VARIATIONS IN US AND SOVIET/RUSSIAN INTERVENTION DECISIONS DURING AND AFTER THE COLD WAR

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Abstract

In the context of the US and Soviet/Russian rivalry, we explain the ways in which domestic and international factors contributed to the intervention decisions of the policymakers in these two major powers during and after the Cold War. Using the recently updated International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset, we employ the ordered logit models to analyze US and Soviet/Russian interventions. While their rivalry remained constant during and after the Cold War, there was significant variation in their intervention decisions. Our results show that US policymakers are more rational and less ideological. Overall, they paid attention to both domestic and international factors. However, due to their pragmatism, they were more receptive to international strategic factors during the Cold War and to domestic factors afterwards. The foreign policy decisions of the Soviet/Russian leadership are overall driven by international strategic concerns, without much influence from domestic politics. However, during the Cold War, Communist ideology led the Soviet decision makers to sometimes make risky decisions and decisions that did not correspond with the rivalry-related considerations. After the Cold War, confirming neorealist expectations, Russian foreign policy decisions are mainly driven by international strategic considerations and its rivalry with the US.

Key Words: *Interventions; major power rivalry; strategic calculations; domestic factors, ideology.*

INTRODUCTION

The recent crises in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine have reinforced the significance of the competing interests of major powers, especially concerning their interventions in smaller states. To intervene in an international crisis is a risky decision for the leaders of major powers. These risks involve uncertainty about the outcome of the crisis, cost of engagement, and domestic and international consequences. The main objective of this paper is to explain how specific structural contexts (i.e., the context of Cold War and post-Cold War world) affected cost-benefit calculations of the leaders of the US and Soviet Union regarding their decisions to intervene in international crises? Furthermore, this study also explores if relative significance of the domestic and international factors in the foreign policy decision-making changed as the structural context changed.

The main argument of this paper is that the policymakers take input from both domestic and international levels, and they make policies that are aimed at achieving both domestic and international goals. Related to the role of domestic factors in foreign policy, we attempt to address a lacuna in neoclassical realist theory. As this theory takes domestic factors as intervening variables, it does not provide a systematic account to establish link between domestic and international factors. Owing to the diversity and irrationality of domestic level factors, it opens the space for theoretical incoherence. In order to bring consistency to neoclassical realism, we believe that arguments of those traditions that give primacy to domestic factors can be used. Some of these traditions, especially diversionary use of force theory, assume rationality of the state leaders. According to these accounts, state leaders are rational in the sense that they want to stay in office and enhance cohesion of their states while making foreign policy decisions. Acknowledgement of such (domestic level) rational preferences can bring more structure to neoclassical realism. However, at the same time, if we entertain these assumptions then we must also appreciate that state leaders pursue both international and domestic level goals. They make foreign policies not only to enhance the power of their states in international system, but also to stay in power and achieve domestic cohesion.

In this study, using Brecher et. al.'s (2021) International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset, we employ ordered logit models to analyze US and Soviet/Russian interventions from 1945 to 2019. The findings of this research highlight an important comparison between US and Soviet/Russian interventions, both during and after the Cold War. Econometric analysis confirms the general perception that the US and Russia continue to be each other's primary rivals even after the end of the Cold War. This result suggests that ideology was one factor that defined competition between these two major powers. There could be other factors, such as regime type, historical and cultural differences, or competition for international leadership, that define their competitive relationship. Strategic locations were also important for both these powers; however, we see slight readjustment of strategic locations for both these major powers after the Cold War. An interesting finding regarding alliances is that alliances (with either major power) mattered for US during the Cold War, while they mattered for Russia after the Cold War. Our explanation for this outcome is that these alliances were related to the US and Soviet/Russian rivalry. The US paid more attention to its rivalry with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. However, after the Cold War, it did not feel compelled to heed the rivalry-related Cold War alliances. On the other hand, the Soviet Union did not pay much attention to the rivalry-related Cold War alliances. Mainly due to its Communist ideology, it also supported non-aligned poor and weak states that did not have formal alliances with either major power. However, after the Cold War, as the overarching shadow of Communist ideology was lifted, Russia started responding to rivalry-related alliances. This result also indicates that, after the Cold War, Russia is more concerned about its rivalry with the United States than the other way around.

US policymakers were found to be more rational than ideological. For international strategic reasons, both during and after the Cold War, they intervened when non-democratic states were involved in international crises. However, after the Cold War, the significance of such interventions was reduced

significantly. We also see that overall, the US is less likely to make risky interventions, but during the Cold War, due to the international strategic considerations, it felt more compelled to make a bit risky interventions. These results show that, being rational and pragmatic leaders, US policymakers adjusted their foreign policy based on structural considerations. Due to the end of the Cold War, as compulsion to intervene for international strategic reasons was minimized, they responded accordingly. After the Cold War, they were less likely to make risky interventions and interventions that involved non-democratic states. It was also noted in the US case that as international pressures were lifted, its leadership started taking more input from domestic politics. For Soviet Union/Russia, domestic political considerations did not matter much both during and after the Cold War. As predicted, its foreign policy was mainly driven by international strategic considerations. If anything else mattered, it was the Communist ideology that drove its foreign policy during the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War, Russian foreign policy appears to be consistent with the neorealist considerations. Its interventions after the Cold War were mainly driven by its rivalry with the United States and its desire to regain or maintain its great power status.

