

Long-Term Consequences of Aggressive Diplomacy: European Relations after Austrian Crimean War Threats

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There is a large literature on the impacts of explicit threats on the outcomes of crises between states, but the longer-term impacts of threats on dyadic state relationships and on international outcomes have been much less studied because of the difficulty of establishing causal connections between events separated in time. By comparing nearly identical foreign policy contexts before and after the Austrian Crimean War ultimata to Russia, this article demonstrates that, contrary to the prevailing view in much of the international relations literature, such long-term effects are not marginal ones that theoretical simplification with the goal of analyzing the central tendencies of the international system can usefully ignore. Under conditions discussed below, when a state is threatened in a way that attempts to deny one of its key policy objectives, that state will be less likely to come to the aid of the threatening state in the future and more likely to join the other side in future wars, realign its alliance commitments, and adopt strategies to drain the resources of the threatening state. Among the implications of these findings are that policymakers should take greater account of the long-term consequences of aggressive negotiating stances than current theories imply and that scholars have underestimated the information conveyed by private threats in crisis bargaining.

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A broad range of topics are addressed in the literature on interstate coercion. Scholars have analyzed the role of the balance of forces, state interests, decision-making structures, and psychological factors in determining whether threats achieve their ends. They have considered the conditions under which threats may be provocative and the effect of the form of government and the medium through which messages are delivered.¹ The longer-term effects of threat making, however, have been much less studied because of the difficulty of establishing causal connections between events separated in time.² When it comes to effects past the resolution of the particular crises in which threats are made, only the impact of crisis actions on bargaining reputation has received substantial attention.

This article demonstrates that threats, even those that do not immediately lead to conflict, can have decisive longer-term influence on relations between states and that this influence is central to understanding the course of international history. This is because threats provide threatened states with information about the foreign policy calculus of the threatening state and because of the resentment that efficacious threats often leave behind. When one state frustrates another state's foreign policy objectives through an explicit threat of violence, the latter state will sometimes reorient its security policies in ways that have both long- and short-term consequences for the threatening state. Interestingly, however, because states are often aware of

¹ A sample of works that address these questions includes Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Glenn H. Snyder *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Robert Powell, "Nuclear Brinkmanship with Two-Sided Incomplete Information," *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 1 (1988): 155–78; James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577–92; Kenneth Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Anne E. Sartori, *Deterrence by Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1984): 270–90; Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005); Bear F. Braumoeller, "Causal Complexity and the Study of Politics," *Political Analysis* 11, no. 3 (2003): 209–33; Curtis S. Signorino and Ahmer Tarar, "A Unified Theory and Test of Extended Immediate Deterrence," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 3 (2006): 586–605.

² Although Walt does not separately examine the impact of explicit threats, he does analyze long-term effects of being perceived as threatening or aggressive in general. See, for instance, Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances, Threats, and U.S. Grand Strategy," *Security Studies* 1, no. 3 (1992). In general, however, even prominent analyses of enduring rivalries have not focused on the effects of diplomatic activities that predate the initiation of the analyzed crises. See, for instance, Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "General Deterrence Between Enduring Rivals: Testing Three Competing Models," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 1 (1993): 61–73. Several exceptions are discussed below.

these potential negative long-run consequences, states sometimes follow up threats with other initiatives designed to improve relations.

Contrary to the prevailing view in much of the international relations literature, these effects are not marginal ones that theoretical simplification with the goal of analyzing the central tendencies of the international system can usefully ignore. Rather, the long-term consequences of threats are a primary determinant of later international outcomes. Thus, there is a strong case for strategies of moderation in international relations. Threats may have serious consequences that are felt only over the long term.

The evidence for these claims comes from a detailed analysis of the Austro-Russian relationship before and after the Austrian Crimean War ultimata. These countries and this period were chosen for analysis because the period exhibits a rare property: nearly identical foreign policy questions and contexts recurred before and after the war. This allows us to examine a series of cases in which nearly all factors except that under study are held constant. Thus, the effect of threat making on the long-term relations between the states can be seen independently of other factors, including the structural variables that other scholars point to as primary determinants of foreign policy decisions. Further evidence for the thesis comes from an examination of eyewitness Russian accounts during the war, which allows for a precise understanding of the evolution of Russia's Austria policy. As we shall see, a reciprocal and self-reinforcing process led diplomats at the time to understand that "between Austria and Russia a great gulf [had] been fixed."³

Although historians have long understood that Austrian actions angered Russia, the process tracing of events and internal government discourses during the war elucidates the precise sources of Russia's reaction and the dynamics that generated such a profound split. Then, the comparative case analysis demonstrates the specific tangible implications of this reaction for Russian foreign policy and for international outcomes. Alternative explanations of the Russian shift offered by political scientists and historians are shown to be unconvincing.

The possibility of such reactions to threats has far-reaching implications. First, the dominant strands of international relations theory that seek to explain events based solely on temporally proximate factors ignore key determinants of national interest construction and foreign policy formation. On the whole, realists ignore such factors entirely and liberals see the past operating on the present only through the creation of specific institutions. Constructivist theories sometimes include a more expansive role for the past operating on the present, but the specific relations between past and present

³ W. E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question: 1848-71* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 70. Translations from German and French sources are due to the author; translations from Russian sources are due to the author and Galina Varese.

are either not developed or different from those identified here. The evidence presented below demonstrates that particular diplomatic choices of the relatively distant past play a central role in constructing the intersubjective space of perceptions of threat and intention, thereby having a causal impact on foreign policy decision making.

A second implication is that policymakers should take account of the long-term consequences of aggressive negotiating stances more than current theories of international relations imply. Even threats that achieve their object in the short run can have unwanted results down the road that may be difficult to foresee and that run severely against a threatening state's future security interests. Third, the possibility of such long-term consequences of threat making implies certain crisis dynamics in the short run, including a particular mechanism for diplomatic communication. When leaders are conscious of the potential long-term consequences of threats and choose to threaten anyway, their threats will convey information even when they are made in private and even when reputations are not at stake.⁴ Fourth, the international system exhibits path dependencies that are central to its functioning; static analysis of brief moments in time will miss much.⁵

As a general rule, scholars have neglected long-term effects and path dependencies because of the difficulty of rigorously demonstrating their existence.⁶ This has skewed the field's perspective on the underlying causes of foreign policy decisions, including decisions for war and peace. The importance decision makers often place on avoiding long-term breaches in diplomatic relations has been underestimated. An appreciation of longer-term consequences reveals that diplomacy is more consequential, and the sources of national interest definition more temporally distant than previously understood.

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF THREATS

The literature on crisis bargaining, and on threat making in particular, is large. However, in spite of the vast range of specific topics considered and the scholarly consensus that perceptions of intentions play a central role in foreign policy decision making,⁷ relatively little scholarship has examined the

⁴ This mechanism of diplomatic communication is described in detail in Robert F. Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Diplomacy Matters," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 2 (2010): 347–68.

⁵ For a review of literature on path dependence and an attempt to conceptualize it in terms of increasing returns, see Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–67.

⁶ Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow Moving and Invisible: Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics," in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, ed. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschmeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 177–207.

⁷ John Mearsheimer, for instance, points out that such important features of the system as the differing levels of rivalry in the early and late periods of the Cold War do not appear to have a structural realist

topic of this article: the longer-term effects of threat making on perceptions of intentions and relationships between states.⁸ The principal exception is the literature on the effects of crisis behavior on states' reputations for honesty and resolve. Some scholars argue that a reputation for these qualities affords a state a better chance of achieving its ends in future crises and potential crises without actually having to resort to the use of force. Other scholars argue against this idea. As will be demonstrated below, however, the long-term effects of threats go well beyond the credibility of that state's threats in future crises.⁹ Scholarship in the field has therefore focused on the potential benefits of aggressive diplomacy to states' reputations for resolve without considering the potentially significant long-term costs on the other side of the ledger.

The primary reason for this gap in the literature is a double epistemological bind, both parts of which are related to the passage of time. Suppose a threat leads elites in the threatened state to think differently about the threatening state. In crises and international contexts that immediately follow the original threat, the threatened state may refer back to the threat as a source and justification for a new policy in its internal decision making. We shall

explanation. John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 8–12. On this point, see also Robert Jervis, "Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001): 36–60; Andrew Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Waltz's theories about the systemic effects of polarity and the eventual need for balances to form also explicitly assume that states make choices that are not determined by material structure. One pillar of the argument for increased conflict as the number of system poles increases, for instance, is that alliance behavior becomes more uncertain. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 163. At the other end of the materialist-idealist spectrum, constructivist scholars have emphasized the role of agency. For overviews of the constructivist research program, see Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (1998): 324–48; John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 855–85; Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 44–75.

