading market, would "greatly enhance China's international standing."[260] At the UN, Foreign Minister Wang Yi continued to praise China's "new concept of development."[261] Still, as Chinese emissions continued to grow each year, by 2019 they exceeded those of all the developed OECD countries *combined*.[262] One camp of skeptics has doubted that China will be able to meet its most ambitious commitments, such as doubling the non-fossil fuel proportion of its energy mix by 2030.[263] In 2020, China built "over three times more new coal-power capacity than the rest of the world combined."[264] Another camp criticizes China's policies for *lacking* ambition and engaging in a kind of "Potemkin environmentalism," that is, industrial policy masquerading as climate policy.[265] Analysts have also suggested that China will achieve peak emissions by 2030 without undertaking aggressive policy measures beyond existing controls on carbon intensity.[266] This is a politically fraught issue because China's

[254] People's Republic of China 2018a, ii.
[255] Geall and Ely 2018, 1177–8; Sandalow 2019, 3–4.
[256] Myers 2018.
[257] Teske 2019, xv, xxix.
[258] McNeice 2019.
[259] Xinhua 2019a.
[260] Buckley 2017.
[261] Quoted in Xinhua 2019b; Li and Shapiro 2020.
[262] Larsen et al. 2021.
[263] Groves, Schaefer, and Loris 2016, 7–8. According to the Chinese government, transforming the energy mix will cost 32 trillion RMB ($2.1 trillion) per year. People's Republic of China 2018a, 30.
[264] Maizland 2021. Notably, China has recently said it will finance the construction of coal plants abroad in the future. In 2021, in a "move designed to bolster Beijing's climate credentials," Xi Jinping announced to the United Nations General Assembly that China would "step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low carbon energy and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad." Sengupta and Gladstone 2021.
[265] Stinson 2017.
[266] Zhang 2017, 7; Grubb et al. 2015; Sussman 2014 (all arguing the goal is ambitious); cf. Green and Stern 2017, 425–7. Notably, there is no target cap for emissions before they peak. See Rong

emissions must peak by 2025 in order for the Paris Agreement to remain on track.[267] The Climate Action Tracker, which monitors and assesses states' NDCs, indicated that China's 2020 update was "stronger" than its 2015 targets but still "highly insufficient" for reaching the Paris Agreement's goals.[268] In COPs after Paris, Beijing has seemingly reverted to a more defensive stance, rejecting calls from developed and developing countries for it to further increase the "ambition" of its emissions restraint.[269]

CONCLUSION

We should not mistake the forest for the trees, however. Despite the technical and normative difficulties of assessing "ambition" in the context of climate change mitigation, the overall trend in China's standing within the regime remains clear. "In 2009, after the United Nations climate negotiations in Copenhagen, China was widely viewed as an opponent of a global agreement on climate change. Since the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, China has been hailed in many quarters as a global leader on climate change."[270] At Paris, after more than two decades of defending the firewall that shielded it from most climate obligations, China not only consented to, but championed, the transition "from the asymmetric distribution of responsibilities between developed and developing countries to a common framework for all countries to reduce emissions."[271]

This chapter has attributed the shift in China's climate change diplomacy to the prestige motive and performative restraint (see Table 6.1). Conventional wisdom holds that economic development and modernization are key material sources of international prestige.[272] Asserting a national prerogative for development has traditionally been at odds with restraint, instead entailing the acquisition of resources and markets, the domination of the environment, and thus—in the industrial era—the emission of planet-warming CO_2. In contrast, this chapter shows how discourses of modernity have evolved with the advent of norms tying technological innovation and economic capacity to environmental restraint

2010.
[267] Sandalow 2019, 25; Maizland 2021.
[268] CAT Climate Target Update Tracker - China 2020.
[269] See Group of 77 and China 2017; Kopra 2019, 125.
[270] Wang 2018, 755.
[271] Quoted in Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018, 206.
[272] Buzan and Lawson 2015, chap. 6.

and non-emission. Consider that "Chinese state media… made the best of slowing economic growth figures, framing [them] as part of a concerted effort to adopt 'a more mature view on development' that incorporates stronger environmental protection. Such an approach 'will eventually benefit the world.'"[273] This framing is of course self-serving, but it was largely accepted by international audiences. Consistent with the logic of performativity, China and other international actors retained strategic agency within the social environment characterized by this frame. Under the UNFCCC and CBDR, emissions restraint was *always* linked to states' material capacity and moral responsibility. What changed was China's position in relation to other states in the regime. Small developing countries that were vulnerable to climate change had a clear incentive to pressure China—as the largest emitter—to undertake more ambitious mitigation commitments. China at first responded by moderating its position to avoid isolation in the climate regime. Ultimately, it took a more proactive approach, performing restraint to broadcast material (economic innovation and dynamism) and moral (responsible international leadership) sources of prestige.

Alternative Explanations

Other explanatory logics are relevant for this case but fail to fully account for its progression. First, perhaps the most prevalent alternative explanation draws upon the materialist logic of consequences, according to which states have "focused narrowly on securing their own national interest and avoiding costly commitments to emission reductions…"[274] Often the premise of such explanations—blending the "holding back to cover up" and "holding back to hunker down" mechanisms—is that leaders make international climate commitments only once they perceive the domestic policies underlying them as favorable in material terms. Proponents of this view can point to two related developments in the Chinese case. On one hand, the costs of business-as-usual emissions became increasingly clear to Beijing.[275] By 2013, studies indicated that air pollution alone cost more than 10 percent of GDP.[276]

[273] Wang 2018, 721, quoting Foreign Minister Wang Yi's 2015 speech to the 12th National People's Congress.
[274] Falkner, Stephan, and Vogler 2010, 256; Sprinz and Vaahtoranta 1994.
[275] Huang 2020, 61.
[276] Ibid., 57-8. Other studies with more conservative methodologies indicated a loss of 1-4%. Contemporaneous analysis by the Chinese government reports estimated that environmental degradation overall cost as much as 15% of GDP. Wang 2013a, 396; Economy 2011.

TABLE 6.1. Summary of Evidence of Chinese Performative Non-Emission, 1992-2017.