Theoretical considerations: Interplay of the domestic and international factors

The scholarly literature that specifically deals with the connection between domestic state concerns and international systemic factors is very extensive.[1] It is the main argument of such studies that leaders take input from both domestic and international arenas to make foreign policy decisions. Jacobsen emphasizes the inevitability of the link between domestic and international domains when he asserts that "behavior in one realm infects the other… The relevant analysis here is not one separate domestic and international dimension but rather one asking which dimension has primacy at a given time and under what conditions" (Jacobsen, 2008: 345). While Jacobsen keeps the question of the primacy of domestic or international arena open and leaves it to the external conditions, most of the authors on the subject prioritize one or the other. For example, a significant amount of literature has been developed by the 'neoclassical realists' who give primacy to international dimension. On the other hand, scholars subscribing to multiple traditions, especially 'diversionary use of force' and 'democratic peace theory,' advocate the primacy of domestic factors.

Neoclassical realism and the primacy of international factors

The trigger point for the onset of neoclassical realism was the process that marked the end of the Cold War. This process exposed rigidity of Waltz's 'structural considerations' as "[h]is purely systemic perspective became 'ill-prepared' to comprehend domestic changes in the Soviet Union and their consequences for the final fall of the bipolar system." Furthermore, this process highlighted the role played by the perceptions and policies of leaders like Gorbachev (Więcławski 2020, 120). While neoclassical realists wanted to emphasize domestic factors, they did not want to give up key ideas of the neorealist tradition. As Foulon (2015) emphasizes, "neoclassical realists share neorealism's core assumptions about the state, relative power, and the primacy of the anarchical material structure" (Foulon 2015, 637). Here it can be noticed that the policy model under neoclassical realism not only takes input from international system, but it also gives output to international system. Domestic factors are mainly intervening variables that contribute to the making of foreign policy.

Among the domestic factors, the most important one is the role of policy leaders. It is mainly these policy elites that "make foreign policy choices based on their perception of international environments and their assessment of the relative power of the nation" (Yoo 2012, 323). As an example, Dueck (2008) emphasizes values of liberal elites in the US that contributed to US grand strategy, in addition to its strategic position, in the aftermath of the First World War. Similarly, Kitchen (2010) argues that grand strategy results both from international systemic dynamics as well as strategic ideas within the executive branch of a state's foreign policy (Kitchen 2010, 132).

[1] Recent studies in this literature include Brulé and Williams (2009); Kuijpers (2019); Pickering and Kisangani (2010); Sirin (2011); Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell (2016); and Kitchen (2010).

By incorporating the perceptions of policy elites, neoclassical realism has brought subjectivity to realism. As prominent neoclassical realist, Schweller (2004, 170) argues, "the process of problem construction (or representation) is a subjective one that is only partly determined by objective facts." Furthermore, neoclassical realism has brought ideational factors to otherwise material-based theory of realism. Kitchen (2010), for example, argues that due to the differences in the 'prevailing ideas' within the states, similarly structured states may respond differently to similar international threats (Kitchen, 2010, 132). By bringing in the subjective factors, according to some critics, neoclassical realism has made room for state's behavior which may not always depend on rational calculations. As 'systemic determinants' are 'transmitted' through domestic factors, "states may not always read the systemic signals properly." This situation "opens more space to irrationality, inconsistency, and misperceptions." As neoclassical realists try to integrate such domestic level factors with "some general and rational systemic frames," it leads to overall "tensions and inconsistencies" in their theory (Więcławski 2020, 122-123).

In the next sub-section, we will argue that irrationality problem in neoclassical realism, resulting from domestic level variables, can be resolved if we take into account core arguments of those traditions that give primacy to domestic factors. These traditions, especially diversionary use of force theory, give specific attention to the rational behavior of the leaders. Incorporation of such argument into the neoclassical realist theory can help us bring coherence to this tradition.

Domestic factors and the rationality of state leaders

A number of recent studies that give primacy to domestic factors in explaining states' foreign policies, especially related to international conflicts, assume that political leaders are *rational actors* who are intent on keeping themselves in power and use all available resources and tools to accomplish this goal. According to such accounts, "if foreign policy concerns are incompatible with the domestic situation, leaders may need to adjust foreign policy in order to make it more consistent with those domestic demands" (Doeser 2011, 224).

On the issue of rationality, it was the diversionary use of force theory that, after taking clues from earlier traditions, further refined this concept. As Foster and Keller (2010) argue, "the vast majority of contemporary contributions to the diversionary research program have taken a distinctly rational-choice approach" (Foster and Keller 2010, 422). A sub-section of this literature also emphasizes cohesionary objective through external use of force. Main argument of this theory is that "leaders might use interventions to increase their chances of reelection, distract from economic or other problems at home, or shore up their support through a rally around the flag effect" (Charap et al. 2021, 14-15). Sobek (2007) outlines four specific ways by which leaders reap diversionary benefits: 1) through increased popularity from successful foreign policies; 2) justification for domestic crackdowns due to foreign conflict; 3) diversion of public attention from domestic issues; and 4) rallying support through in-group/out-group dynamics during international conflict (Sobek 2007, 31). Here, the last benefit is very important as it not only helps to solve short-term problem of discontent, but it is also very useful in achieving long-term cohesion and national unity of the state concerned (Sirin 2011, 307). In addition to the development of the nationalistic feelings during the times of international conflict, another key argument to explain domestic unity is that during the time of crisis domestic opposition to the regime in power could become more defensive. As Kuijpers (2019) argues, "[o]pposing the administration over foreign policy decisions in times of conflict can be seen as politicizing military casualties" (Kuijpers 2019, 395). An extreme example in this respect could be that of Iran where, according to Davies (2012), "[b]oth the Ayatollah and the President use confrontation with the US as a means of framing all opposition as unpatriotic" (Davies 2012, 321). If external conflict increases cohesion and national unity of a state, it can be emphasized that it is rational from state's perspective to get involved in conflicts that help achieve this goal, especially during times of domestic discontent. So, at the international level, the goal of the state is not just to enhance its relative power vis-à-vis other states (a neorealist argument), but also to achieve national cohesion and unity at domestic level.