⁸ Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*; Janice Gross Stein, "Reassurance in International Conflict Management," *Political Science Quarterly* 106, no. 3 (1991): 433; and Richard Ned Lebow, "Provocative Deterrence: A New Look at the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Arms Control Today* 18 (1988), analyze whether threats are likely to frustrate their immediate ends by provoking a threatened state but not whether threats have effects past the attainment or non-attainment of the issue over which the threat is made. In provoking, threats may backfire immediately, this literature demonstrates, but the longer-term effects of threats are not examined. Constructivists have also emphasized the importance of such moments of interaction. See, for instance, Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 403–7; James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1987).. The largest body of constructivist work focuses on more slowly changing normative structures, however.

⁹ For literature on the relationship between signaling and bargaining reputation, see, for instance, Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*; Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*; Paul Huth, "Reputation and Deterrence: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment," *Security Studies* 7 (1997): 72–99; Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996); Dale C. Copeland, "Do Reputations Matter?" *Security Studies* 7 (1997): 33–71; Sartori, *Deterrence by Diplomacy*; Press, *Calculating Credibility*.

see that after the Crimean War, the internal Russian policymaking discourse shows evidence of exactly that in the formation of policy toward Austria. As time goes by, however, the threatened state's changed perceptions of the threatening state are likely to become facts of the matter—policy discussions will cease referring back to the original cause. Eventually, the record of internal state discussions can be expected to provide scant reference to the original event and thus little evidence of the event's causal importance, even when this event is in fact the source of an earlier and lasting shift in perceptions. Process tracing of later foreign policy decisions, therefore, cannot forward such an inquiry.

Unfortunately, the comparative method also faces difficulties. As time passes, many aspects of the international situation and the domestic politics within states are altered. Thus, it will be difficult to demonstrate through comparative analysis of the threatening state's policies before and after the threat that it was in fact the threat itself that led to policy changes from which the threat is separated in time. Other changed aspects of the situation will provide alternative explanations for policy shifts that will be difficult to rule out.

The difficulty of establishing causal connections between events separated in time has led to the perception that such connections do not exist or that they are of only marginal importance. Thus, many scholars believe that “structural factors such as anarchy and the distribution of power . . . are what matter most for explaining international politics.”¹⁰ Other scholars see norms and domestic political concerns as the key determinants of foreign policy choices.¹¹ The long-term effects of diplomatic choices, however, have been ignored in the name of theoretical simplification or empirical operationalization. For example, Daryl Press argues that, for purposes of testing his theory that state decisions are based on a “current calculus” of power and interest, interests related to the balance of power can be considered “vital” or “important.” Interests derived from non-material factors, such as previous diplomatic interactions, are to be thought of as less important “concerns.”¹²

The empirical analysis below, however, demonstrates that threats made in the past are among the most consequential determinants of state foreign policies on matters of war and peace. When considering the nineteenth century, we cannot understand the fundamental dynamics behind the Austro-Russian split that lasted until the First World War, the formation of the large German state at the center of Europe, the loss of Austrian territories in Italy,

¹⁰ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 10.

¹¹ For references to the constructivist literature, see note 8. Works that emphasize the role of domestic politics in determining state decisions include Helen V. Milner, *Interests, Institutions and Information* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42 (Summer 1988): 427–60; Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*.

¹² Press, *Calculating Credibility*, 25–28.

or the changed nature of the Austrian regime in 1867 without analyzing the long-term effects of threats. Briefly, if we treat the long-term effects of threats as marginal in the international system, we ignore the root causes of seminal events in world history.

In the international relations literature, the works of Paul Huth, Russell Leng, and Stephen Walt come nearest to the topic addressed here. Drawing on the bargaining reputation literature, Leng argues that when less aggressive negotiating strategies fail in one crisis, states will employ more aggressive strategies in the next crisis, largely so that they are not perceived as weak. I focus not on what states learn about bargaining from one crisis to the next but on how the willingness of one state to cooperate with other states is influenced by the diplomatic strategies employed by those other states.¹³ Huth regresses deterrence success/failure on a variable coded "1" when one of the states bullied the other or was intransigent in a past crisis between the same pair of states and coded "0" when the states were never involved in a crisis. Finding an effect, he argues that past intransigence or bullying leads to deterrence failure in the future.¹⁴ Because of the construction of this variable, however, it is likely that this effect derives at least in part from the fact that the states simply were involved in a previous crisis (states in one crisis often have long-running disputes that are not easily resolved) rather than from the particular actions of the states in the earlier crisis. Thus, although these studies are of great interest and are carefully carried out, they do not constitute the last word on the long-run connections between events.

In *The Origins of Alliances*, Walt argues that states form alliances to balance against states or coalitions they perceive as threatening.¹⁵ Whether one state considers another threatening depends on four factors: relative power, proximity, the offense-defense balance, and a state's perceived intentions. It is through this last channel, perceived intentions, that explicit threats may affect whether a state is balanced against.¹⁶ Walt does not, however, analyze

¹³ Russell Leng, "When Will They Ever Learn? Coercive Bargaining in Recurrent Crises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27 (1983): 379–419. Leng's research strategy is also fundamentally different from the one employed here. He examines a sample of cases in which crises recurred between states and shows that bargaining failure is correlated with increased aggression in a subsequent crisis. This correlational analysis, however, is carried out on a small number of cases with no control variables. Thus, since alternative explanations are plausible and even likely for most of the cases examined, further analysis must establish the veracity of the claims. See also Russell J. Leng and Hugh J. Wheeler, "Influence Strategies, Success, and War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 23, no. 4 (December 1979): 655–84; Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁴ Paul Huth, "Extended Deterrence and the Outbreak of War" *American Political Science Review*, 82, no. 2 (June 1988): 423–43.

¹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

¹⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985); Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*; Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (1988).

the specific role of explicit threats as a component of a potentially aggressive foreign policy in producing a balancing reaction. Further, rather than focusing on specific state objectives and intentions in dyadic relationships as the current study does, Walt emphasizes the overall aggressiveness of states toward other states in a system. He argues that a key determinant of whether a state will be balanced against is whether that state is a “known aggressor,” because such states are “by definition harder to appease.”¹⁷

This article, by contrast, demonstrates that threats can have dramatic, long-term effects on relations between states even when the threat does not lead to the threatening state being perceived as more aggressive than other states.¹⁸ The analysis below shows that Austria’s behavior was not any more aggressive than that of other states in the region at the time. Austria’s threats were designed to end a war that Austria tried to prevent and believed contrary to its interests. Thus, Russia did not choose to “balance against” Austria in Walt’s sense. Nevertheless, Austrian threats—which Austria never needed to fulfill because Russia complied with Austrian demands—had a very salient impact on European foreign policies for years to come.

CAUSAL MECHANISMS

The better relations are between two states, the more willing each is to see the interests of the other forwarded or to actively assist in improving the lot of the other. Thus, a worsening in relations has diverse effects. These include the states being less apt to trust each other’s good intentions or come to each other’s aid, more likely to join an opposing side in future conflicts, and more likely to realign alliance commitments and adopt strategies to drain the resources of the other.

Three principal mechanisms, summarized in Table 1, lead some threats to have long-term negative impacts on state relations.¹⁹ The first mechanism

¹⁷ Stephen M. Walt, “Keeping the World ‘Off-Balance’: Self-Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy,” in *America Unrivaled*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), 139. A well-known and extensive literature analyzes the determinants of balancing reactions without analyzing the role of explicit threats in dyadic relationships. Recent examples include Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Robert Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7–45; John G. Ikenberry, ed., *American Unrivaled* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002).

¹⁸ By analyzing the effects of an explicit threat, rather than of appearing threatening in general, the argument made here avoids Paul Schroeder’s criticism of Walt, namely, that because dangers in the international system are often numerous, every foreign policy decision can always be described as a response to some perceived threat. See Schroeder, “Why Realism Does Not Work Well for International History (Whether or Not It Represents a Degenerate IR Research Strategy),” in *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, ed. Colin Elman and John A. Vasquez (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 121. This means that general balance of threat theory borders on unfalsifiable, but the critique does not apply to the dyadic theory of long-term reactions to explicit threats advanced here.

¹⁹ In this article, “long-term” shall refer to effects past the resolution of a particular crisis. To make this idea more precise, we shall use the common definition of a crisis from the International Crisis

TABLE 1 Determinants of Negative Long-Term Consequences of Threat Making

Factor	Mechanism
Importance of Issues Availability of Other Combinations	1. Threat conveys information about threatener's intentions; if the systemic context allows, threatened state will seek a better deal through altered relationships.
Public Nature of Threat Likely Recurrence of Issues	2. Threat creates need to demonstrate to other states the consequences of similar behavior.
Emotional Salience of the Encounter	3. Antipathy engenders more hostile policy.

by which threats lead to long-lasting effects relates to how threats affect each side's perceptions of the other's intentions. Threats convey information about how hostile the threatening state is to the foreign policy objectives and interests of the threatened state. When states believe that other states are more hostile to their interests, they will often seek to reduce each others' influence. Thus, because of what it has learned, the threatened state may take steps to reduce the threatening state's influence, or the threatening state may believe that the threatened state will take such steps. In either case, the relationship of the states will become more adversarial. Such outcomes are more likely (1) when the issues involved are perceived to be of high importance by the sides and (2) when changes in alignments and other aspects of its foreign policy may allow the threatened state to achieve objectives that the threatening state had blocked. By contrast, when these conditions are not met, threat making is much less likely to have a long-term negative impact and, as we shall see, may even lead relations to improve.