1.	**Framing**: *voluntary? principled*?	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** Climate regime frames Chinese emissions restraint as economically costly but prosocial; "ambitious" emissions restraint is supererogatory under Paris framework.
2.	**Underlying capability:** *demonstrated? claimed by actor? accepted or assumed by audience?*	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** China's economic growth creates clear opportunities for more ambitious emissions restraint. Int'l audience assumes this capacity; China later admits it.
3.	**Prestige motive:** *referenced by actor? attributed by other analysts?*	**Support for "holding back to rise above."** Beijing justified emissions restraint in terms of self-presentational benefits related to economic dynamism (material capacity) and responsible global citizenship (moral exemplarity).
4.	**Keeping the option open:** *do leaders resist commitments that undermine voluntary nature of restraint*?	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** China rejected binding international obligations even as its domestic climate policies became increasingly ambitious.
5.	**Reference others' lack of restraint**: *do leaders respond by doubling down on restraint? frame it in relative terms?*	**Some support for "holding back to rise above."** China cited developed countries' lack of restraint in rejecting calls for it to commit to non-emission. But it also championed the Paris Agreement after Trump withdrew the United States.
6.	**Investment in presentation**: *do states toe the line? cry foul?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** China "cried foul" when others demanded that, despite its developing country status, it accept binding mitigation commitments. Beijing insisted that its emissions restraint would always be supererogatory.
7.	**Sensitivity to social costs**: *do leaders react to perceived disrespect or humiliation?*	**Strong support for "holding back to rise above."** The opprobrium that China incurred after COP 15 spurred it to moderate its opposition to a symmetrically binding climate agreement. (This is also consistent with "holding back to blend in.") Subsequently, Beijing responded to positive reinforcement from the US and EU.
8.	**Material consequences:** *do leaders adjust to changing material cost-benefit calculus?*	**Some support for "holding back to hunker down."** China's domestic mitigation policies reflected material cost-benefit calculus, leading to greater emissions restraint beginning in the 11th FYP period (2006-2010). However, this did not correspond to greater Chinese commitments in ICCN until after 2011, when emissions restraint policies also assumed expressive significance due to their association with China's technology- and innovation-focused development model.
9.	**Social appropriateness:** *do leaders rule out alternative policies?*	**Some support for "holding back to blend in."** See 7. However, "blending in" cannot explain China's subsequent championing of the Paris Agreement, which went above and beyond the bare minimum required to remain within the global mainstream.
10.	**Parochial interests:** *does restraint have narrow partisan support?*	**Some support for "holding back to earn credit."** Performing emissions restraint internationally served to symbolically legitimate the CCP to domestic audiences by signaling that they took environmental issues seriously. This is consistent with "holding back to rise above," as an international audience remained proximate.

On the other hand, China's "economic transition" made available mitigation measures with potential upside for development.[277] Technological advances in, for instance, clean energy production and storage undeniably affected the cost-benefit calculus of emissions restraint at the domestic level, leading *all* major emitters to grow "more confident that a gradual shift towards a low-carbon economy [would] not necessarily harm their long-term growth strategies."[278]

Yet it does not automatically follow that this calculus applied to international commitments as well. The climate regime was "set up primarily to focus on the distribution of mitigation burdens, with few, if any, economic gains on the table, at least in the short to medium term."[279] Chinese negotiators often perceived the pressures they faced in this context as a ploy to "postpone the rise and development of China as well as to maintain international political and economic orders dominated by Western countries."[280] Distributional concerns meant that Chinese leaders were reluctant to match domestic ambitions with international concessions, leading to a noted "discrepancy between [China's] domestic actions and simultaneous reticence to act at the international level."[281] For instance, aspects of the economic transition began as early as the 11th FYP period in 2006, when the government adopted a suite of measures intended to achieve a "mode of economic growth" featuring "less input, less consumption, less emission and high efficiency."[282] This did not have a notable effect on China's negotiating position, which remained remarkably recalcitrant for another five or six years through key negotiations including at Copenhagen. This timing does not support "holding back to cover up."

Nor does the cost-benefit calculus for China's later concessions support the material mechanism of "holding back to hunker down." Consider that, while the economic transition did not obviate the material costs of emissions restraint,[283] it did impose diplomatic costs upon China's conservative stance in international

[277] E.g., Ewing 2016 ('These shifts [in China's climate policies] are best explained by… an economic transformation towards slower, more high-quality growth, and has placed new primacy on environmental health'); Hart 2017 ('Beijing wants to move its citizens out of the coal mines and into the labs'); cf. Wu 2018, 211.
[278] Falkner 2016b, 1113.
[279] Falkner 2016a, 91.
[280] Yu and Zhu 2015, 61; Wang 2019, 72.
[281] Zhang 2021, 57.
[282] Wang 2013a, 401.
[283] Keohane and Oppenheimer 2016, 145.

negotiations. Rapid economic growth made the rhetorical strategy of pleading poverty to disclaim climate responsibility much less effective and increased the reputational consequences of recalcitrance. International pressures led China to engage in costly compromises such as endorsing the Paris Agreement's transparency regime, which followed decades of fierce opposition to symmetric verification requirements. What justified China's proactive—indeed, enthusiastic—support for these costly commitments? At the same that economic growth increased the social costs of unfettered emission, it oriented Chinese leaders towards the pursuit of international prestige. "Growing wealth generates an expectation of greater respect." [284] That China could perform costly but effective emissions restraint within the context of its economic transition was perceived to symbolize successful development, which, in its leaders' eyes, imbued climate commitments with expressive significance. In short, neither the costs nor the benefits that influenced these performances of emissions restraint can be chalked up to domestic economic considerations.

Second, alternative explanations grounded in identity factors and normative logics of appropriateness require comparatively little consideration. While China's climate diplomacy was peppered with invocations of legal and moral principles, especially CBDR, its interpretations shifted opportunistically in line with various negotiating interests. In contrast to "holding back out of habit," Chinese leaders engaged clearly *instrumental* rhetorical action, seeking greater prestige and influence by "present[ing] themselves as the supreme moral rectifiers of the world order."[285] This stance allowed them to rail against the climate regime even while claiming to represent the normative status quo. The meaning of China's primary identity in the climate regime—as a developing country—remained inherently contested, as did the obligations attached to it. Indeed, this case demonstrates the tensions inherent in China's evolving and overlapping identity conceptions as the "next superpower" and a "poor developing country," a "weak country and a strong one." [286] Traditional constructivist accounts may struggle to connect these complicated identities to specific negotiating strategies or policy outcomes, but a performative lens reveals China's expressive goal: demonstrating that it *could* take

[284] Deng 2008, 2.
[285] Chan 2005, 3; Stalley 2013, 6; Chayes and Kim 1998, 519.
[286] Wu 2001, 293; Callahan 2009, 196; Pu 2017, 139.

on the obligations of a great power with the regime, and that it was exceptional for doing so given its stage of development. This emphasis on national exceptionalism also distinguishes China's post-2012 performance of restraint from its immediate response to opprobrium after Copenhagen, when its concessions exemplified "holding back to blend in."