Most of the studies dealing with the diversionary use of force theory do not make distinctions based on regime type. In recent years, a few authors have started addressing this issue. In this respect, Brulé and Williams (2009) argue that "because leaders are thought to divert when direct policy measures [e.g., repression or redistribution policies] to address the source of discontent are unavailable, there is tendency to conclude that the diversionary use of force is a pathology of democracies- specifically, powerful and mature ones" (Brulé and Williams 2009, 779). On the other hand, as Pickeirng and Kisangani (2010) argue, single-party regimes are less likely to use military force abroad for diversionary reasons because they are more stable domestically. Such regimes are more stable because they "tend to develop an all-encompassing ideology to legitimize their rule," which leads "their leaders to take foreign policy decisions on their merits, not because they need to win over domestic groups" (Pickering and Kisangani 2010, 479). Based on these insights, we can expect that rationality for the US leaders related to foreign policy decisions would mean taking into account both domestic and international factors, while rationality for the Soviet/Russian leaders would be based on just international factors. The rationality of democratic leaders that depends on the domestic factors is further emphasized by the recent developments in democratic peace theory. In the context of 'the political accountability or constraints model,' democratic peace theorists argue that "because political leaders want to retain office, they avoid foreign policy blunders and pursue high success foreign policies in an effort to diffuse political opposition and build domestic political capital" (Hayes 2011, 771).

The discussion in this sub-section clearly shows that those scholars who give primacy to domestic factors have made considerable efforts to emphasize rationality in their accounts. Such authors have successfully delineated rational preferences of the leaders, especially related to staying in office and enhancing cohesion and unity of their states. Recognition of these preferences has brought structure to such studies. Owing to this, a number of quantitative studies appeared that gave primacy to domestic factors. From the point of view of our study, such literature has the potential to solve the problem of domestic-level irrationality in the neoclassical realist tradition. However, if we take into account these considerations, then we must also acknowledge that objectives of the state leaders are not just to enhance relative power of their states vis-à-vis other states in international system (a neorealist argument), but also to retain themselves in power and to enhance cohesion (and legitimacy) of their states.

Specification of Hypotheses

In order to make foreign policies, especially policies related to the issues of wars and conflicts, two factors are paramount in the calculations of state leaders. First, the likely political, economic and military costs of intervention. Second, the domestic and international political and strategic benefits expected from intervention. Before making decisions about wars and interventions, leaders take into account such cost-benefit calculations. Within this framework of cost-benefit analysis, we propose hypotheses that taken into account both international strategic considerations as well as domestic political factors. These hypotheses are based on the assumption that leaders gain both domestic political and international strategic benefits for their successful foreign policies, while their failed foreign policies cost them both domestically and internationally.

Before proposing specific hypotheses, it is important to explain the structural context of the major powers. Acknowledging certain states as major powers based on their material capabilities is an important consideration rooted in the core assumptions of neorealism. Even in terms of the diversionary use of force context, Tir (2010) reports that as diversionary targets are difficult to find, it will "limit diversionary opportunities significantly for all but the most powerful states" (Tir 2010, 415). Study of major power interventions in international crises is a common phenomenon, as "[m]ajor powers have more opportunities for conflict because their enhanced capabilities extend their military reach, and because their strategic interests are global in nature" (Mitchell and Thyne 2010, 465). During the cold war, global strategic interests were defined in terms of ideology. Snyder, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon (2009) provide two reasons for major powers to get involved in ideological

foreign policy. First, as a strong state does not face 'pressing material constraints,' it can get involved in "ideological preferences without fear of negative consequences for its survival and wealth." Second, "the national interest is always ambiguous, but this is especially so when material power is great and threats are indirect, distant, long term, or diffuse" (Snyder, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon 2009, 158). Ideological foreign policy provides a direction to the state concerned. Based on these considerations, it can be noted that the major power context allows states to think beyond their immediate security concerns and attempt to promote their own values and ideologies.

Based on these considerations, it can be noted that the major power context allows states to think beyond their immediate security concerns and attempt to promote their own values and ideologies. As these values and ideologies could be based on domestic factors, it can be argued that, compared to other states, major powers are less constrained by international pressures and have more freedom to seek their friends and foes based on domestic factors.

The first three hypotheses below primarily focus on the strategic benefits of intervention for the major powers. They suggest the military-strategic value of one of the crisis actors for the major powers. The logic of the first three hypotheses is drawn from the traditional writings of the realist approach, wherein the strategic value of a state is the key factor in determining whether important security interests of major powers are at stake in supporting the crisis actor.[2] The strategic value of a state can be determined by three main factors: ties of the crisis state with a major power; the presence of a common adversary between the two states (a crisis actor and intervening major power); and the location of the crisis actor in a region that is strategically important to the major power. In each case, the leaders of the major powers are likely to believe that important security interests are at stake. Based on our theoretical considerations, however, we will further argue that these apparently strategic-military hypotheses also have domestic political component which is taken into account by the leaders when they make foreign policy decisions.

Hypothesis 1:

The likelihood of intervention by a major power will increase if the crisis actor has an alliance with any of the two major powers.