The second rationalist mechanism causing threats to have long-term effects relates to the audience of the initial interaction. When other states are aware that one state has attempted to coerce another through the threat of violence, the coerced state will sometimes wish to demonstrate to others the impolicy of such hostile measures. Thus, in order to convince these other states not to follow similarly hostile policies when circumstances permit, the coerced state may seek retribution against the coercing state. The coerced state will hope that state onlookers think twice before pursuing such courses

Behavior Project: a bounded period precipitated by a specific event, which "leads decision-makers to perceive a threat to basic values, time pressure for response and heightened probability of involvement in military hostilities." Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Michael Brecher, *International Crisis Behavior Project, Actor-Level Dataset*, ICPSR Study #9286, Version 10.0 (2010). Our definition of threat is adapted from the definition employed in the Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset: indications of hostile intent that are contingent and usually take the form of an ultimatum; the intention is to signal a willingness to take a certain action against another state if the other state acts, fails to act, or does not refrain from acting in a specified manner. See Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 2 (1996): 170–71.

in the future.²⁰ Such reactions are particularly likely when idiosyncratic factors led the threatened state to back down in the past, threats are made in public, the issues involved are likely to recur, and when the threatened state has sufficient capacity. On the other hand, if other states do not perceive the threatening state to have acted in a manner that would justify retribution, the chances of a long-term breach are reduced.

The third mechanism is emotional rather than rational. Memories of negative experiences with other social actors are often long lasting (in fact, this is true across mammalian species).²¹ When a threat prevents a state from achieving important objectives, the state's leaders may feel humiliated and may harbor resentment against the coercing state. These long-lasting resentments may affect states' foreign policies for years to come when the emotional salience of the encounter is high.²²

Surprisingly, because state leaders are often aware that aggressive behavior can have a long-lasting negative effect on state relations, tensions resulting from aggression can also spark improvement in relations when leaders strive to avoid the dangers just described. A clear example comes from Russian-German relations in the late nineteenth century. Following a series of tense interactions between the two countries in the late 1870s, Russia came to understand that its threatening behavior had precipitated the alliance between Austria and Germany and that Germany might become still further alienated. In order to reverse the trend of deteriorating relations, Russia launched an attempt to form a closer alliance with Germany, eventually resulting in the creation of the Three Emperors' League.²³

In this case and others, aggressive behavior led to an improvement in relations because the factors associated with the three mechanisms described above were not present. The Russian side decided that the various sources of tension were not so important or the other possible alliance combinations so attractive as to merit allowing relations to remain poor. Further, the episodes of the past were not perceived as humiliating, and other nations did not perceive one of the nations to have acted in a way that could have warranted retribution by the other. Thus, when the factors associated with long-term breaches in relations are not highly salient, threat making may even improve relations by offering leaders a glimpse of the specter of deteriorated diplomatic ties.

²⁰ This mechanism is related to the "Deterrence Paradox" discussed in Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 255–58, 266–71.

²¹ Peter Hammerstein, ed., *Genetic and Cultural Evolution of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

²² For a discussion of the role of humiliation in world affairs, see Evelin Linder, *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).

²³ For an extraordinary account of the sources and conduct of these negotiations from the Russian side, see Peter Alexandrovitch Saburov, *The Saburov Memoirs or Bismarck and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

Although the mechanisms described here relate to the impact of explicit threats on individual state foreign policies, these foreign policy shifts, in turn, have dramatic effects on international outcomes. The ways in which outcomes—such as war and peace, changes in control over territory, and changes in alliance structures—are affected by threat making will vary from case to case depending on many factors external to the present study. As the history analyzed below makes clear, however, these effects on outcomes are likely to be substantial.²⁴

The failure of the literature to appreciate these long-term effects is of more than marginal importance. In the Crimean War case, although Austrian threats achieved their short-term ends, the certain long-term costs described below were enormous, and the possible long-term costs were the empire and the Great War in Europe. Further, these potential long-term consequences of threat making have implications for the short-term dynamics of crisis bargaining that are not captured in the current literature. Most obviously, the literature's focus on the credibility of threats will sometimes be the least of policymakers' worries in taking an aggressive foreign policy stance. More salient may be the reorientation of other states' foreign policies that threats engender. Thus, policymakers should be more reticent to adopt threatening stances than models in the literature imply.

These long-term consequences of threats—whether made in public or private—also imply that diplomatic signals can convey information to adversaries. One strand of literature has argued that diplomatic threats made behind closed doors can convey no information because states have incentive to say they are resolved to fight over an issue in order to get their way even if they would not be willing to fight. If private threat making carries no drawback, this argument goes, states would misrepresent their intentions if doing so would help their cause; this, in turn, means that threats convey no information.²⁵ The analysis below, however, demonstrates that since threats can result in long-term reorientations of other states' foreign policies, whether threatening statements are explicitly costly or “just talk,” states have reason not to risk a threat when the likelihood of such consequences is high or when the issues involved are of lesser importance. Therefore, since only relatively resolved states would be willing to make threats when the stakes

²⁴ For a discussion of the importance of distinguishing between explanations of foreign policy and of international outcomes, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 119-21; Kenneth N. Waltz, “International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,” *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): 54-57. For an argument against the usefulness of this distinction, see James D. Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 289-313.

²⁵ James D. Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379-414.

are high, threats convey information about state intentions in a rationalist framework.²⁶

RESEARCH STRATEGY

In 1853, a dispute arose between Russia and Turkey over the rights of Christian sects at the holy places in Palestine and the right of the Russian tsar, Nicholas I, to protect the interests of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Turkey had made concessions to non-Orthodox Christians represented by France that the Tsar believed infringed on Orthodox rights. When Turkey rejected Russia's final, moderate demand, Turkey also rejected the status quo in Russo-Turkish relations. The honor of Russia and its proud leader were brought into question. The tsar commented, "I feel the five fingers of the Sultan on my face."²⁷ In response, Russia occupied the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (which later merged to form the Romanian state but were then under Ottoman rule).²⁸ Several rounds of diplomacy between Britain, France, Russia, Turkey, and Austria followed (discussed further below), the failure of which culminated in war between Turkey and Russia by October. Then, following Russia's destruction of the Turkish port of Sinope, which further aroused anti-Russian sentiment in the West, Britain and France issued an ultimatum to Russia, though there was still no agreement in Britain on the scope and aims of the threatened conflict. On 27–28 March 1854, in support of Turkey, Britain and France declared a war on Russia in which over 600,000 soldiers would lose their lives.²⁹

First, I shall describe Austria's behavior in the period that led to war and during the war itself and the Russian response. Particular attention will be given to Russia's reactions to specific Austrian statements and actions in order to isolate the critical junctures in the evolution of the relationship. In the course of the conflict, Austrian threats incited Russia to make commitments to other powers against Austrian interests, nearly causing Russia to declare war on Austria despite her own dire military position. At the Paris peace conference that ended the war, Russia, still thirsting for revenge, was more willing to make concessions to the actual belligerents than to Austria.

In order to show that Austrian actions short of war in this period had a decisive and continuing impact on the course of events, I then compare

²⁶ See Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy."

²⁷ Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War? A Cautionary Tale* (Hanover, NH: University Press for New England, 1985), 61.

²⁸ According to Nesselrode's ultimatum to Turkey, which preceded the occupation, this would be done "by force, but without war." Vernon J. Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question: 1844–1856* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1931), 266.

²⁹ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 106. On disagreement over British war aims, see, for instance, Paul W. Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 216.

Russian policy toward Austria on similar questions and in similar international contexts both before and after the war. The cases and Russian foreign policy questions were chosen because of their striking similarity on all dimensions, both objectively and in the minds of policymakers at the time.