Finally, domestic political dynamics add color to the case but cannot independently account for its chief contours. The importance of bureaucratic politics—"holding back to guard turf"—was circumscribed by China's highly centralized authoritarian system. Initially, weak environmental protection and the lax enforcement of environmental regulations reflected a lack of bureaucratic capacity and authority.[287] The subsequent re-organization of relevant government departments tracked the greater priority afforded climate change by the central leadership. For instance, between 2007 and 2008 climate policy was elevated to the portfolio of the influential National Development and Reform Commission and a coordinating body, the National Leading Group to Address Climate Change, was established under the Chinese Premier.[288] It is also relevant that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took charge of international climate negotiations and tended to regard them, not from a domestic economic development perspective, but as "a vehicle for asserting leadership" in world affairs.[289]

The CCP's political calculations also indicate the relevance of "holding back to earn credit." Though authoritarian, China's governance model nonetheless relies upon a degree of responsiveness to citizens' concerns.[290] In the 1990s and early 2000s, this consideration counseled against costly international commitments; the CCP's legitimacy remained tightly linked with economic growth and rising living standards.[291] By the 2010s, however, the Party faced acute domestic pressure to restrain carbon emissions, especially due to worsening air pollution.[292] Public opinion research from 2015 indicated that 76 percent of the Chinese population

[287] Lo and Leung 2000.
[288] The NDRC remained chiefly responsible for climate policy until 2018, when responsibility was transferred to the newly formed Ministry of Ecology and the Environment.
[289] Kasa, Gulberg and Heggelund 2008, 120; Chayes and Kim 1998, 528.
[290] Gilley 2012; Wang-Kaeding 2021, chaps 1–2.
[291] Lewis 2007, 156; Conrad 2012, 444–8; Hale 2011, 92; Kopra 2019, 59.
[292] Wang 2013, 394-7; more generally, Mertha 2014; Xie and van der Heijden 2010. While distinct problems, frustration with pollution tended to be associated with public support for aggressive climate policies. See Brunnée and Toope 2010, 170.

considered air pollution a "big problem."[293] In repones to citizen demands, Hu Jintao and especially Xi Jinping explicitly attempted to re-ground the CCP's legitimacy in its handling of social problems, including environmental stewardship.[294]

Air pollution and climate change are not isomorphic problems. Some solutions to the former—such as adding scrubbers to coal plants or investing in synthetic natural gas that is refined in rural areas, away from population centers—can actually exacerbate the latter by increasing emissions.[295] And as late as 2006, it seemed that for most Chinese citizens, "global environmental issues clearly have a low profile, when compared with the constant stream of reports on local pollution incidents, domestic nature degradation and national environmental regulation."[296] Therefore, it is not self-evident that domestic legitimacy concerns should have required China's leaders to perform emissions restraint *internationally*. In fact, the CCP promoted international climate change leadership as a means of symbolic legitimation, that is, as a signal to domestic audiences that the government was taking environmental problems seriously. "This act of 'performing performance' [signaled] competence, commitment to the people, tradition, nationalist strength, and a host of other positive values to citizens and other audiences."[297] Climate leadership came to embody "two values central to the domestic legitimacy of the Communist Party of China (CCP): authority and national honour."[298] As we have seen in previous chapters, once performative restraint became expressively viable, leaders' political interests tended to align with the prestige motive in commending it.

[293] Sandalow 2019, 43; Huang 2020, 55.
[294] Wang 2013, 390-4; Shambaugh 2009, chaps 4–5.
[295] Sandalow 2019, 47.
[296] Martens 2006.
[297] Wang 2018, 699.
[298] Kora 2019, 132.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2009, Barack Obama hailed his country's "moral and strategic interest in binding [itself] to certain rules of conduct… Even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides by no rules… [we] must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war… That is the source of our strength."[1] For Obama, "what makes [the United States] exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law; it's our willingness to affirm them through our actions."[2] In short, "[p]art of our capacity to lead is linked to our capacity to show restraint."[3] To recover its prestige after the Bush Administration's embrace of unilateralism and interventionism, the United States must look beyond "military power alone" to cultivate its "moral authority."[4] The new Administration would give effect to this vision, it claimed, by withdrawing US forces from Iraq, forswearing controversial counter-terrorism tactics, and, in a more general stylistic adjustment, toning down America's "swagger" on the world stage.[5]

For critics at home, most vociferously those on the right, this doctrine of leadership-through-restraint was quixotic, even risible.[6] They charged Obama with misconstruing the pursuit of prestige as a "popularity contest," engaging in a shameful "apology tour," and betraying the quasi-sacred creed of "American exceptionalism."[7] Characteristically blunt, Donald Trump lambasted Obama on the campaign trail for foreign policy "weakness" that had "embarrassed" the country internationally.[8] As President, Trump pledged to "restor[e] the United States [sic] standing in the world by putting America first and achieving peace through strength."[9]

[1] Quoted in Hurd 2017, 122.
[2] Quoted in Boot 2016; Obama 2015; see also Onuf 2012b.
[3] Quoted in Ikenberry 2011a, 324.
[4] See Obama 2009.
[5] McCann 2014. Bush himself had, before 9/11, promised a foreign policy that was "strong but humble." Quoted in Walt 2019.
[6] For scholarly critiques, see Kaufman 2014; Dueck 2015; Löfflmann 2015.
[7] Gardiner and Roach 2009; Wilson 2012; Dovere 2016; cf. Grandin 2016.
[8] Quoted in Boot 2016.
[9] White House 2019; Harris 2020.

These debates about American exceptionalism are not as parochial as they at first appear. Their contours and cleavages map with remarkable accuracy onto the Mytilenean Debate over the sources of Athenian prestige recounted in the Introduction. The intervening chapters have traced the view that restraint can confer international prestige—a view espoused by such disparately situated figures as Thucydides and Obama, but which has occupied a marginal position in the IR literature—across a wide range of cases. This conclusion considers salient themes to emerge from the historical chapters with respect to states' pursuit of prestige, before turning other major issues in IR for which my theory is relevant, namely, (1) compliance with international law, (2) the challenge posed by rising powers, and (3) the durability of the liberal international order.

CHARTING RESTRAINT AS A PATH TO PRESTIGE

Though it includes a discursive element, prestige-seeking through performative restraint cannot be confined to leaders' rhetoric or dismissed as mere "cheap talk." As these cases have played out through the "high politics" of war and peace and the high-profile diplomacy of international summits, leaders have willingly incurred significant material costs—up front and in the form of forgone benefits—to perform restraint, so long as they have expected to reap prestige in return. In Chapter 3, the United States broke with decades of its own diplomatic practice by declining to forcefully intervene against the Mexican government's expropriation of millions of dollars of U.S. citizens' property. And it risked the political influence it had accrued in Nicaragua through significant expenditures of blood and treasure by refusing to support its preferred leader in the face of an impending coup. In Chapter 4, Germany seriously strained its most important alliance by spurning even symbolic participation in the Coalition of the Wiling. In Chapter 5, India accommodated itself to the presence of a nuclear-armed rival on its borders without rushing for the bomb. And in Chapter 6, China subjected itself to international accountability for emissions restraint commitments that included trillions of dollars in new investment and envisioned the transformation of its economy.