At the structural level, main focus of this paper is to study extended deterrence by major powers, which is mainly reflected in the alliances of these powers with other states in the context of their grand strategies. Charap et al. (2021, 11) argue, "[p]ast research is clear that the existence of an alliance or partnership is one of the strongest factors shaping intervention decisions." These alliances could be of different types, including formation of multilateral organizations like NATO and Warsaw Pact, bilateral formal agreements, and different types of informal arrangements. The type of extended deterrence could also vary from state to state and region to region. This hypothesis suggests that the crisis actor was militarily and strategically important enough that it had an alliance with any of the competing major powers. A major power may intervene to protect its own ally, or it could intervene when the competing major power's ally is involved.

Even in the broader context of grand strategy, it is difficult to assess intentions of the major powers to pursue extended deterrence. Charap et al. (2021) also argue that there are many reasons for states to intervene to protect their allies. While "[t]he most obvious is to respond to a shared external threat or adversary," additional reasons for intervention could be "shared interests or goals, historical ties, or the explicit terms of the alliance" (Charap et al. 2021, 11).

Acknowledgement of multiple factors opens up the space for non-strategic factors that could influence major powers to intervene on behalf of their allies. Tomz and Weeks (2021) emphasize domestic political reasons to explain the significance of alliances in the intervention decisions of the policymakers. In the case of US, these authors find that participants of their public survey were "on

[2] These assumptions are shared by different variants of realism.

average, 33 percentage points more supportive of intervention to help an ally than to help an otherwise equivalent country to whom the United States had not made a pledge." Hence, in cases where public opinion matters "alliances can raise the probability of intervention and potentially contribute to the credibility." (Tomz and Weeks 2021, 812). In other words, sometimes rational leaders might intervene internationally based on public pressure, with an expectation that their popularity would increase at domestic level and will help them retain their political offices.

Hypothesis 2:

The likelihood of intervention by a major power will increase if the rival major power intervenes in the crisis.

The logic of the second hypothesis is very close to the second situation in the first hypothesis (i.e. an alliance between the threatened state and the adversary major power). However, in the case of the second hypothesis, an adversary major power directly intervenes in a crisis, and it may or may not have an alliance with any of the parties of the crisis. The second hypothesis emphasizes the context of rivalry, where participants of an enduring rivalry are engaged in a zero-sum game, and "fear of exploitation by a rival naturally commits states to hawkish foreign policies" (Lektzian, Prins, and Souva 2010, 1076).

Wright and Diehl (2016, 648) link rivalry context to the domestic politics of major powers. Their main argument is that rivalry provides an issue space where domestic political actors compete and outbid each other by advocating tougher policies against rivals. According to them, "[t]he rivalry context is ripe for outbidding, given that the public already has latent or active hostility against an enemy and may view interactions with said rival in a zero-sum fashion." Consequently, rational leaders are more likely to pursue aggressive policies to achieve strategic goals as well as gain public support. Haynes (2017) asserts that "the rally theory predicts that diverting leaders will target traditional enemies and enduring rivals, as conflict against such persistent adversaries is most likely to promote in-group solidarity" (Haynes 2017, 338).

Hypothesis 3:

The likelihood of intervention by a major power will increase if the crisis actor is strategically located for that major power.

Strategic locations for the major powers are identified based on their grand strategies. Hegemonic concerns of the major powers mainly drive their grand strategies. Regarding the cases under study, the US emerged as a predominant power after the Second World War, while the Soviet Union mainly challenged US hegemonic status. Russia effectively followed the same policy even after the end of the cold war. As Carap et al. (2021) argue, "[p]ursuit and reinforcement of great-power status is widely acknowledged as a central driver of Russia's foreign policy" (Charap et al. 2021, 30). Another difference between US and Soviet/Russian positions in the world is that US was mainly concerned about the far away regions of the world, while Soviet Union/Russia mainly focused on its neighborhoods. This situation was inevitable, as in the aftermath of World War I and World War II, primary areas of strategic concern were Europe, Southeast Asia, and Middle East. Coincidently, all these areas are in the immediate neighborhood of the Soviet Union/Russia. Charap et al. (2021) affirm this assertion by declaring that "[a] major component of being a great power, in Moscow's view, is being the leader of a region (specifically, its immediate neighborhood)" (Charap et al. 2021, 30).

In addition to the power-political considerations, domestic factors also contribute to the significance of certain geographical regions for the major powers. Regions like the Middle East and Southeast Asia might have purely strategic values to the US and Soviet Union, but Europe has different significance for these two major powers. The history, culture, and domestic political structures of these major powers gave specific meanings to Europe. Western Europe for the US and Eastern Europe for the Soviet Union/Russia had more than strategic value to these major powers. Actually, it can be argued

that their Cold War related grand strategies emanated from the 'Us' versus 'Them' identities historically prevalent in Europe.

Unlike the first three hypotheses that are mainly based on structural sources, the following two hypotheses specifically prioritize domestic factors.

Hypothesis 4:

The likelihood of intervention by a major power will decrease if the powers of crisis actors are equal.

If the first three hypotheses emphasized the need for intervention, the fourth hypothesis concentrates on the reasons of nonintervention by major powers. It is argued that if the power gap between crisis actors is wider, then there will be less risk involved. As the power gap narrows between the crisis actors, risks increase as uncertainty of the outcome is enhanced. The supporting logic for this hypothesis draws from the domestic level of analysis. As decision makers in the major power are assumed to be rational actors and answerable to the domestic audiences, hypothesis four suggests that leaders seek to minimize risks associated with intervention.

