

# Alliances and Bargaining

POSC 1020 – Introduction to International Relations

Steven V. Miller

Department of Political Science



## Puzzle(s) for Today

*Why do states fight other countries' wars?*



Figure 1: A Chinese soldier displays knocked-out U.S. tank of 1st Cavalry Division

# Alliances

Alliances are commitments by states to cooperate on security policy.

- They form when states have compatible interests in military cooperation.
- Importantly, alliances can alter the bargaining dynamics in a bilateral dispute.

# Types of Alliances

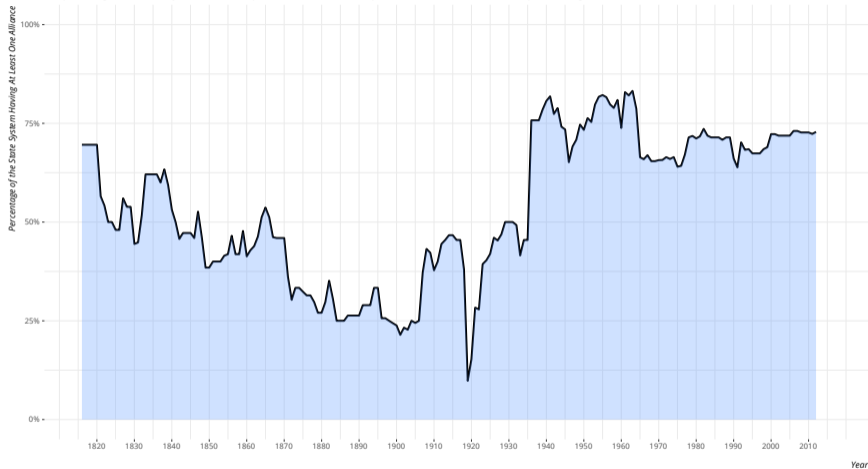
- Bilateral or multilateral (e.g. NATO)
- Asymmetrical—a powerful state commits to defending a weaker state (for example, the United States and South Korea)
- Offensive (e.g. Molotov-Ribbentrop)
- Defensive (e.g. France-Russia, pre-WWI)

## A Correlates of War Typology

- Type I: Defense (i.e. A and B promise mutual defense)
- Type II(a): Neutrality (A and B promise to remain neutral if A/B is in conflict with C)
- Type II(b): Nonaggression (A and B acknowledge contentious issues, but pledge non-violence to each other)
  - CoW acknowledges substantial overlap, but generally neutrality pacts are more specific.
- Type III: Entente (A and B pledge cooperation/consultation in a crisis)

## Roughly Three-Quarters of the State System Has At Least One Active Alliance

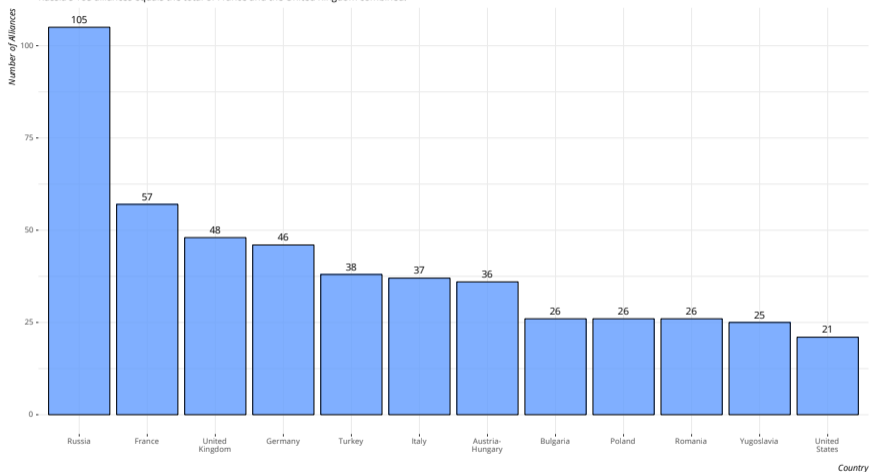
The percentage of the state system membership with at least one alliance plummeted after World War I and spiked during World War II.



Data: Correlates of War Alliances Data (v 4.1)

## No Country Has Signed More Alliances in the Post-Napoleon History of the World Than Russia

Russia's 105 alliances equals the total of France and the United Kingdom combined.