It is these costs that make performative restraint a worthy puzzle from the perspective of a materialist-rationalist logic of state behavior. According to this logic, states exercise restraint when the alternative incurs significant costs. So, for instance, the United States stopped intervening in Latin America after the

Nicaragua debacle, and China stopped pursuing a high-emissions development path once air pollution and environmental degradation threatened growth. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, however, such explanations often founder on two points. First, the costs of assertion which precipitate a change of policy to restraint are often not material but *social*, accruing in the form of opprobrium or (threatened) isolation such as Washington faced from Western hemisphere republics or Beijing faced from developing countries within the G77. Second, states' policies of restraint go far beyond the kind of self-limitation necessary for cost-reduction. Continuing with the US and Chinese examples, consider that these states not only ceased certain forms of interventionism and emissions-intensive growth, respectively, but publicly embraced self-imposed restraints on their assertive policies in the future. This public-facing (or performative) aspect of restraint entails its own set of diplomatic costs. In sum, the benefits which leaders attribute to forgoing assertion do not accrue solely in the form of material-cost savings, but also in terms of social face-saving. And the benefits attributed to performing restraint, which must often tally against material costs, are taken to accrue in the form of prestige.

What do the historical chapters suggest about when states are most likely to countenance this trade-off? Recall that the prestige motive is a premise for "holding back to rise above," and as such, the theory does not directly address when this motive will prevail over others. Yet several factors do appear relevant. International audiences may prompt leaders to prioritize their social standing by threatening them with opprobrium. Leaders may then respond not just by meeting, but by exceeding, others' demands and expectations. Such was the case with Roosevelt's extension of Hoover's policy of non-intervention, for instance. Domestic audiences may have a similar effect: elections (as in the German case) or leadership transitions (as in the Chinese case) may prompt leaders to seek to enhance their standing with their domestic audience by securing international recognition and deference. This is not to say that leadership transitions matter because they elevate leaders who differ in their inherent preferences for restraint. Rather, such transitions are focal points in which leaders' domestic credit-earning aligns with and therefore reinforces international prestige-seeking. In short, domestic politics plausibly affects the salience of international prestige as a foreign policy goal. Chapter 4 on German non-intervention and Chapter 5 on Indian non-proliferation

also indicate how domestic political cultures, in addition to international standards and norms, shape performances. In these cases, leaders did seek to embody and exemplify their nations' cultures of restraint rooted in, respectively, post-war anti-militarism and Gandhian non-violence. But they did so to express their states' exceptionalism in terms of those cultures' ostensibly distinct and morally superior values. In contrast to prior studies of political culture, here it serves as an enabling resource for foreign policy (and specifically for performative restraint) rather than a constraint upon it or an independent cause of it.

Performative restraint appeals to leaders for social and strategic reasons, apart from ideological or principled considerations. The historical chapters are replete with examples of leaders opportunistically adapting their personal beliefs. FDR shed (at least publicly) his deeply ingrained paternalism towards Latin Americans to better embody the ethic of neighborly restraint. Rajiv Gandhi subordinated his personal conviction of the righteousness of nuclear restraint to his desire for India to be taken seriously on disarmament matters. Schröder, Fischer, and much of the Green-Red coalition dropped their long-standing opposition to foreign interventionism so that Germany could meet the expectations of its NATO allies. Chinese negotiators tempered their intense suspicion of international climate commitments to avoid alienating other developing countries.

The historical chapters are also noteworthy for the explanatory logic that they do *not* disclose, namely, that of norm-internalization and habitual rule-following. In both substance and style, performative restraint breaks with habitual or "normal" behavior; it is inherently conspicuous and intentionally communicative, broadcasting behavior as relatively exceptional. Consider instances in which states defied social pressures to preserve (even just in principle) the contingent and voluntary nature of their restraint. New Delhi emerged as a virulent critic of the NPT regime because it would foreclose the nuclear option. China steadfastly opposed the original "top-down" climate regime because it purported to supersede planners in Beijing. Insofar as they seek prestige from restraint, states cannot simply conform their behavior to binding norms (which that would render their restraint mandatory). Conversely, states can perform restraint through *standard-raising* or *standard-setting*, presenting themselves as champions of a contested or emergent norm or rule—entrepreneurs and first-movers distinguishing themselves

vis-à-vis later followers.[10]

Performative Restraint, Socialization, and Social Norms

This suggests that "holding back to rise above" becomes relevant at distinct stages of the norm life cycle.[11] Standards of restraint often begin as voluntary restrictions, which later crystallize as binding proscriptions. The "cascade" of a norm, as it spreads and commands more widespread compliance, will tend to diminish the supererogatory (and thus potentially prestigious) nature of the underlying conduct, even as it increases other incentives (such as social conformity and the avoidance of opprobrium) for compliance with the norm. At a later stage, however, states may seek to "raise the bar" further, creating new supererogatory standards. Insofar as performative restraint takes the form of standard-setting and standard-raising, the prestige motive becomes most meaningful at the "top" of the cycle.

Consider nuclear arms control. While, as discussed in Chapter 5, the Non-Proliferation Treaty has rendered nuclear restraint obligatory, ongoing efforts to build on or supplement the NPT may auger new supererogatory standards.[12] Consider the prospects of a fissile material cutoff treaty: four nuclear weapons states—the US, UK, France, and Russia—have announced voluntary moratoria on producing fissile material for nuclear weapons.[13] Declaratory policy is another domain where the nuclear powers have more room to maneuver. Under Obama, the United States linked its bid for leadership of the global disarmament movement to publicly bolstering its "negative security assurance," clarifying that it would not "use or threaten to use" nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states, even in response to a chemical or biological attack.[14] China has long signaled a similar kind of restraint in declaring a "no first use" policy, a gambit used to favorably distinguish China (especially in the eyes of other Global South states) from the

[10] Prior studies on the social dynamics of rulemaking have largely focused on states' desire to avoid isolation in international fora, rather than on desire for distinction. Cf. Mantilla 2020; Raymond 2019.
[11] Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink 1998.
[12] For instance, the Nuclear Ban Treaty goes beyond the NPT in requiring non-nuclear states not to "allow stationing, installation or deployment" of any nuclear weapons on their territory. Thus, endorsement of the Ban Treaty could count as meaningful restraint from a non-nuclear state currently in a nuclear alliance. See Highsmith and Stewart 2018, 130; Kütt and Steffek 2015.
[13] Kimball and Reif 2018.
[14] *Nuclear Posture Review* 2010; Kimball, Davenport, and Reif 2018.