In terms of two cases under study, we will expect that US, being more powerful[3] and democratic state, is less constrained by international factors and more constrained by domestic factors than Soviet Union/Russia. Snyder, Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon (2009), in this respect, argue that democratic leaders, needing bigger winning coalitions, are "more accountable to their domestic supporters than autocratic leaders and more likely to lose office after spending resources on a failed war" (Snyder, Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon 2009, 164). Vietnam syndrome is the clear example of this phenomenon in US case. Vietnam Syndrome was further reinforced after the Beirut barrack attacks in 1983 and the Black Hawk incident in Somalia in 1993 (Kuijpers 2019, 394). Based on these arguments, we can expect that the US will be less likely to make risky interventions (i.e., interventions in those crises where the power gap between the crisis actors is narrow).

Hypothesis 5:

The likelihood of intervention by a major power will increase if the major power and the crisis actor share the same type of political system.

Owing to the application of the constructivist assumptions in IR, identity literature became very important in explaining international conflicts. Charap et al. (2021), for example, apply this context to the ethnically motived international conflicts. According to them, "[s]tates are motivated to protect those with whom they share common cultural and other ties" (Charap et al. 2021, 17). Westra supports this argument when he argues that "states value a particular international order insofar as it corresponds to the configuration of their domestic social identities" (Westra, 2010: 520).

Research Design and Measurement of Variables

This study employs an ordered logit model to explain US and Soviet/Russian interventions in the international crisis situations. For this purpose, we use 'actor level' data from the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project, developed by Brecher et al. (2021). The ICB Dataset Version 14 covers the period from 1918 to 2017 and includes data on 1,078 crisis actors. Version 15, which is about to be released, extends the coverage through 2019 and adds 22 additional crisis actors, bringing the total to 1,100. However, since this study focuses on the period from 1945 to 2019, the number of crisis actors is reduced to 721.

Dependent Variable: Intervention by the major power

[3] Snyder, Shapiro, and Block-Elkon (2009) support this assertion when they argue, "[d]uring the twentieth century, whether under multipolarity, bipolarity, or unipolarity, America enjoyed the luxury of disproportionate power and geographical buffering" (Snyder, Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon 2009, 155).

As defined earlier, leaders of major powers are inclined to define their country's national security interests in broader regional and/or global context and thus consider intervention in many international disputes beyond their borders. Considering such definition of major powers, Brecher et al. (2021) label France, Britain, Japan, Italy and Germany, along with Soviet Union and the United States as major powers in the period from 1918 to 1945. Brecher et al. (2021) define Soviet Union and the US as superpowers in the post-World War II period (i.e., 1945 onwards). Since our study covers the period from 1945 to 2019, we could have used the term superpowers to refer to the US and Soviet Union/Russia. As in the theoretical literature mostly the term 'major powers' is used to refer to the US and Soviet/Russian cases after the Second World War, we also use the term major powers to refer to these two cases. However, at the same time, we agree with Brecher et al. (2021) that there were only two overarching powers in the post-World War II period.[4] For the purpose of our analysis, we suggest two different models with two different dependent variables: US intervention and Soviet/Russian intervention (USINT and SRINT, respectively).[5]

For the dependent variables, we use International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset and collapse nine categories identified by Brecher et al. (2021) into four in the following way. First, no intervention is coded 0 (i.e. first two of nine categories, not involved and nonintervention, are collapsed to get these values). Second, nonmilitary intervention is coded 1 (i.e. categories 3, 4, and 5; political, economic, and propaganda involvement, respectively, are collapsed). Third, indirect military intervention is coded 2 (i.e. categories 6 and 7; covert involvement and semi-military involvement, respectively, are collapsed). Fourth, direct military intervention is coded 3 (i.e. category 8; direct military intervention). Category 9 (i.e., major power as a crisis actor) was dropped because we are mainly interested in the major power interventions in crises that involve other actors, not major powers themselves.

Independent Variables

Five independent variables are measured as follows:

1) Alliance with a major power (ALLYCAP):

To measure whether a crisis actor had an alliance with a major power, we used the same ordered variable (ALLYCAP or Alliance Capability) created by Brecher et al. (2021). This variable has four values: non-aligned or neutral; informal alliance with superpower or great power; formal alliance with superpower or great power; alliance leader – superpower or great power. Brecher et al. (2021) identify seven great powers before 1945 and two superpowers after 1945. Since we are dealing only with the post-1945 period, all alliances by crisis actors are with either the US or Soviet Union/Russia (labelled by us as major powers).

2) Intervention by the rival major power:

As mentioned above, there are only two major powers (i.e., US and Soviet/Russia) for the entire period under study, and we attempt to construct two different models for the US and Soviet/Russian interventions. These interventions are taken as dependent variables. Since both of these major powers were rivals to each other, intervention by one major power can be taken as an independent variable in a model in which the intervention by the other major power is taken as

[4] Some observers might argue that Russia lost its major power status in the post-cold war world (i.e. after 1991), but I agree with Brecher et al. (2021) that Russia being the most powerful second power in the world (with a considerable nuclear stockpile) retained its status of major power. Furthermore, some patterns in Russian foreign policy remain similar to its behavior during the cold war. For example, Russia continues to stay involved in geopolitics in its neighborhood, it still has ambition for great power politics, it is still steadfast in countering US hegemony, and it continues to adopt non-liberal political model.

[5] Note that Brecher et al. (2021) use the terms USINV (US Involvement) and SUINV (USSR/Russian Involvement) to label US and Soviet/Russian interventions. We stay with the term intervention, because it is more widely used in the literature.

dependent variable. For example, if we take US intervention (USINT) as a dependent variable, intervention by Soviet Union/Russia (SRINT) can be taken as an independent variable, and vice versa.