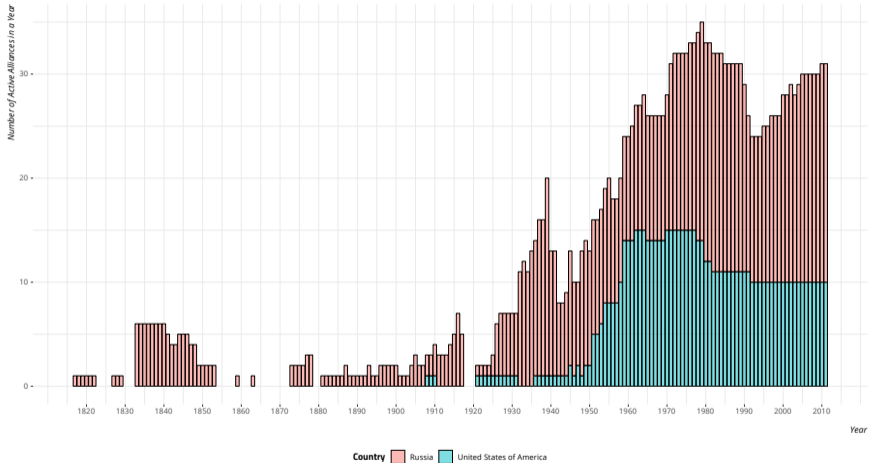


Data: Correlates of War Alliances Data (v. 4.1)



## The Number of Active Alliances for the U.S. and Russia, 1816-2012

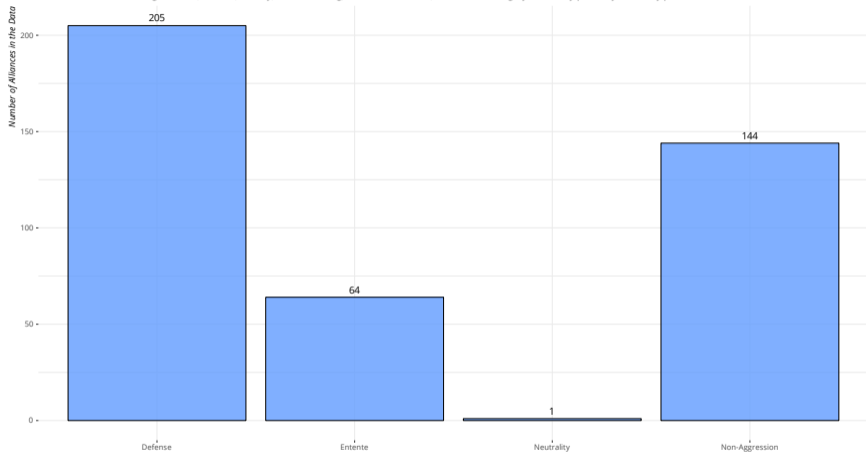
The U.S. foray into alliance-making starts with the Root-Takahira Agreement with Japan. They've been a common part of Russian foreign policy for much longer.



Data: Correlates of War Alliances Data (v. 4.1)

## Almost Half (49.5%) of Alliances Are Primarily Defensive

An 1862-66 alliance among Hanover, Bavaria, Saxony, Wuerttemberg, Hesse Grand Ducal, and Austria-Hungary is the only primarily neutrality pact in the data.

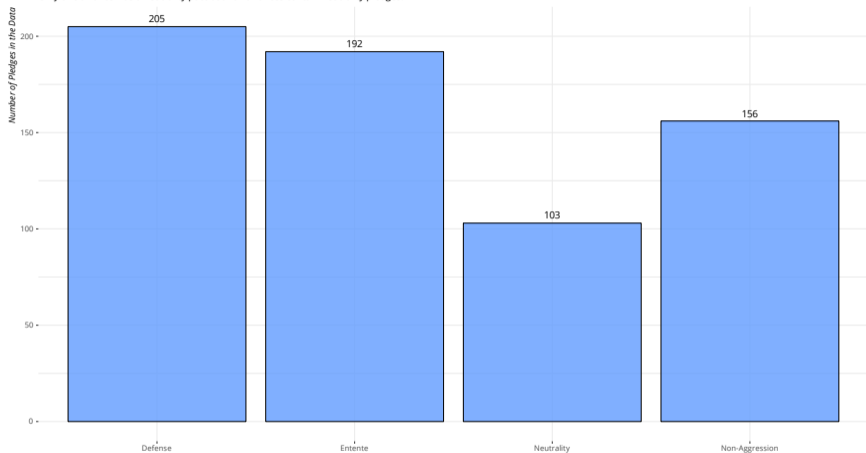


Type of Alliance (via Singer and Small, 1966)

Data: Correlates of War Alliances Data (v 4.1)

## Few Alliances Are Primarily Ententes or Neutrality Pacts, but Those Pledges Appear in Defense and Non-Aggression Pacts

Only one alliance was a neutrality pact but 102 alliances contain neutrality pledges.



*Pledge Type (via Singer and Small, 1966)*

*Data: Correlates of War Alliances Data (v 4.1)*

# The Cost of Alliances

Alliances are costly.

- Commitment of blood and treasure to defend another.
- Must be upheld to be credible, even if defeat is likely.
- Alliances limit freedom, as consultation with allies is necessary before taking action or making decisions.
- An emboldened ally may entrap protector in conflict.