Western nuclear powers.[15] By recently signaling an intention to expand its nuclear arsenal, China may have created an opening for other nuclear powers, especially the United States, to perform nuclear weapons "responsibility".

Opportunities for nuclear restraint abound beyond the nuclear realm as well, especially in emergent domains of arms control—cyber warfare, the weaponization of space, environmental weapons, Artificial Intelligence—where technology is outpacing regulation, causing normative contests or lacunae.[16] States that take the lead in setting standards in these domains, and are perceived as doing so, will likely reap prestige as a result. This is quite different from the standard (though not necessarily mutually exclusive) view that prestige will equip states to set those standards by securing other states' voluntary deference. And it applies well beyond the realm of arms control. For example, there is evidence that "[b]ecause the characteristic communicated by human rights compliance—restraint—is perceived as positive, states that successfully campaign for behaviors that signal restraint reap a perception of moral authority."[17]

At a higher level of aggregation, is clear that "holding back to rise above" can play an important role in helping international society "hang together," but with an important qualification. The attribution of rewards to encourage prosocial behavior plays a key role in socialization among states.[18] Yet when it comes to socialization, "sticks" have received much more attention than carrots. The "role that status *maximization* plays in eliciting cooperative behavior has been undertheorized in IR…"[19] Scholars have thus called for work that probes how "the desire for enhanced recognition can also motivate more constructive behavior, such as diplomatic initiatives or institution building…"[20] On one hand, the theory of "holding back to rise above" makes an important contribution in this regard. Goffman concurred that "[a]pproved attributes and their relation to face make of every man his own jailer; this is a fundamental social constraint even though each man may like his cell."[21] If actors seek to elicit applause from their audiences, they must perform

[15] Haynes 2020, 40; Frieman 1996, 19–22. Cf. Medeiros 2009.
[16] See, e.g., Cusato 2021, 5; Maas 2019.
[17] Moore 2003, 891–2.
[18] Johnston 2001, 504. See also Checkel 1997; Risse et al. 1999; Dai 2007; Goodman and Jinks 2013a.
[19] Johnston 2008, 76 emphasis added; Petrova 2016, 390.
[20] Larson and Shevchenko 2019, xi; Macdonald and Parent 2021, 380–5.
[21] Quoted in Manning 1992, 39.

according to the prevailing standards of laudatory behavior. Yet on the other hand, the fact that prestige only motivates *exceptional* restraint, since only exceptional restraint can be effectively performed, also serves as a key qualification for "holding back to rise above."

PERFORMATIVE RESTRAINT AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Thus, there are countervailing implications regarding the application of "holding back to rise above" to international law, and particularly, to states' compliance with international law—long considered a key form of restraint.[22] One of the distinctive features of law, which ostensibly distinguishes legal norms from other kinds of social norms, is its *binding obligation*.[23] Many scholars believe that states follow international law "voluntarily"—that is, in the absence of a central enforcement mechanism—out of a sense of obligation that follows from the particular legitimacy of legal rules.[24] And in turn the legitimacy of (international) law derives from and depends upon its precision and consistency: legal rules do not admit *ad hoc* exceptions and apply equally to the classes of subjects which they address.[25] This leads to the finding that, of the legal rules to which states' initially consent, those with more detailed and demanding provisions often secure greater compliance in the long run.[26] Yet when it comes to the *performance* of compliance, these same features—binding obligation to strict and definite standards—serve as a detriment, for the same reasons discussed above. This suggests a "paradox of legalization" whereby, the more precise and binding a norm becomes as it is expressed through law, the less salient prestige becomes as a motive for compliance with the norm.[27]

It is worth considering the implications of "holding back to rise above" for the effectiveness of legal regimes in light of this paradox. For instance, consider the "expressive" function of international law. This term often designates the role that legal agreements or judgments play in clarifying international conventions and thereby providing for stable coordination among states who prefer this outcome

[22] For an early example, see Linglebaugh 1900, 27.
[23] Armstrong, Farrell, and Lambert 2012; Reus-Smit 2004.
[24] Falk 1985; Franck 1988; Chayes and Chayes 1993.
[25] Thomas 2014, 749–52; cf. Zürn 2018, 87–8.
[26] Koremenos 2016.
[27] One version of this argument is that legalization can undermine effectiveness by creating loopholes that essentially authorize certain kinds of unforeseen, but antisocial, behavior. See Percy 2007; Abott et al. 2000.

but would otherwise struggle to arrive at an equilibrium of give-and-take.[28] In this sense, the "expressive" function of law cuts against reputational reasons for compliance, since under expressive theories, reputational sanctions (or the threat thereof) should be superfluous for sustaining mutually beneficial coordination.[29] But the expressive function of law can also be considered in light of its role in enabling and shaping states' *self-expression*,[30] in which case, states may view compliance as a means of expressing their positive qualities and thereby boosting their reputations. For on one hand, law may serve as a evocative backdrop for performative restraint because "[l]egal institutions… focus expectations on particular standards of behavior…"[31] And on the other hand, "legal practices are embedded within, and constituted by, layers of nested social understandings;"[32] "law now provides in large part the vocabulary for contemporary politics."[33] While performative restraint that invokes the *spirit of the law* may not register as by-the-letter compliance with the provisions of a treaty or agreement, it certainly contributes to the effectiveness of the underlying legal regime, in promoting its purpose.

Several related dynamics merit discussion. Most obviously, treaties can encourage compliance by publicly rewarding restraint. Recent studies have proposed mechanisms, such as "naming and praising" in international norm development and "rewarding" in international law, which seek to harness states' desire for prestige.[34] Yet it has not been fully appreciated that such mechanisms will be most effective when compliance is inconsistent, that is, when rewards are doled out sparsely and alongside sanctions. The value of praise as a social resource must be measured in relative terms; and what counts as obligatory compliance depends upon "the context of generally prevailing expectations."[35] As has been alluded to repeatedly above and in prior chapters, when states break the law, they create opportunities for other states to perform relative restraint and risk, therefore, alienating themselves from a regime around which others have suddenly

[28] McAdams 2015, 22, 70.
[29] McAdams and Ginsburg 2004, 1262, 1240–1; McAdams 2015, 66.
[30] See, e.g., Sunstein 1996, 2032.
[31] Simmons 2000, 325; Charlesworth 1999, 393.
[32] Reus-Smit 2011, 344; Bower 2015; Brunnée and Toope 2010, chap. 2; Hawkins 2004.
[33] Kratochwil 2014, 1.
[34] See, respectively, Petrova 2019; Van Aaken and Simsek 2021. For earlier work, see also Koh 1997, 2635; Chayes and Chayes 1993, 27–8.
[35] Simmons 2000, 333; Bull 1977, 125–60; Kingsbury 1997, 356.

rallied. In contrast, most reputational accounts of compliance posit that, since the costs of violation diminish with each subsequent instance, high-profile rule-breaking is likely to spur further violations.[36] This may be an accurate assessment of the social costs of non-compliance, but a countervailing set of incentives also exists, namely, that the reputational benefits of voluntary compliance increase as the obligations of compliance recede.[37] How these countervailing incentives play out in contested legal regimes is fertile ground for further analysis and study.