3) Strategic location of the crisis actor:

Since different regions are strategically important for US and Soviet/Russia, two different independent variables are calculated for the strategic location of the crisis actors. Strategic location was coded as including any of the following: geographical proximity of the region; region containing significantly important strategic assets (e.g., oil in the case Middle East); and regions containing significant communications channels (e.g., in case of the United States, Panama Canal, bases in Caribbean and Philippines are strategically vital).

For both US and Soviet/Russian cases two separate dummy variables were coded, where 1 = crisis actor was strategically located, and 0 = crisis actor was not strategically located. ICB dataset contains the variable ACTLOC, which refers to the geographic location of the crisis actors. For the purpose of this study, the crisis actors that were strategically important for the US (variable USSTLOC) were those that were located in East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East, West Europe, North Europe, South Europe, North America, Central America, and South America. Such actors were coded 1, and the crisis actors located in the rest of the regions were coded 0. For the Soviet/Russian case (variable SRSTLOC), the crisis actors located in Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, Euro-Asia, East Europe, and Central Europe were coded 1, and the crisis actors located in the rest of the regions were coded 0.

4) Power gap between crisis actors (POWGAP):

ICB dataset measures the power discrepancy between the crisis actor and its major adversary (variable POWDIS). In this respect, Brecher et al. (2003) measure a power score for each crisis actor and its adversary on the basis of six separate scores measuring size of population, GNP, territorial size, alliance capability, military expenditure and nuclear capability. The power of a crisis actor, and the power available to it from alliance partners (if present), was then compared to that of its principal adversary or adversaries to create a final power discrepancy score. We use absolute values of this variable to specify the power gap between the crisis actors.

5) Similarity of regime between the major power and the crisis actor (REGIME2):

ICB dataset identifies the regime type of the crisis actor through the variable REGIME. This variable distinguishes between democratic and non-democratic regimes. Since, we are analyzing the cases in which a democratic state (US case) and an authoritarian state (Soviet/Russian case) are major powers, we can use this variable to analyze whether US intervened when the democratic regimes were involved, and Soviet/Russia intervened when the non-democratic regimes were involved in international crises. We code the variable measuring regime type as a dummy variable, where 1 = democratic regimes (value 1 given by Brecher et al. 2021 for their variable on regime type) and 0 = non-democratic regimes (including civil authoritarian, military-direct rule, military indirect rule, and military dual authority; values 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively given by Brecher et al. 2021).

Econometric models

The current study employs an ordered logit model due to the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, representing different levels of intervention. This variable captures the level of intervention undertaken by countries, categorized as: No intervention, Non-military intervention, Indirect military intervention and Direct military intervention. The decision-making process by countries is binary and sequential. For US intervention, the model is shown below:

$$Z_i = \alpha + \beta_1 ALLYCAP_i + \beta_2 \mathrm{SRINT}_i + \beta_3 USSTLOC_i + \beta_4 POWGAP_i + \beta_5 REGIME2_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

and the Soviet/Russian Intervention is analyzed through the following:

$$Z_i = \alpha + \beta_1 ALLYCAP_i + \beta_2 \mathrm{USINT}_i + \beta_3 SRSTLOC_i + \beta_4 POWGAP_i + \beta_5 REGIME2_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

The model is built around a latent regression in the same way as the binomial logit model. The ordinal variable Y is a function of latent variable ξ, which represents difference in utility levels from a decision.

The continuous latent variable is given by:

$$\xi_i = \sum_{k=1}^{K} \beta_k X_{ki} + \varepsilon_i = Z_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad (3)$$

Where X_{ki} are the explanatory variables, β_k are the coefficients and ε_i is the random error term which is independent of X and has a logistic distribution. This continuous latent variable ξ_i has different number of threshold points and the value of the variable Y depends on whether a particular threshold is crossed. In the current analysis, for our dependent variable, we have four integration levels, so the number of thresholds will be three. For example:

$$\begin{gathered} Y_i = 0 \; if \; \xi_i \leq \delta 1 \\ Y_i = 1 \; if \; \delta 1 < \xi_i \leq \delta 2 \qquad (4) \\ Y_i = 2 \; if \; \delta 2 < \xi_i \leq \delta 3 \\ Y_i = 3 \; if \; \xi_i > \delta 3 \end{gathered}$$

The ordered logit model estimates,

$$Z_i = \sum_{k=1}^{K} \beta_k X_{ki} = E(\xi_i) \qquad (5)$$

Results and discussion

Regarding US interventions, hypotheses predict that the coefficients for all variables are positive. As Table 1 (see Appendix A) shows, coefficients for most of the variables are positive as expected, with two obvious exceptions. One, the variable *allycap* (alliance with any of the two major powers) is statistically significant at 1% during the Cold War, while it is insignificant afterwards. Two, coefficient for *regime2* (similarity of the regime between the US and crisis actor) is negative. Results for *allycap* demonstrate that significance of alliances mattered for the US leadership during the Cold War, not afterwards. This result can be easily explained by referring to the fact that these alliances were linked to the context of the Cold War and lost their significance afterwards.