Thus, the analysis avoids the double epistemological bind discussed above by employing each qualitative research strategy where it can be useful. Process tracing of the evolution of the Austro-Russian relationship is used near the time of the Austrian ultimata. Here, substantial evidence from internal Russian documents is brought to bear. Comparative analysis is then employed through the examination of nearly identical foreign policy questions that arose before and after the ultimata. The recurrence of nearly identical contexts in this case is relatively rare in international history and allows us to control for other causal factors. From this we can see the dramatic shifts in Russian foreign policy that are not predicted by other international relations theories.³⁰

As we shall see, Russia's reaction to the Austrian threats was to cease its opposition to revolution in Hungary, encourage France and Sardinia to strip Austria of Northern Italy, favor Prussia in the struggle with Austria for influence in Germany, and define its interests in the Balkans in a way that greatly heightened the security competition with Austria in the region. The direct result for Austria was the loss of the Italian provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867 in which Austria ceded significant political authority to Hungarian elites, and the war between Prussia and Austria in which Austria lost her influence over the German states. More speculatively, but not unreasonably, the Austrian actions, as the historian Norman Rich puts it, "can also be seen as a turning point in European history, for it marked the end of the friendship and cooperation between the two Eastern European conservative powers and the beginning of a bitter hostility that was to culminate in war in 1914, the destruction of both imperial houses, and the liquidation of the Habsburg Empire."³¹

AUSTRIA'S POLICY AND THE RUSSIAN RESPONSE

At the beginning of the crisis, relations between the two countries were harmonious. Both favored the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire; however, in secret articles of the Treaty of Muenchengraetz of 1833, both had agreed

³⁰ For an overview of the qualitative methods used in this article, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

³¹ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 123. I shall not argue that Russian actions toward Austria after the Crimean War were contrary Russian foreign policy interests. Even though such an argument would be easily developed, Russia's true interests are highly debatable. The more important point is that Russia changed its behavior in dramatic fashion as direct result of Austrian threats during the war.

they would partition Turkey “only together and in a perfect spirit of solidarity” should the treaty fail.³² During the uprisings in 1848-9, Russia had sent troops into Hungary in response to an Austrian request for aid. On the Russian side, relations were so good that when the British ambassador to Russia, Sir George Hamilton Seymour, asked about them in February 1853, the tsar responded, “Oh! But you must understand that when I speak of Russia I speak of Austria as well; what suits one suits the other; our interests as regards Turkey are perfectly identical.”³³

For their part, the Austrians were grateful for Russian assistance in 1849 and knew that Russia counted on Austrian support more than on that of any other power. Austria knew, however, that the rest of Europe saw the empire as partly dependent on and beholden to Russia. Austrian statesmen felt the imperative to demonstrate that Austria had the independent foreign policy of a great power. The Austrian foreign minister, Count Buol, like Prince Metternich before him, viewed Russia as a threat in the Balkans. Even indirect Russian pressure might break up Turkey, and Russia’s cultural and religious ties to many Balkan nations, as well as its size and power, would give Russia tremendous influence in the region no matter what the formal terms of partition.³⁴

The Russian belief in the closeness of the relationship was likely encouraged by the cooperation of the two empires in an international crisis involving Russia, Austria, and Turkey that arose at the same time as the issue that led to the Crimean War. When Austria delivered an ultimatum to Turkey (demanding withdrawal from Montenegro) in January of 1853, Russia urged Austria to occupy Bosnia and Montenegro and informed Turkey that an attack on Austria would constitute an attack on Russia as well. When the tsar mistakenly came to believe that the Austrian ultimatum had been refused, he sent word to Austria that Russia would fight on Austria’s side against Turkey.³⁵

When it became clear that the Western powers would not compel Turkey to accept Russia’s minimal final demands and would support Turkey in a subsequent conflict, however, Austria was confronted with a stark and unwanted choice. She had to choose sides. If Austria were to side with Russia, she would risk the enmity of the Western powers and revolution in Italy, increasing her dependence on Russia. If Austria sided with the West, she might alienate her powerful neighbor and ally and bear the brunt of the conflict because of geographic proximity.³⁶

³² Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 20–21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 228.

³⁴ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 12–14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27–28; Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 26; John Shelton Curtis, *Russia’s Crimean War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 92.

³⁶ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 67.

The first hint of how Austria would decide came when it declined to support Russia's final ultimatum to the Porte.³⁷ This angered some in Russia who argued that Austria's failure to take Russia's side was openly and "straightforwardly" the cause of Turkish "impudence" and even the actions of Britain and France.³⁸ The tsar, however, understood that Austria was under threat from the West and hoped that Russian assurances would swing Austria to the Russian side.³⁹

A week after Russia broke off relations with the Porte on 21 May 1853, Nicholas, knowing the importance of Austrian support or at least neutrality in a future conflict, made a direct overture to Austria for cooperation along the lines of Muenchengraetz. In response, Franz Joseph assured Russia only that Austria would try to prevent a wider conflict if Russia occupied the principalities as long as Turkey did not consider the occupation an act of war.⁴⁰ Buol also warned Russia that Austria might be forced to oppose Russia if Russia adopted a "revolutionary" policy in the Balkans.⁴¹ At this time, however, Austria still had not decided how it would side in the event of conflict. Some members of the Austrian elite, including the emperor, favored an understanding with Russia. Others, including Buol, favored a closer relationship with the West.⁴² Both sides agreed, however, that the conflict—and thus the choice—should be prevented if at all possible.⁴³

When Russia occupied the principalities in July, the tsar made further proposals to Austria that tended to indicate Russia believed the policies it would adopt would lead to the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. Austria, with no desire to engage in "adventuresome projects," tried again to end the crisis through the agreement of all parties. All the powers of Europe, including Russia, agreed to support the Austrian proposal (known as the Vienna note). Turkey, however, realizing it could bring Britain and France into a war on its side, did not. Not wishing to be forced to fight on behalf of a country, Turkey, that had declined to follow Britain's advice for ending the crisis, Britain and France labeled Russia's interpretation of the Vienna Note "violent" and retracted their support for it. In September, Buol tried again

³⁷ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 31.

³⁸ Aleksandr Petrovich Shcherbatov, *General-fel'dmarshal kniaz' Paskevich, ego zhizn' i dîeitel'nost'*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg, 1888–1904), 73.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁰ Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 266.

⁴¹ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 44. By "revolutionary" Buol meant the inciting of nationalist revolutions against the Ottoman Empire. The tsar told Austria that encouraging revolution would be the "simplest decision." G. H. Bolsover, "Nicholas I and the Partition of Turkey," *Slavonic Review* 27 (1948): 144.

⁴² See Memorandum des Felzeugmeisters Hess, "Ueber die Meinung-Verschiedenheit in der Konferenz vom 22. März 1854"; Protokoll der Konferenz vom 22. März 1854; and Vortrag Buols, 21. März 1854, all in *Politisches Archiv des Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien*, repr. in Baumgart, *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs, Serie I. Oesterreichische Akten* (Oldenbourg, Germany: Wissenschaftsverlag, 1980). See also Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 45.

⁴³ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 53.

to find a negotiated solution favorable to Russia, and when this too failed, Russia and Turkey were at war by October.⁴⁴

The next month, Nicholas tried to reassure Austria of Russia's benevolence toward the Habsburg Empire, and Austria surprised the world by beginning its tilt toward the West. "Let me again embrace you tenderly," Nicholas wrote to Franz Joseph, "and tell you that my friendship for you is and will be unalterable and that it is deep in my soul, that I am for life, my very dear friend, your faithful and devoted brother, friend and ally."⁴⁵ To his counselors, the tsar maintained that Austria's failure to guarantee its neutrality and side openly with Russia should be partly excused by circumstances. "It is difficult for Austria," he noted, "it has a lot of worries regarding Italy and Hungary; only this can be an excuse."⁴⁶ Further, according to the Russian understanding even in November, "Austria was on friendly terms with us . . . nobody could assume that it could possibly be against us."⁴⁷

Meanwhile, on 21 November, Austria agreed to join the West in requiring Russia to acquiesce to all of Turkey's conditions for ending the crisis. British foreign minister Lord Clarendon admitted, "I own I had not expected such a complete assent." For his part, Henry Cowley, British ambassador to France, argued that Austria could not be sincere in her solidarity with the West because she had asked for almost nothing from the West in return. In particular, Austria might have asked for Anglo-French assistance in Italy.⁴⁸ In order to further alienate Austria and Russia, the French then published the protocol that resulted from Austria's acquiescence for all the world to see.⁴⁹ In response, Russia attempted to get Buol replaced as foreign minister and warned Franz Joseph that his current actions would determine Austro-Russian relations for his entire reign.⁵⁰

The tsar still hoped for an understanding with Austria, however, and he made a significant proposal. He was willing to offer joint protectorates over Balkan nations and promised to guarantee Austria against revolution and attack from the West.⁵¹ Following an angry exchange between the two sovereigns at the end of January 1854, Russia renewed its previous offer of cooperation in the Balkans with additional incentives and, importantly, a

⁴⁴ Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 281–83; Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 69, 74–86; Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 65–82.

⁴⁵ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1991), 131.