Moreover, "holding back to rise above" is more likely to lead to compliance with international law when the latter is costly. The prestige value of compliance increases when it signals an ability to bear costs. Generally, costs covary with the degree to which a law or agreement commits states to changing their behavior. A state's behavior before it agrees to be bound by law thus serves as an important baseline. For an authoritarian regime with a record of depriving its citizens of their civil and political rights to hold onto power, "incurring the costs of human rights compliance demonstrates that a nation is able and willing to restrain the reach and exercise of its power in the near term."[38] Full compliance in this instance incurs both implementation costs (a government must exercise effective control over its officers, and perhaps over quasi-official agents such as paramilitaries, to ensure that their conduct is lawful) as well as opportunity costs (the government must govern without recourse to rights-violating practices). Neither category of costs would apply to a state whose government respected its citizens' relevant rights from the beginning. Both kinds of costs *would* have applied, however, even if the state brought its conduct nearly but not entirely in line with its international commitments. From an expressive perspective, what matters is how the state's behavior has changed and the attribution of intentionality to that change, a set of considerations that commend a focus on the effectiveness of legal regimes rather than on letter-of-the-law compliance.

The climate regime remains a prime example of how the performative dynamics of international law play out in practice, illustrating the promise and limitations of "holding back to rise above" as an analytic lens in this area. Recall that the structure of the Paris Agreement explicitly relies upon increasing ambition

[36] Simmons 2000, 362; Simmons 1998, 81.
[37] Cope, Creamer, and Versteeg 2019, 160; Reus-Smit 2004.
[38] Moore 2003, 884; Guzman 2002, 1884.

over time and on the public comparison of states' relative success in implementing highly technical and demanding requirements. Most recently, COP 26 in Glasgow highlighted the extent to which post-Paris climate diplomacy conflates compliance with a process of standard-raising.[39] States are not only encouraged, but essentially required, to present their emissions restraint measures in relative terms. When the European Commission announced its proposed package of ambitious climate change policies to EU member states in July 2021, in advance of COP 26, it "said it would make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050'" and "urged the United States and other nations to follow."[40] The Biden Administration for its part had already pledged that "the United States will exercise its leadership to promote a significant increase in global climate ambition… and mak[e] a positive contribution to [COP 26] and beyond."[41] While China did not announce new targets for emissions reduction at COP 26, instead reiterating its previous goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2060,[42] its UK embassy emphasized that "China will achieve bigger cuts in carbon emissions intensity than any other country in the world and take the shortest time in history to move from carbon peak to neutrality…"[43] Still, despite some evidence that the Agreement has spurred progress, states have so far to offer contributions of sufficient ambition to meet the Agreement's key targets. And in this context, it is worth noting that there is reason to doubt whether the prestige motive alone can mitigate the collective action problem that besets international climate change mitigation (or other such problems). For prestige will motivate emissions restraint that is exceptional *relative to other states' restraint*. If all major emitters undertake ambiguous or ambivalent mitigation measures, then one must do very little to distinguish oneself from the pack. Alternatively, if every state undertakes extremely ambitious emissions restraint, there would be diminishing marginal returns of prestige in attempting to exceed ever higher expectations.

In short, the necessarily "exceptional" nature of performative restraint colors the application of my theory in the context of international law. The mechanism of "holding back to rise above" is less applicable for explaining

[39] *The Economist* 2021.
[40] Noack and Ariés 2021.
[41] White House 2021.
[42] Myers 2020.
[43] Quoted in *Global Times* 2021.

widespread or stable compliance. Conversely, it is most relevant when other explanations of compliance do not apply—that is, before a law has achieved universal legitimacy, when violations are common, and whenever compliance remains costly.

PERFORMATIVE RESTRAINT AND RISING POWERS

"Holding back to rise above" also, rather obviously, implicates rising powers—those that are most visibly "rising above" others in the international system. Scholars have extensively noted the fraught dynamics of power transitions. Perhaps the most common refrain is that as "parvenu powers" rise, the established powers perceive them to lack restraint, exacerbating security competition and leading to potentially disastrous confrontations.[44] In fact the impression that rising powers tend to lack restraint owes to two separate arguments which should be carefully distinguished.

The first argument is that, as a matter of social convention, rising powers are expected to declare their status through the successful use of military force. William R. Thompson summarizes the view that "rising powers historically have been expected to 'make their bones' by demonstrating their worthiness for promotion into a system's elite through displaying some degree of martial prowess on the battlefield…"[45] Note that this argument differs from the broader realist contention—with which it is often associated—that prestige in general must principally derive from the successful use of military force. In theory, this could be a necessary signal only at a specific moment in a state's ascension of the social hierarchy, while at other times remaining unnecessary or even counterproductive for prestige. If correct, this argument might still inform significant pessimism about the prospects of peaceful power transitions, however, since rising powers *qua rising powers* must use force if they are ever to transcend that status and reach a position of parity, let alone superiority, with the established set.[46]

Or perhaps such pessimism is not necessary. For if the historical association of violence and rising powers is a matter of social convention (rather than, as we

[44] See Lebow 2008b, 429–38. Former or declining great powers such as France may feel "like an old aristocrat who's now forced to dine next to a peasant who's become rich, and he finds that unbearable." Onishi 2021.
[45] Thompson 2014, 219; Lebow 2010, 20–1.
[46] A related but distinct argument is that established powers will not voluntarily cede their position of primacy, instead initiating conflict against a rising challenger. Allison 2017; cf. MacDonald and Parent 2018.