Overall, the result regarding alliance variable is consistent with the basic argument of this study that Cold War context defined rivalry relationship between the US and Soviet Union/Russia. These results also show more dynamism in US foreign policy, which is primarily driven by rational calculations. US policymakers were quick to adjust to the post-Cold War realities by discounting the importance of alliances that mattered during the Cold War. The results about variable *regime2* are most surprising. The probability of reaching higher levels of intervention by the US in the ongoing crises increases when the regime type of the crisis actor is non-democratic. This result contradicts the basic assumptions of the democratic peace theory as well as identity literature mentioned in this study. To explain this unexpected outcome, the first thing that we should note is that our data does not specify that US intervention will be on behalf of the crisis actor. It just says that the US is more likely to intervene if crisis actor is non-democratic. Now this intervention could be on behalf of the adversary to the crisis actor (which could possibly be a democratic state). Our dependent variable just shows that the US becomes more concerned about a crisis if non-democratic states are involved. We can interpret this result in the Cold War context. Due to its policy of containment, the US becomes more concerned about the spread of non-democratic regimes (especially Communist regimes) and intervenes when non-democratic states are involved. In the context of its grand strategy, this appears to be a more pragmatic and rational approach. This idea could be reinforced if we refer to the detailed results on this variable. It is obvious that during the Cold War the US was more likely to intervene when non-democratic states were involved (i.e., significance at 1% level), while in the post- Cold War period we see very weak relationship between the presence of non-democratic crisis actor and likelihood of US intervention (i.e., significance at 10% level). In other words, it appears

that the US felt more compelled to intervene when non-democratic crisis actors were involved during the Cold War for strategic reasons, while afterwards this compulsion seems to have reduced significantly. These results also show that the US is more rational, than ideological, in its foreign policy. It is less likely to intervene when democratic states are involved.

Table 1: US Interventions

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	USINT AFTER 1945	USINT 1945-1991	USINT AFTER 1991
ALLYCAP	0.199**	0.310***	-0.128
	(0.0897)	(0.106)	(0.188)
SRINT	0.893***	0.993***	0.869***
	(0.0926)	(0.107)	(0.220)
USSTLOC	0.903***	0.956***	0.801**
	(0.162)	(0.187)	(0.348)
POWGAP	0.0331***	0.0262**	0.0346***
	(0.00447)	(0.00992)	(0.00591)
REGIME2	-0.573***	-0.514***	-0.639*
	(0.160)	(0.187)	(0.343)
/cut1	0.415**	0.948***	-1.313***
	(0.190)	(0.230)	(0.401)
/cut2	2.671***	3.083***	1.642***
	(0.216)	(0.263)	(0.402)
/cut3	4.393***	4.796***	3.443***
	(0.255)	(0.309)	(0.474)
McFadden's R2	0.152	0.129	0.223
Log likelihood	-798.18	-589.48	-190.58
Exp (log likelihood / observations)	0.331	0.327	0.373
Number of Observations	721	528	193

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results of the remaining three variables (*srint, usstloc,* and *powgap*) are consistent with our expectations, albeit with slight differences in terms of significance during and after the Cold War. For example, *usstloc* (strategic location of the crisis actor for the US) is significant at 1% during the Cold War, while significance becomes 5% after the Cold War. A slight drop in significance of the strategically located states shows that there could be minor adjustments in the areas that are strategically important to the US after the Cold War. The variable *powgap* (power gap between the crisis actors) is significant at 5% during the Cold War, while its significance increases to 1% after the

Cold War. These results show that overall, the US was likely to intervene in less risky crises. However, during the Cold War it was slightly more willing to take risks. Finally, results of the variable *srint* (intervention by the rival major power, i.e., Soviet/Russian intervention) are statistically significant at 1% both during and after the Cold War. This result clearly demonstrates that US considers Russia as a rival even in the post- Cold War world.

With reference to the Soviet/Russian interventions, hypotheses predict that the coefficients for the variables *allycap* (alliance with a major power), *usint* (intervention by the rival major power, i.e., US intervention), *srstloc* (strategic location of the crisis actor for the Soviet/Russia) are positive. While coefficients for the variables *regime2* (similarity of the regime between the Soviet/Russia and the crisis actor, i.e. non-democratic regimes) and *powgap* (power gap between the crisis actors) are negative. We expected negative result for *powgap* variable because we assumed that being an authoritarian state, Soviet Union/Russia is not constrained by domestic level factors to make risky interventions.

As Table 2 (see Appendix B) shows, coefficients for the first three variables *allycap, usint* and *srstloc* are in general positive, as expected. However, we see that *allycap* is not significant during the Cold War, while it becomes significant (at 1%) after the Cold War. One reason for this outcome could be that the Soviet Union supported a number of less developed and developing countries that did not have formal alliances with any major power. Hence, alliances did not matter much to the Soviet leadership during the Cold War. A more obvious example to substantiate this argument is the presence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Most the members of this organization (such as India, Yugoslavia, and Cuba) and its anti-imperialist rhetoric and objectives were supported by Soviet Union. After the Cold War, Russia gave up its Communist ideology and responded to the alliances that reflected its rivalry with the United States. Results of the variable *srstloc* (strategic location of the crisis actor for Soviet Union/Russia) are similar to US results regarding this variable. Strategic location of the crisis actor for Soviet Union/Russia was significant at 1% during the Cold War, while significance dropped a little bit to 5% after the Cold War. As in the US case, this result shows that there was some slight readjustment of areas that are strategically important to Russia after the Cold War. Regarding *usint* variable, the result is similar to that in the US case. US intervention did provoke Soviet/Russian intervention equally during and after the Cold War.