⁴⁶ Shcherbatov, *General-fel'dmarshal kniaz Paskevich*, 77.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁸ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 107–9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

promise not to cross the Danube in return for a guarantee of Austrian neutrality. Austria declined the Russian offer and instead moved 30,000 troops into Transylvania, which menaced Russian troops in the principalities.⁵²

The Russians understood that the Austrian refusal was highly significant. The tsar's close adviser, Field Marshall Ivan Paskevich, believed that the latest Russian offers of an understanding with Austria had "destroyed all the misgivings of Austria [related to] the Serbs and other Christians," and, he continued, "it was precisely these misgivings that gave rise to the hostile [Austrian] plans against us."⁵³ The Russians drew the correct inference that Austria was forming a league with the Western powers. Responding to these moves by Austria, the tsar wrote to Franz Joseph that it was "monstrous nonsense" for Austria to consider attacking the country that had given it, "a tribute of blood [in 1849]."⁵⁴

The Austrian refusal of this proposal precipitated the beginning of the shift in Russian policy. The Russians now referred to the Austrian alignment as a "sham union" and began to search for others. Since Prussia had been willing to accept the tsar's proposals in return for continued Prussian support, the Russians agreed to look favorably on Prussian attempts to unify Germany. Russia also attempted, unsuccessfully, to enter into alliance with one of the belligerents, France, which would have led directly to the loss of Italy for Austria.⁵⁵ Thus, this already represented a profound diplomatic shift. Russia became willing to abandon Austria, its closest ally of several decades, in favor of France, historically one of Russia's principal adversaries. Russia had not yet settled on active hostility toward Austria, however, and at this stage, a change in the Austrian policy would immediately have renewed the relationship.

In the early months of 1854, having failed to prevent the coming of war, Austria had to decide whether to assist one of the sides. Believing that Russia now intended to break up the Ottoman Empire, that Russian power was a menace to Austria, that the Western powers would incite revolution in Italy if Austria did not cooperate with them, and that Austria's great power status required demonstrating that she was not dependent on Russia, Austria began a series of actions that favored the Western side. A few days before the Anglo-French declaration of war, Austria again increased its level of mobilization against Russia.⁵⁶ The Austrian mobilization was itself a decisive factor in the Crimean War. The Russians were forced to keep 200,000 troops or two-fifths of their army away from the fighting in the Crimea in case the

⁵² Ibid., 149; Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 329–30; Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 101-2.

⁵³ Shcherbatov, *General-fel'dmarsbal kniaz' Paskevich*, 113.

⁵⁴ Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 331.

⁵⁵ Evgeniĭ Viktorovich Tarle, *Krymskaia voĭna* (Moscow, 1950), 553; Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 152; Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 332.

⁵⁶ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 106, 112-16; Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 331.

Austrians attacked. The lack of a guarantee of neutrality had direct effects on Russian tactics, especially in preventing Russia from profiting from its military successes against Turkey by seizing Silistria. According to Russian military plans, the Silistrian invasion would commence as soon as Austria agreed to remain neutral.⁵⁷ In May, the Russians worried about losing one-quarter to one-third of their army due to an Austrian attack on their flank unless Russia repositioned its troops in the principalities.⁵⁸ These were tense times for Russia as it awaited word from Austria.

In spite of all this, Russia still held out hope that it and Austria would come to terms. The tsar wrote, "Everything depends on Austria's disposition. If it improves, then our situation will be much easier."⁵⁹ Then, in April, the Russians learned that the "most dangerous" had happened: Austria had signed a protocol with France and England in order to force Russia to leave the principalities. On 3 June, Austria communicated its decisive step to Russia. It sent an ultimatum to Russia (known as Austria's "summons"). If Russia did not evacuate the principalities, Austria would join Russia's enemies.⁶⁰

When Russia tried to soften the blow by negotiating (offering a partial evacuation or even a full evacuation that would not be directly connected to an ultimatum, as well as a commitment to defend Austria's southern frontier), Austria flatly refused any discussion. Buol had already promised the Western powers not to admit any compromise with Russia.⁶¹ In internal discussions, the Russians rejected Austria's pleas that her actions were forced by circumstances. Compelled to abandon his primary war aim—the siege of Silistria—because of the Austrian position, the tsar wrote that Austria tried to explain its behavior "by blaming it on the English and French, as if it were subject to them."⁶²

This constituted a decisive break. The tsar and other key figures were furious and spoke of punishing Austria's treachery and "shameless ingratitude."⁶³ In June, the Austrian ambassador to Russia wrote to Buol that it was beneath Austrian dignity to pay any attention to all the slanders made against Austria by Russia. The sentiments of the Russians for Austria, he wrote, "are those of a protector for its protégé, without regard for the equality of their positions as European powers." A month later, on 6 July 1854, the tsar told the Austrian ambassador that "[Franz Joseph] had forgotten what [Nicholas] had done for him, and that he was profoundly pained and wounded at the preparations for war against his armies being made in Austria, . . . that the

⁵⁷ Shcherbatov, *General-fel'dmarshal kniaz' Paskevich*, 101, 104, 113, 118–25, 142.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 121–22.

⁶⁰ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 120.

⁶¹ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 176.

⁶² Shcherbatov, *General-fel'dmarshal kniaz' Paskevich*, 198.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 168, 189; Andreï Medardovich Zaionchkovskiï, *Vostochnaïa voïna v svïazi s sovremennoï eï politicheskoï obstanovki* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 342.

confidence that had existed between the two sovereigns for the well being of their empires was destroyed, the same intimate rapport would not be able to exist anymore.”⁶⁴ The tsar spoke similarly of Austria to other powers, including Prussia. The view of Prince Gorchakov, Russia’s future chancellor, was that Russia should accept the terms of the Austrian summons because “in three years Russia will have reconstituted its forces and will be able to have its revenge on this deceitful government, which called for the dismemberment of Russia.”⁶⁵ Another diplomat presciently remarked that it would be “easier [for Russia] to pardon its enemies than its so-called friends.”⁶⁶ All of Europe appreciated, as Seymour wrote to Clarendon, that “between Austria and Russia a great gulf has been fixed.”⁶⁷

The tsar’s unmeasured declarations assured the Austrians of Russia’s enmity. Knowledge of enmity became common, creating a breach in relations that would have been almost impossible to repair. Austria had alienated its closest ally without acquiring any security guarantees or other concessions from the West. Russia was humiliated, but its withdrawal from the principalities had actually strengthened its military position.⁶⁸ Austria wished to see Russia weakened, and the war ended quickly before Russia could incite revolution in European Turkey. But the summons actually worked contrary to Austria’s key strategic objectives: it provoked Russian hostility without weakening her in the long term. Buol gambled that cooperation with France and Britain would win their friendship, but it did not. In presenting the summons to Russia, as Rich argues, the Austrians and Buol in particular, “lost their sense of balance and judgment.”⁶⁹

Here, we see the self-reinforcing process by which the close relationship of the countries became one of open hostility. With each Austrian action, Russian resentment grew; each time Austria understood Russia’s reaction, Austria’s increased fear of Russia and of isolation in Europe pushed it further away from Russia, again increasing Russian resentment, and so on.⁷⁰ Thus, by 18 July, aware that Russia would now oppose Austria at any opportunity, Austria and the West were agreed on limiting Russian power in the Black

⁶⁴ W. E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System: 1855–1871* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1963), 58; Barbara Jelavich *Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 131; W. E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question: 1848–71* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 65.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Shcherbatov, *General-fel’dmarsbal kniaz’ Paskevich*, 194; Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 189–97.

⁶⁹ Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 112.

⁷⁰ See Buol to Prokesch, 16 September 1854, in Baumgart, *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs Serie I*; Bernhard Unckel, *Oesterreich und der Krimkrieg: Studien zur Politik der Donaumonarchie in den Jahren 1852–1856* (Luebeck, Germany: Matthiesen, 1969), 180–86.

Sea.⁷¹ As Russian troops moved out of the principalities, Austrian troops moved in.⁷² Three days after the Russian evacuation, Austria presented Russia with the Western demands for a basis for negotiations to end the war. Austria supported the unconditional acceptance of these demands, known as the “Four Points.” Russia was asked to (1) renounce any claim to protectorate rights over the principalities and Serbia, (2) give up its influence over the mouth of the Danube, (3) agree to the limitation of its power in the Black Sea, and (4) renounce its protectorate over the Orthodox subjects of Turkey.⁷³

Coming only days after the Russian concession in the face of the previous Austrian ultimatum, these new demands were particularly galling to Russia. In spite of the obvious impolicy of adding another to the list of Russia’s enemies, the tsar initially considered declaring war on Austria.⁷⁴ Once again taking account of the level of Russian hostility, Austria then resolved to move still closer to the West. In September, Austria proposed a formal alliance to Britain and France. British prime minister Lord Aberdeen, not yet fully comprehending the breach between Russia and Austria that had already occurred, was disappointed that Austria did not more strongly restrain Britain’s own far-reaching war aims.⁷⁵ In October, Austria again increased its level of mobilization.⁷⁶ In November, expressing a shift in Russian policy that would have profound consequences on world history, the tsar and his advisers discussed their hope that Prussia would “seize the political helm of Germany.”⁷⁷

Then, on 2 December, only four days after Russia again conceded unconditionally to Austria’s demands, this time on the Four Points, Austria and the Western powers announced the formation of a new formal alliance.⁷⁸ In a secret provision, Austria agreed to join the war against Russia if peace negotiations failed. The French charge d’affaires at Constantinople wrote, “Politically and militarily, the treaty of 2 December overturns everything and reveals a new horizon. [It has] mortally wounded the Holy Alliance and given it a first-class funeral.”⁷⁹ The tsar said that Austrian “treachery has exceeded

⁷¹ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 341.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 189; Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 339.