shall see, some underlying mechanism which causes rising powers to lash out) then it can be attenuated or even severed altogether by normative changes to the international order which increasingly stigmatize the use of force, not to mention by material changes which limit the incidence of war among the major powers. It is possible that success in war was a necessary hurdle which rising powers in previous eras had to clear in order to attain the rank of recognized great power; but that today, the characteristics of great powers (such as economic dynamism or ideological reach) and the primary means of demonstrating them (such as providing global public goods or serving as a center of global innovation and technology) not only do not *require* launching a major war, but are antithetical to it. Therefore, we might expect rising powers to instead seek prestige by performing restraint if there are opportunities to do so. This is also true because, as a separate matter, rising powers have a strategic interest in signaling restraint to forestall the emergence of counterbalancing coalitions.[47]

Complications do, of course, abound. Consider the extent to which China, as the most important rising power today, might take advantage of international norms that have more tightly linked great power status to restraint. China has sought to trumpet its restraint, especially to its neighbors, claiming a unique record of non-intervention and anti-imperialism that will make it a new kind of major power.[48] Yet an instructive comparison can be made to the US Good Neighbor Policy. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the history of US interventionism, and the discourses that justified it, remained crucial as the United States sought to present its restraint as volitional and supererogatory. As the legitimate purposes of intervention have been circumscribed during the subsequent century, the scope of supererogatory action with respect to non-intervention has correspondingly narrowed.[49] Today, even powerful states may struggle to appear magnanimous for simply respecting others' sovereignty. Ironically, this development casts doubt on whether China could replicate the Good Neighbor Policy in its own neighborhood, as this would require a greater degree of restraint than the Roosevelt Administration practiced in Latin America. However, as China's rise continues apace, this will also shift observers' expectations about its conduct, seeding

[47] See, e.g., Ikenberry 2011a, 65.
[48] Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 103; Larson and Shevchenko 2010a, 198; Larson 2015; Goldstein 2020, 165, 172, 180–2; Zhao 2018, 36.
[49] Finnemore 2003.

opportunities for Beijing to further perform restraint in domains—such as climate change mitigation—that did not exist in the 1930s.

A second argument linking power transitions to the use of force is less sanguine about the potential for China, and rising powers in general, to seek prestige by performing restraint. In a seminal article, Johann Galtung posited that states' perceptions that they have been denied deserved status triggers a psychological state of frustration and anger—called "rank disequilibrium" or "status inconsistency"—which in turn motivates aggression.[50] While some studies describe this aggression as a "status-gratifying tool," Galtung introduced the mechanism to explain patterns of conflict in international politics, not of status-seeking *per se*.[51] In a related vein, a number of studies have further explored the relationship between states' prestige-seeking and the emotions of anger, resentment, and shame.[52] For instance, Joslyn Barnhart finds that national humiliation makes states "more likely to engage in international aggression and intentionally defiant foreign policies."[53] In short, many scholars argue that rising powers resort to war when they fail to secure respect and prestige from established powers.[54]

Such arguments bear on the prospects of rising powers' performative restraint because of the implication that rising powers' performances are especially unlikely to secure voluntary recognition from their great-power audiences.[55] It is the "fear of misrecognition," as well as the anger that results from actual misrecognition, that leads rising powers to "engage in provocative demonstrations of military force designed to instantiate their aspiring identity in practice."[56] Recall that, for Goffman, instances of mis- and non-recognition remain limited by actors'

[50] Galtung 1964; Volgy and Mayhall 1995. Other scholars such as Stephen Ward and Jonathan Renshon have also proposed a link between "status concerns" or "status dissatisfaction" and war, though they have noted that this response to prolonged status denial is not necessarily pathological. Ward 2017a, 39; Renshon 2017, chap. 2.
[51] Prosser 2017, 29. See also the discussion in Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 5.
[52] For an overview, see Bleiker and Hutchinson 2008, 120–4.
[53] Barnhart 2020, 2, 36–44. Barnhart clarifies (p. 10, emphasis added) that her argument only addresses "the relationship between national humiliation and *assertive* status-seeking strategies like the acquisition of status symbols and direct military conflict. It does not address the relationship between humiliation and other more pacific status-seeking strategies." On humiliation and international conflict more generally, see Harkavy 2000; Wang 2014; Masterson 2022.
[54] For an overview, see Levy 2015. For centrally important studies, see Organski 1958; Gilpin 1981; Organski and Kugler 1980; Kugler and Lemke 1996; Wohlforth 2009.
[55] Nel and Nel 2017; Kavalski 2013; Ringmar 2002; Wolf 2011; Bartelson 2013.
[56] Murray 2019, 16, 46.

interest in presenting performances that appear credible, and by audiences' interest in accepting credible performances to protect the semantic structure underlying social interaction.[57] When actors experience particularly pronounced shifts in their capabilities, however, audiences' perceptions may lag actors' self-conceptions. Actors may not have had the opportunity to directly display the capabilities underlying their restraint that would render it credibly volitional to observers. The example of India's nuclear program from Chapter 5 demonstrates how, when an actor feels that it has faced prolonged disrespect after performing restraint, it will abandon that performance. It provides relatively little consolation that, according to the dramaturgical perspective, spurned actors may abandon restraint and embrace assertion due to a strategic calculation of what constitutes an effective self-expression, rather than out of anger or resentment.

The question of how rising powers can secure recognition of their restraint deserves greater consideration than space allows here. One intriguing dynamic that emerges from the historical chapters it that rising powers often target their performances of restraint at subordinates in addition to, or instead of, targeting established powers directly. The Roosevelt Administration sought prestige from weaker hemispheric republics; Germany, from other nations in the EU; India, from within the non-aligned movement; China, from within the G77 bloc of developing countries. In each of these cases, subordinates were a *proximate* audience for restraint, which the prestige-seeking states sought to consolidate and lead. It was then as leaders of their respective blocs that actors presented themselves to powers of equal or greater prestige.[58] This strategy of triangulation may mitigate the risk of non-recognition, since subordinates seem more inclined to accept the credibility of a superior's performance.

Such triangulation was particularly salient in the Indian and Chinese cases because those states were able to manipulate various cleavages in international society to present themselves as legitimate representatives of a numerically and/or politically significant bloc—a role which endowed them with political clout. Performative restraint, it seems, is a particularly effective way of prestige-seeking for states that purport to champion the poor, downtrodden, or exploited members

[57] Goffman 1959, 10–4; Manning 1992, 39.
[58] Other scholars have occasionally touched upon this trend. Zhang 2003, 79; Narlikar 2011, 1611; Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018, 32..

of the international community.[59] Further research might consider whether, and for how long, rising powers can effectively champion their cohort through performative restraint. China's recent alienation of other developing Asian states—through territorial disputes with India, Vietnam, and the Philippines—raises key questions in this regard, given the risk that it will undermine Beijing's credibility to perform restraint on behalf of non-Western countries in other, unrelated, domains.