## Why Form Alliances?

- Weak state may gain protection from powerful rivals.
- Strong state may signal its resolve to defend weak state.
- Combining resources may economize, allowing greater defense.
- Can temper conflicts (e.g. Greece and Turkey in NATO).
- Can formalize a sphere of influence (e.g. the Warsaw Pact).

# Additional Motives

Balancing results in roughly equal blocs.

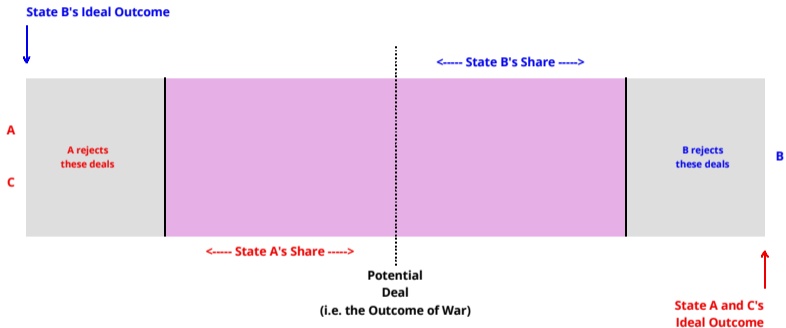
- Small states seek to avoid domination by alliance leader.
- Alliance with strong state threatens state freedom.

Other explanations of alliance formation

- Bandwagoning: when states join aggressive/threatening side (for example, Italy in World War II)
- Affinity: shared culture, ideology, or religion.

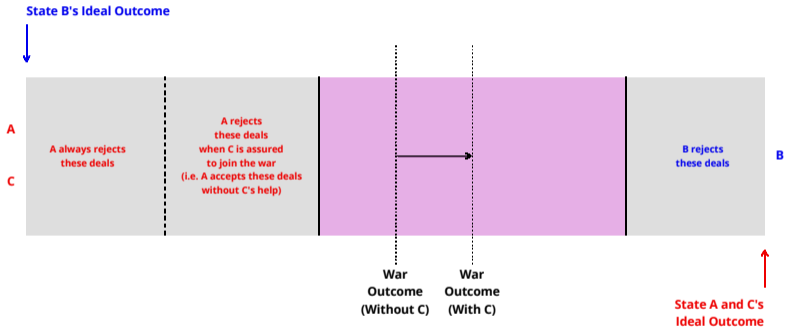
## The Alignment of Interests Among A-C and B

C supports A, but C's participation in a potential war is an open question. Both A and B are perfectly matched (i.e.  $p(\text{victory}) = .5$ ) and a hypothetical bargaining space still exists.



## What C's Participation Does to the Bargaining Range

C's participation decreases A's cost of war and decreases the bargaining range.





# How Alliances Establish Credibility

Alliance obligations are honored about 70% of the time. Reasons include:

- Hands-tying
- Abrogation costs
- Influencing decision-making calculus of opposing side in multiple ways



Figure 2: Marriage of John I, King of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster

# When Alliances Fail

- The tail wags the dog, raising costs of war for C.
- Abrogation costs are cheap.



Figure 3: If we're talking alliances, we're talking Europe

# The Emergence of Germany

Germany emerged as a major power after 1870, collecting both friends and enemies.

- 1879: Dual Alliance with Austria-Hungary.
  - A curious alliance, given Seven Weeks' War (1866)
- 1882: Expansion to include Italy, Austria's blood enemy.
  - Italy's rationale: placate nearby states to focus on empire.

# The Counter-Coalition Against Germany

This prompted quite a counter-coalition, especially among former rivals.

- 1894: Franco-Russian Alliance
- 1904: Entente Cordiale (UK-France)
- 1907: Anglo-Russian Convention

# Leading to World War I

The alliance pattern contributed to the outbreak of World War I:

- Small conflicts escalated.
- Alliances created incentives for preventive war.
- Major powers became dependent on allies.
- The larger number of states increased chances of miscalculation.

# The Interwar Period

The interwar period posed similar problems.

- Major buck-passing, definitely among UK, France, and Russia/USSR.
- Hitler successfully defied French commitments to Czechoslovakia and Romania, among others.



# The Interwar Period

We can understand why the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact happened in this perspective.

- No country was more consistent in raising alarms about Hitler than the USSR.
- However, UK and France had folded on the Ruhr, Sudetenland, and other issues.
- Thus, the Soviets bailed to placate Germany and leave UK and France to dry.

WWII happened as a result of weak alliance commitments.

# The Cold War

Clear bifurcation of Europe into West and East.

- West: NATO countries
- East: Warsaw Pact

# The Cold War

A long, if very problematic, “peace” followed.

- U.S. tied its hands to Europe with troops in W. Germany/elsewhere.
- Both sunk costs into reorganizing entire economic systems in the sphere.

# Conclusion

Alliances are institutions that can prevent or facilitate war.

- Peaceful: influence bargaining by  $B$ , settle issues among signatories.
- Dangerous: tail-wags-the-dog, cheap commitments with small abrogation costs.

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