⁷³ Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straights Question*, 341–42; Andrew D. Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853–1856* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 88.

⁷⁴ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 200.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 215–16.

⁷⁶ Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, 63.

⁷⁷ Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini, Swiss adviser to the tsar, to Paskevich, memorandum, 10 November 1854, in Shcherbatov, *General-fel’dmarshal kniaz’ Paskevich*, 228–29.

⁷⁸ Buol indicated to Gorchakov that acceptance of the Four Points would result in reductions of Austrian troops on the Russian border and in Austrian neutrality, and Gorchakov believed Buol’s assurances. Curtis, *Russia’s Crimean War*, 350.

⁷⁹ Russia was informed of the public part of the alliance and believed it to be a significant signal. Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* 144; Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 230; Puryear, *Russia, and the Straights Question*, 350–54.

anything invented by an infernal Jesuit school. But God will punish them bitterly for this. *We'll wait for our time to come.*"⁸⁰

For most of the year that followed, negotiations between the powers continued but led nowhere. The reason was that Britain and France were unwilling to make peace because they had not yet achieved decisive military victories that would enable them to press severe peace terms on Russia and satisfy public opinion at home. This situation changed only with the fall of the Russian Black Sea port of Sebastopol in September 1855.

In December of that year, Austria presented a new ultimatum to Russia that ended the war. The terms were similar to the Four Points, but they insisted that warships be forbidden in the Black Sea (leaving Russia's coast undefended) and that Russia cede territory in Bessarabia. In favor of the ultimatum policy, Buol argued that "the terms would free Austria from Russian pressure in the Southeast, make the whole Danube virtually an Austrian stream, and thereby restore Austria's prestige and influence in Germany."⁸¹ Understanding the threat that a hostile Russia posed to Austrian interests at this stage in the evolution of the relationship, contemporary observers found the Austrian policy unsurprising.⁸²

The Russians announced a "pure and simple acceptance" of the ultimatum, but it was the concessions to Austria that they resented more than those to the actual belligerents. The Russian representative to the conference, Count Orlov, was ordered to resist the Bessarabian cession most strongly. Orlov's instructions were to convince Buol with the following argument (which summarizes in part this article's argument):

The policy followed by the Austrian cabinet since the beginning of the current crisis gave rise to extreme irritation in Russia. It is not easy to forgive a friend who showed ingratitude and betrayed you. It is not in Austria's interests that this feeling become stronger, that this hostility continue: Austria might feel it in those cases that can easily arise during such an agitated state of Europe. The only means at Austria's disposal is to redress the harm caused to us by making concessions in the case of Bessarabia, and renouncing the bad demarcation invented by [Austria].⁸³

Russian hostility was certainly convincing, but the Austrians did not believe that a concession at this point would significantly alleviate it. Austria therefore insisted on the more defensible border that the Bessarabian cession would provide.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Shcherbatov, General-fel'dmarshal *kniáz* Paskevich, 250 (emphasis added).

⁸¹ Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*, 315.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 336–38.

⁸³ Tarle, *Krymskaia voïna*, 555.

⁸⁴ For an account of the Russian perspective on the conference and Orlov's diagnosis of Buol's isolation and regret for a policy that "betrayed the past," see Krasnyi Arkhiv, "K istorii parizhskogo mira 1856 g," *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 75 (1936).

To summarize, this analysis of the evolution of the Austro-Russian relationship during the Crimean War demonstrates several points. First, the sources of Russian irritation were Austria's diplomatic threats and the concentration of troops on the border. Second, Russian reactions convinced Austria of Russia's likely future hostility and thereby impelled Austria to seek closer relations with Russia's enemies. Third, in internal discussions and overtures to third powers, the Russians discussed specific foreign policy reorientations that would adversely affect Austria.

In order to demonstrate that this reorientation was lasting and had salient long-term effects, we shall now examine Russian policy toward Austria in similar situations before and after the Crimean War. In 1850 and 1866, as well as in 1849 and 1867, international crises that were remarkably similar developed. Russian policy, however, was not, nor did the Russians ever again offer Austria the same level of cooperation in the Balkans. Alternative explanations of particular policy shifts are considered where relevant.

COOPERATION IN THE BALKANS BEFORE AND AFTER THE CRIMEAN WAR

As has already been mentioned, in the decades before the Crimean War, Russia was intent on cooperating with Austria in the Balkans. In 1844, the tsar told the Austrian ambassador that he would "never cross the Danube . . . and everything between this river and the Adriatic ought to be yours." Austria, he said, must be the heir to European Turkey and also occupy Constantinople, which would require "a bridgehead in Asia; that goes without saying."⁸⁵

Metternich and the Austrian government worried that Nicholas intended to bring about the fall of Turkey in order to put these plans into effect, that the plan was impracticable and would lead to a major war with the Western powers, and that the tsar might not hold to the agreement once Turkey had fallen. Not wanting to offend Nicholas, Metternich preferred to give no response at all, but eventually he informed Berlin that Austria had no wish for additional territory, that such a plan "would inevitably cause a tremendous political upheaval in Europe," and that therefore the tsar's proposal was "valueless."⁸⁶ Only after this rebuff did Nicholas begin in-depth talks with England on a joint contingency plan in the event of Turkey's fall.⁸⁷

Just how genuine these sweeping Russian proposals were is hard to know because the Austrians did not pursue them. In addition to the Austrians,

⁸⁵ Bolsover, "Nicholas I and the Partition of Turkey", 127–28, 131–34; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 112.

⁸⁶ Bolsover, "Nicholas I and the Partition of Turkey," 129.

⁸⁷ Puryear, *Russia, and the Straights Question*, chap. 1. Russia began talks with England shortly after broaching the subject with Austria, but had Russian overtures received a different response from Austria, any concessions to England would have been limited by prior understandings with Austria.

some Russians had doubts the tsar meant what he said. Count Colloredo, the Austrian minister to Britain, thought the tsar wished to be able to say that Russia's actions after the collapse were for the benefit of another power, when in fact he intended to set up a new Orthodox, Slavic state that Russia would dominate.⁸⁸ However, even after the Austrian rebuff made it all the more necessary that any partition compensate France or Britain, or both, Nicholas remained constant in his wish that a large piece of territory be given to Austria. In 1852, a year before the start of hostilities in the Crimean War, the tsar informed his advisers that upon the breakup of Turkey, Austria should be given territory that would at least have encompassed Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania.⁸⁹

Following the war, such offers of cooperation were never renewed. For twenty years, no major attempts at cooperation were made that were comparable to those made before the Crimean War.⁹⁰ In 1860–1, Russia sought to form a new alignment of Russia, France, and Prussia.⁹¹ In 1876, when Russia was again contemplating war with Turkey, it was again willing to make concessions to Austrian interests in the Balkans to win Austrian neutrality. Russia's offers were much more limited in scale, however, and the concessions Russia made in the end were done begrudgingly. (The two countries eventually agreed that Austria would be allowed to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina in return for a guarantee of neutrality.) Further, when Austria initially refused to guarantee its neutrality, Russia contemplated war against Austria as a first step and sounded Germany on what its position would be in such an eventuality. In the early stages of the Crimean crisis, initiating a war against Austria, Russia's closest ally, was not within the remotest realms of Russian consideration.⁹² When Russia did finally reenter a significant alliance with Austria in 1881, it was only in order to convince Bismarck to enter into alliance with Russia, and the arrangement did not last long.⁹³

⁸⁸ Bolsover, "Nicholas I and the Partition of Turkey," 134–35.

⁸⁹ The tsar desired that Serbia and Bulgaria be independent, Russia acquire the principalities and part of Bulgaria, Austria receive the littoral of the archipelago and the Adriatic, Britain be compensated with Egypt and perhaps Cyprus and Rhodes, Crete go to France, and Greece acquire the islands of the archipelago. *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹⁰ In 1863, when war between Russia and the Western powers over Poland appeared possible, Russia was willing to seek a limited rapprochement with Austria, but nothing on the scale of the pre-Crimean War cooperative proposals was ever contemplated again. Robert H. Lord, "Bismarck and Russia in 1863," *American Historical Review* 29, no. 1 (1923): 24–48.

⁹¹ Franco Valsecchi, "European Diplomacy and the Expedition of the Thousand: The Conservative Powers," in *A Century of Conflict, 1850–1950: Essays for A.J.P. Taylor*, ed. Martin Gilbert (London: H. Hamilton, 1966), 56–68.