PERFORMATIVE RESTRAINT AND LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER

"Holding back to rise above" is not an exclusive feature of liberal international order (LIO).[60] While Roosevelt (Chapter 3) and Schröder (Chapter 4) did rely upon recognizably liberal discourses to frame their restraint, Indian and Chinese leaders (Chapters 5-6) rejected this framing *and* the legitimacy of the order it supported. Thus, the scope of the historical chapters neutralizes the charge that prestige-seeking through performative restraint reflects of a narrow worldview rooted in liberalism. And yet the relationship between performative restraint and LIO merits special, even if necessarily schematic, consideration. This is so not only because LIO faces ongoing internal and external challenges,[61] but also because the content of liberalism itself discloses a tension with respect to restraint.[62] On one hand, liberalism endows subjects with equal and universal rights, which can be invoked to authorize the imposition of liberal, rights-respecting, institutions—for instance, through humanitarian intervention—and therefore cut against restraint.[63] Yet on the other hand, the foreign policies of liberal societies are often presented as uniquely peaceful and "restrained."[64] Equality of rights under liberalism would also seem to encourage restraint since no agent (absent a legitimating procedure) can

[59] Notably, Deborah Larson and Alexi Shevchenko, in their application of SIT to world politics, have associated this strategy an overall logic of "social creativity." Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 32.
[60] Other international orders have disclosed practices and supererogatory standards of restraint. See, e.g., Kang 2010a for a relevant study on the international order of early modern East Asia. However, some scholars suggest that restraint is a distinctive part of LIO. Cf. Lake 2014; Ikenberry 2014a; Mastanduno 2014.
[61] Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Mearsheimer 2019.
[62] See Sørensen 2006 (on the "liberalism of restraint" vs. the "liberalism of imposition") ; Doyle 1986 ('liberal pacifism' vs. 'liberal imperialism'). On the relationship between the philosophical and ideological content of liberalism, and the project of liberal internationalism, see Jahn 2018.
[63] Jahn 2013, chap. 6.
[64] Doyle 1986; Owen 1994.

arrogate for itself the authority to impose its vision of the good life upon others.[65] Liberal theorists have attempted to resolve this tension with resource to a naturalizing logic. If all individuals have an inherent interest in realizing their own freedom through enjoyment of equal, universal rights—such that failure to recognize this interest reveals them as victims of traditional, unenlightened, social systems—then opponents of liberalism may be, in effect, forced to be free.[66] In the context of world politics, liberal states may have to "enforce restraint."[67]

The idea of *reason* plays a key role in this narrative. Liberalism contemplates subjects that are not only equally free, but equally rational. Universal reason minimizes conflict between competing visions of the good life and facilitates peaceful pluralism within liberal societies, including a society of liberal states.[68] (This bounding of conflict does not occur vis-à-vis illiberal actors, however, since their visions are antithetical to pluralism.)[69] LIO purports to limit conflict by instantiating "rationality" as a distinctive way of ordering world politics, in which law and other institutions mediate disputes among states disposed to positive-sum cooperation.[70] Honor, esteem, and prestige are denigrated as the atavisms of an earlier (and more violent) era, and/or as the idiosyncratic obsessions of authoritarian regimes.[71] In short, though LIO purports to promote restraint, it definitely does *not* to do so on the basis of prestige.

The theory of performative restraint presents a direct challenge to this narrative. It suggests that the liberal restraint does not result (only) from reason supplanting prestige, but (also) from the construction of standards of restraint and rationality that actors' persistent desire for prestige will lead them to exemplify. If liberal international order is in some significant sense *performed*, rather than organically reproduced through the spread of universal reason, this should spur us to reconsider its prospects in light of current challenges. Such a reconsideration cannot be undertaken here at any length—this is a worthy task for future work—but it bears briefly outlining an initial presumption that the potential centrality of performative restraint to LIO would make it *more* rather than less durable.

[65] Wall 1998, chap. 2.
[66] See, e.g., J.S. Mill's views in the regard discussed in Miller 2005.
[67] Damrosch 1993.
[68] Rawls 1999, 54–7.
[69] On this "paradox of tolerance," see Cohen 2014; Rawls 1999, 59–82.
[70] Meyer 2000, 233–4.
[71] Lebow 2008b; Lebow 2018.

Much has been written about the "return of great power competition" beginning in the second decade of the twenty-first century.[72] A corresponding resurgence in great power prestige-seeking might be expected to follow. But dealing with this resurgence becomes a more tractable problem if, in fact, states' desire for prestige was never systematically de-emphasized by international order; and if, by extension, international order is experiencing, not a resurgence of prestige-seeking per se, but rather the erosion of standards of restraint that previously served as guard rails for the pursuit of prestige. Indeed, much of the "revisionist" behavior of rising powers such as China and Russia can be understood as an effort to recast the standards of restraint in international society.[73] Contestation over standards of restraint renders prestige-seeking more *visible* without necessarily reflecting its increasing importance as a motive.[74]

For established states, this perspective suggests, the *defense* of liberal international order and its constitutive standards of restraint will be intimately linked with the struggle to maintain their position of prestige. To some extent, this is a familiar story. Hegemonic stability theory in IR has long recognized that a leading state typically "seeks to promote its own interests…[through] a form of *noblesse oblige*," which wins support from other states.[75] As Charles Kindleberger put it, if hegemonic leadership is "thought of as the provision of the public good of responsibility, rather than exploitation of followers or the private good of prestige, it remains a positive idea."[76] Yet this implies a tension between responsibility and prestige that the theory of performative restraint dissolves. States invest in presenting their international leadership as an exercise in responsibility—an investment that frequently entails costly and proactive restraint—because doing so confers prestige. Ultimately, the theory of performative restraint implies that challenges to liberal norms of restraint make these *more salient* and *more effective* sites of prestige-seeking because they denaturalize restraint and facilitate framing it as exceptional—as *noblesse oblige* rather than as an obligation. Challenges to the

[72] For an overview of this literature and recent contribution, see Kroenig 2020.
[73] Consider, for instance, the sovereigntist conception of "authoritarian international law." Ginsburg 2020.
[74] The corollary insight is that performative restraint merely makes the struggle for prestige and power less visible. It may still contribute to "structural violence," which "is silent, it does not show—it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters…[S]tructural violence may be seen as about as natural as their air around us." Galtung 1969, 173.
[75] Stokes 2018, 139.
[76] Kindleberger 2013, 304.

liberal international order need not enfeeble "holding back to rise above"—and in an important sense, they animate it. Not only because prestige can be used as a bribe to encourage restraint on the part of challengers. But because challengers' lack of restraint sets the stage for established powers to dramatically reassert their own.

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