Table 2: Soviet/Russian Interventions

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	SRINT AFTER 1945	SRINT 1945-1991	SRINT AFTER 1991
ALLYCAP	0.284***	0.160	0.515***
	(0.0912)	(0.109)	(0.195)
USINT	0.870***	0.877***	1.053***
	(0.0896)	(0.102)	(0.215)
SRSTLOC	0.572***	0.498***	0.626**
	(0.153)	(0.182)	(0.316)
POWGAP	-0.00111	0.0413***	0.00165
	(0.00275)	(0.00987)	(0.00403)
REGIME2	0.0669	0.0590	0.291
	(0.160)	(0.186)	(0.357)

/cut1	1.550***	1.438***	2.889***
	(0.208)	(0.242)	(0.507)
/cut2	3.515***	3.272***	5.847***
	(0.241)	(0.273)	(0.649)
/cut3	5.430***	5.373***	7.478***
	(0.302)	(0.353)	(0.766)
McFadden's R2	0.108	0.127	0.176
Log likelihood	-743.21	-546.78	-163.80
Exp (log likelihood / observations)	0.357	0.355	0.428
Number of Observations	721	528	193

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The variable *powgap* (i.e., power gap between crisis actors) yielded interesting results. We expected negative direction for this variable, as we argued that Soviet/Russia would be less constrained by domestic pressures to take risky decisions. This variable is statistically significant (at 1% level) only during the Cold War, while it is insignificant afterwards. The insignificant result can be easily explained by our theoretical argument that risk factor did not matter in the Russian foreign policy behavior, which confirms that domestic pressures did not constrain Russian intervention decisions. Strong positive relationship during the Cold War requires explanation. To do so, we need to revisit the interpretation of this variable. Regarding this variable, we hypothesized that as power gap increases between the crisis actors, risks are decreased. As domestic pressures did not restrain Soviet/Russia policymakers, we expected that Soviet/Russia will make riskier interventions (i.e., negative sign on this variable). However, positive sign during the Cold War goes against our expectations. We can explain this result by referring to the Soviet ideology, which advocated support for weaker states against powerful (mostly capitalist) states. Soviet leaders, in other words, intervened in international crises where the power gap between the parties was wider because of the Communist ideology, not because of the relevance of the domestic pressures. Finally, the statistical insignificance of the *regime2* variable both during and after the Cold War is an unexpected result. We expected negative sign on this variable, as we thought Soviet Union/Russia will be more involved when non-democratic states are crisis actors. Statistical insignificant clearly shows that regime type did not matter in the Soviet/Russian intervention decisions. Here, the behavior of the Soviet leadership can be easily explained as regime type did not matter to them as much as economic ideology. For example, Soviet leadership supported India (despite its democratic regime) because it adopted socialist ideology. Russian case (after the Cold War), however, is a bit difficult to explain. It is clear that regime type does not matter to Russia for its intervention decisions. Russia does appear concerned if smaller states (especially in its neighborhood) join US side, as is evident by *usint* variable. However, it does not seem to show interest if a former non-democratic state becomes democratic. This result shows that Russian leadership does not have too much hostility towards democratic values. This argument can be substantiated by Russian attempts to prove its democratic credentials by holding elections. In other words, for two separate reasons during and after the Cold War, Soviet Union and Russian leadership did not take into account regime type to make intervention decisions.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, hypotheses were developed to weigh the relative significance of the domestic political and international strategic concerns in the foreign policy decisions of the major powers to intervene or not to intervene in international crises. The comparative nature of this study revealed important and interesting factors involved in the decisions of the foreign policy makers in the major powers. Unequivocal support was found for the hypotheses about the strategic significance of the crisis actors (i.e., hypotheses 2 and 3). As proposed by the theory developed in this paper, these results show that international strategic interests are important and are the ones that help leaders muster up domestic political support. The identical nature of results on rivalry and strategic location hypotheses clearly show that despite huge differences in their political, economic and social structures, these two major powers behaved similarly at international level.

As far as hypotheses on alliances, regime type and risk of intervention (i.e., hypotheses 1, 4 and 5) are concerned, we clearly see that variation between the US and Soviet/Russian cases is very high. In general, if we compare results of hypotheses 1, 4 and 5 in both cases, we can clearly find that US policy to intervene in an international crisis was more rational than Soviet/Russian policy. Partly this rationality was a result of the tendency of the US policymakers to take input from both domestic and international sides. Both during and after the Cold War, US policymakers paid attention to domestic political factors, however, influence of the domestic factors was more pronounced after the Cold War. Overall, the US made less risky interventions, and prioritized strategic interests over ideology. After the Cold War when they felt less pressure from international arena, US policymakers adjusted their foreign policy to further reduce risks.

In Soviet/Russian case, we see that domestic politics does not seem to matter much. Overall, during the Cold War, Communist ideology was a dominant factor that explained its intervention decisions. After the Cold War, when ideology was not a factor in Russian foreign policy behavior, it did pay attention to (US) rivalry related alliances and did not pay attention to the power gap between the crisis actors (hence, making riskier interventions). Insignificance of *regime2* variable during and after the Cold War clearly demonstrates that the Soviet Union/Russia is not concerned about the regimes of the crisis actors. Combined with the results of other four variables, we can safely conclude that Soviet/Russian foreign policy is driven by international strategic considerations, rather than domestic political concerns. Rationality in Soviet/Russian foreign policy is primarily driven by international factors. If anything else mattered, it was the Communist ideology during the Cold War that influenced its foreign policy, rather than domestic politics.

To sum up the results of this study, we can argue that American political audiences are more driven by the pragmatic assumptions, rather than ideological considerations, and would not let the decision makers make decisions that would have any dire consequences for the US interests. As opposed to the US case, Soviet decision making seems to be driven more by the ideological considerations. These results show that Soviet ideological considerations did override the realistic assumptions of international politics. After the Cold War, Russian foreign policy appears to confirm to neorealist assumptions, as Russia made alliances and interventions based on its rivalry with the United States. Despite the end of the ideological differences between the US and Russia after the Cold War, they still remain to be each other's rivals. On the face of it, this outcome confirms neorealist prediction that these two major powers keep vying for the leadership of the international system. However, future research can look into deeper historical or cultural differences between these two major powers that did not allow them to disengage from each other after the cessation of the ideological competition.

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Appendix A