⁹² For a fuller description of the events of 1876, see Robert F. Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2007).

⁹³ Saburov, *The Saburov Memoirs*.

RUSSIAN RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION IN AUSTRIA:
THE CASES OF ITALY AND HUNGARY

Following the Crimean War, Russia sought a direct means of repaying Austria. Nearest to hand was the independence movement in Italy, which had French support. Although in all its foreign policy before and after, Russia had resisted "the revolution," especially when the impetus originated in France; in this instance, Russia would make an exception.

The Russians immediately set about establishing good relations with Sardinia and France, a radical break from previous Russian foreign policy. The Russian ambassador told the Sardinian prime minister, Count Camillo di Cavour, "Our two countries must be good friends because they don't have interests that divide them, and they have common grudges that bring them together."⁹⁴ Then, in 1858, Russia entered negotiations with France to cooperate in the impending war between Sardinia and Austria that France planned to join. Russia was willing to concentrate sufficient forces on the Austrian border to occupy 150,000 Austrian troops and press other powers to remain neutral, and it would have been willing to do more in return for French support in repealing the Bessarabian cession or the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. In the course of negotiations, Tsar Alexander II told the French he would not intervene militarily but would rather employ "the tactic followed by Austria during the Crimean war."⁹⁵

France and Russia were never able to come to agreement on the points that would have led to the most intimate relations, but a vague secret agreement was signed on 3 March 1859 in which Russia agreed to benevolent neutrality toward France and to exert pressure on neutral states on France's behalf in the event of a Franco-Austrian war. Russia also led France to expect a troop demonstration that would tie down Austrian troops in Galicia. With these assurances, France and Sardinia fought the Italian War in which Austria lost the northern Italian province of Lombardy.⁹⁶

During the war itself, neutral powers worried about Napoleon III's schemes for redrawing the European map and considered intervention on behalf of Austria. When German states, possibly including Prussia, appeared on the verge of offering armed assistance to Austria, the Russian foreign minister sent a circular to Russian representatives at these courts arguing that it would be unwise to take up arms against France. The French expressed their gratitude, and it may well be true that the war could not have been kept localized without the role played by Russian diplomacy. The Russians also went further. Even though Russia had not explicitly agreed to the

⁹⁴ Mosse, *Rise and Fall of the Crimean System*, 106.

⁹⁵ G. J. Thurston, "The Italian War of 1859 and the Reorientation of Russian Foreign Policy," *The Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (1977): 128; Mosse, *Rise and Fall of the Crimean System*, 119–21.

⁹⁶ Thurston, "The Italian War."

military demonstration the French had sought, Foreign Minister Gorchakov inquired about moving 300,000 troops from the Caucasus to the Austrian frontier. Although the troops were slow to arrive, they did prevent Austria from transferring forces to the front, at least for some time.⁹⁷

It is true that Russia wished to focus on internal reforms following the Crimean War, but this focus is not the whole or even the main part of the explanation for Russia's Austria policy in this case and subsequently. The hostility in Russia was still very much felt at the time of the Italian War. As Bismarck, then ambassador to St. Petersburg, wrote to his wife, "No mangy dog takes a bit of meat from [the Austrians] . . . the hate is without measure and exceeds all my expectations . . . The whole Russian policy seems to have no other thought except how one brings about the demise of Austria. Even the calm and gentle Tsar is filled with fire and rage when he speaks of Austria."⁹⁸ Further, the focus on domestic reform cannot explain Russia's willingness to concentrate forces on the Austrian border. Nor can the domestic focus explanation account for the tsar's response to the suggestion by other powers that Austria be compensated for its loss with territory in the Balkans. He wrote on a memorandum that this would be "inadmissible up to war."⁹⁹ Russia's willingness to support revolution, contrary to its inclination in every other instance, shows that she was willing to compromise other policy objectives in order to strike a blow at Austria.

Even after the loss of Northern Italy, all was not forgiven; Russian policy remained hostile with tangible consequences. Some in Russia favored closer relations with Austria, but this was in fact only a means of forcing France to pay a price for Russian friendship. In 1860, the Russian foreign minister told Bismarck, "I promise you that with respect to an intimate relationship with Austria, I am a 'scalded cat'; I will leave you alone there; arrange things as you will be able."¹⁰⁰

The Russian policy on revolution in Hungary was similarly affected by Austrian actions during the Crimean War. In 1848, the year of revolutions, and 1849, there were uprisings all over the Austrian Empire, in Hungary, Italy, Prague, and even Vienna. The Hungarian rebellion proved particularly difficult to suppress; it also presented a threat to the empire itself and, because of the deals the Austrian monarchy might be forced to make with other powers, to the empire's position in Germany.¹⁰¹ The strains of the

⁹⁷ Thurston, "The Italian War," 136–39, 143.

⁹⁸ Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, 84.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰¹ The price for the assistance of twenty thousand to thirty thousand Prussian troops, for instance, was Austria's assent to military alliance between Prussia and the other German states. Austria refused. Istvan Deák, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and Hungarians, 1848–1849* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 298. Note that among the tsar's reasons for intervention was the wish that Austria again play its traditional role of restraining Prussian ambitions to unify Germany. For a list of considerations the tsar took

Hungarian revolt had exposed deficiencies in Habsburg emperor Ferdinand's ability to lead the empire, and he was convinced to resign in favor of his 18-year-old nephew, Franz Joseph.

When he first heard news of the revolution in Hungary, Tsar Nicholas I ordered the partial mobilization of his army and declined to send immediate aid to Austria only because of his dissatisfaction with Austria's accommodation of revolutionary demands.¹⁰² In April 1849, a resounding defeat of the Habsburg forces appeared so likely that Franz Joseph was forced to send a personal appeal to Nicholas for aid. When the Russians agreed, Austrians literally wept for joy, and Franz Joseph traveled to Warsaw where he knelt on one knee to kiss Nicholas's hand.¹⁰³

Russian assistance came on a grand scale. The Russians placed a division of Russian troops under Austrian control and sent into Hungary a separate force of 150,000 to 200,000 troops, larger than the entire Austrian force in the region. The combined forces of the two empires crushed the Hungarians. When the major part of the Hungarian army surrendered to the Russian army, in defiance of the Austrians, the Russians marched the defeated Hungarians over to the Austrian camp.¹⁰⁴

Immediately after the Crimean War, Gorchakov and other Russian elites emphasized that while the spread of revolution from Austria to Russia was a danger, Russia would not put down revolutions in Austria as it had before. Gorchakov communicated the Russian position explicitly to the French before the Italian War: "If reverses in Italy should bring about the inversion of

into account, see Uwe Liskowski, "Rußland und die Revolution von 1848/49" in *1848/49—Revolutionen in Ostmitteleuropa: Vorträge der Tagung des Collegium Carolinum in Bad Wiessee vom 30. November bis 1. Dezember 1990*, eds. Rudolf Jaworski and Robert Luft (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1996), 365–66.

¹⁰² For a discussion of other aspects of the tsar's thinking, see *Ibid.*, 362.

¹⁰³ Deák, *The Lawful Revolution*, 289. Part of the reason the tsar decided to aid Austria was the presence of Polish revolutionaries among the Hungarian troops. The major reasons for the Russian actions, however, were the tsar's fear of the spread of liberal revolution and Russia's close relationship with Austria. For a detailed account of the sources of Russian diplomacy during the period, see Erzsebet Andics, *Das Bündnis Habsburg-Romanov. Vorgeschichte der zaristischen Intervention in Ungarn im Jahre 1849* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963). Note that there were many internal issues to occupy the tsar's attention at this time. Among these were a cholera epidemic that killed almost 750,000, near famine, drought, economic crisis, and revolution in Poland. More than in other periods, Russia had reason to avoid involvement in external affairs. Liskowski, "Rußland und die Revolution," 347–50. Among the reasons Russian elites gave for the intervention at the time was fear of follow-on revolutions in Poland and elsewhere. See Revekka Abramovna Averbukh, *Тsarская интервенция в бор'бе с венгерской революцией, 1848–1849* (Moscow: Gos. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izd-vo, 1935), 31–72.

¹⁰⁴ Jelavich, *The Habsburg Empire*, 63–6; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 110–1; Deák, *The Lawful Revolution*, 285–337. While Austria was grateful for Russian aid, Buol and others saw yet another cause to fear Russian dominance of the region. See Waltraud Heindl, *Graf Buol-Schauenstein in St. Petersburg und London, 1848–1852: Zur Genesis des Antagonismus zwischen Österreich und Russland. Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, vol. 9 (Vienna: Hermann Bohlaus Nachf., 1970). Russia also aided Turkey in suppressing revolts at this time. This assistance, however, resulted in a prolonged occupation of the principalities and Russia's acquiring protectorate rights over them rather than the speedy withdrawal of Russian troops as in the Austrian case.

the state of affairs in Hungary, we would not contest the faits accomplis."¹⁰⁵ Thus, when Austria again faced revolution in Hungary, no appeal to Russia for aid was possible.

In 1866–7, following the defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866, Hungarians pressed their demands for autonomy anew. Franz Joseph, meanwhile, was bent on taking up once again the contest with Prussia for influence in Germany. With no help available from Russia, the one chance for an active Austrian foreign policy and a guarantee of preservation for the empire was an agreement with the Magyars.¹⁰⁶ Thus, Franz Joseph was forced to compromise: the Habsburgs agreed to share power with Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich.¹⁰⁷

RUSSIAN POLICY ON AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN RIVALRY IN GERMANY

In 1849 and 1850, Prussia and Austria were involved in an intense struggle for control of Germany that appeared likely to lead to war. Both sides appealed to Russia, which, more than any other power, held the balance between them. As the Prussian king told the Russian ambassador, "The moment is come [for a decision] by the [Russian] Emperor between Austria and me."¹⁰⁸

In the latter half of 1850, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein and the German state of Hesse were at the center of the Austro-Prussian rivalry.¹⁰⁹ Both Austria and Prussia made concessions to Russian policy objectives in order to win Russian support, but Austria was more adept at adopting anti-revolutionary postures favored by the tsar. Although Prussia withdrew its troops from Holstein, the Prussian king was unwilling to allow troops of the Austrian-inspired Confederate Diet to suppress revolutionary movements in Holstein and Hesse.¹¹⁰ Since the Austrian plans of action in those regions therefore afforded somewhat nearer prospects for the restoration of order in the provinces on a conservative basis, Austrian policy maintained a slight

¹⁰⁵ B. H. Sumner, "The Secret Franco-Russian Treaty of 3 March 1859," *The English Historical Review* 48, no. 189 (1933): 74, 82; Thurston, "The Italian War," 139.

¹⁰⁶ Robert W. Seton-Watson, "The Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 19, no. 53/54 (1939–40): 124–28. For an account of Russia foreign policy during the period, see Dietrich Beyrau, *Russische Orientpolitik und die Entstehung des deutschen Kaiserreiches 1866–1870/71* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 1974).

¹⁰⁷ One result, as the Russians would have predicted, was that Hungarian influence made Austrian policy still more hostile to Russia. Thus, rather than assist Austria, Russia was willing to tolerate developments that ran contrary to important state interests.

¹⁰⁸ Mosse, *The European Powers*, 33. For a review of alterations in Prussian and Austrian policies toward the other over time, see Roy A. Austensen, "The Making of Austria's Prussian Policy, 1848–1852," *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1980): 861–76.

¹⁰⁹ For an account of the conflict in detail, see Dietrich Bohme *Deutschlands Weg Zur Grossmacht* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1966); Heinrich von Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire by William I*, vol. 1–2 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

¹¹⁰ Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, 369–492.

edge in the competition for Russian favor. Even before these issues came to the fore, however, Russia had decided on at least a certain level of support for Austria. With respect to relations in Germany, Russian foreign minister Nesselrode wrote, "We cannot see the Austrian monarchy collapse; this is a vital question for us. . . . It is in our interest to aid her in the very difficult situations that have already arisen."¹¹¹

Even though Russia protested its evenhandedness, the real support that Russia gave to Austria decisively impacted the course of the crisis and resulted in Prussia abandoning its bid for a predominant position in Germany, for the time being. Nesselrode told the Prussian representative, Count Brandenburg, that if Prussia insisted on its position and went to war with Austria, Prussia would go to war with Russia as well.¹¹² When it appeared Prussia might declare war, Russia began military preparations in support of Austria on 28 October 1850. These were only canceled on 12 November, when Prussia assured Russia of its pacific intentions. In response to an aggressive speech on the part of the Prussian king a week later, however, Russia activated four army corps in Poland near the German border.¹¹³

The Austrians were so emboldened by Russian support that they delivered an ultimatum to Berlin at the end of November. This would have resulted in war had not Austria postponed its advance (probably as a result of the ambiguous attitude of Britain and France). Austria and Prussia agreed at Olmuetz on a compromise favorable to Austria that ended the crisis and became known as the Prussian "humiliation at Olmuetz." The Russian ambassador to Austria, Baron von Meyendorff, wrote to his brother that "it is a result of the legitimate influence of our Emperor that Germany and Europe are at peace Our intervention was not just a good action, but a good calculation."¹¹⁴

In 1865–6, a strikingly similar struggle for control in Germany occurred. Once again, the status of the duchies was at stake. Prussia and its new minister president, Otto von Bismarck, were insisting on a sort of "independence"

¹¹¹ Mosse, *The European Powers*, 13–37.

¹¹² Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, vol. 2, 21, 30. For earlier statements of support for Austria, see, for instance, Liszkowski, "Rußland und die Revolution," 350–58.

¹¹³ Mosse, *The European Powers*, 36; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History* (New York: Routledge), chap. 5.

¹¹⁴ Jelavich, *The Habsburg Empire*, 67; Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, vol. 2, 3–82; Mosse, *The European Powers*, 39–40. For a discussion of the French role in the crisis, see Lawrence C. Jennings "French Diplomacy and the First Schleswig-Holstein Crisis," *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 2 (1970): 204–25. The French sided strongly with Denmark in 1848, seeing in Schleswig-Holstein a parallel to Alsace-Lorraine, but the new French government played a lesser role in the events of 1850. For an analysis of the British view of these events, see William J. Orr, "British Diplomacy and the German Problem, 1848–1850," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 10, no. 3 (1978): 209–36. For the view that, following Russian support, Austrian restraint rather than uncertainty about the positions of the powers led to peace, see Austensen, "Austria and the 'Struggle for Supremacy in Germany,'" 206; Austensen, "The Making of Austria's Prussian Policy, 1848–1852," *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1984): 861–76.

for Schleswig and Holstein that amounted to a virtual annexation by Prussia. Once again, Austria turned to Russia for assistance.¹¹⁵

The Austrian ambassador's account of Gorchakov's reply was recorded as follows: "Russia," continued [Gorchakov] in a dramatic way, "only speaks when she has the will and the means to make herself heard. She has counseled prudence and moderation to both sides; today she maintains no hope that such counsels are listened to. What remains to Russia, but to await events?" The Austrian ambassador responded that Russia had acted differently in 1850 "and that situation bore a striking resemblance to what is happening at present." He said Gorchakov agreed that the situations were similar "but added that what the Emperor Nicholas had done then, the Emperor Alexander would no longer do. First of all, the circumstances are no longer the same and the Emperor has renounced the habit of his father of personally intervening in diplomatic affairs." Russia would remain entirely neutral, Gorchakov concluded.¹¹⁶

Russia was genuine in her desire for Prussia and Austria to avoid war, but its policy had clearly changed markedly from that of 1850. The earnest desire to avoid war resulted from the tsar's view that these countries were "a dam against the floods of revolution."¹¹⁷ Russia was also surprised, along with the rest of Europe, at the speed and decisiveness of the Prussian victory. Had such a victory been foreseen, it is impossible to say how Russian policy would have been altered. The key point, however, is that Russia was no longer willing to do the services for Austria after the Crimean War that it was willing to do before. The health of the Austrian Empire was no longer considered a "vital" interest as it was in 1849, and by 1879, Russia could tell Bismarck that Austria's continued existence as a great power was not "indispensable" to Russian security.¹¹⁸

Austrian behavior during the Crimean War was not the only factor in producing this change, but it was the most important. The argument that the shift in Russian policy was rooted primarily in a desire to concentrate on internal reforms after the Crimean War, unconvincing in 1859 as we have seen, is even less plausible in 1866. Russia certainly had the ability to intervene had it wished to and showed itself ready to go to war in other situations when the internal reform explanation should also have held. In fact, at the time of the Austro-Prussian War, 200,000 Russian troops were

¹¹⁵ On the 1864 Schleswig-Holstein crisis that, as in 1850, precipitated the tensions between Austria and Prussia, see Lawrence D. Steefel, *The Schleswig-Holstein Question* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932); Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 237–67; Stacie Goddard, "When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (2008): 110–42. For a detailed history of the posturing of the various sides, see Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, vol. 4.

¹¹⁶ Mosse, *The European Powers*, 224.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹¹⁸ Saburov, *The Saburov Memoir*, 820.

involved in a war with Britain's Indian Army for control of Central and South Asia.¹¹⁹ Four years later, Russia was willing to send 300,000 troops to the Austrian border to prevent Austria's entry into the Franco-Prussian War.¹²⁰

Differences in specific actions and policy positions of the Austrian and Prussian governments in the two crises also cannot explain the change in Russia's attitude. In 1850, differences in Austrian and Prussian objectives were in fact "exceedingly slight." With respect to Hesse, for instance, the sides disagreed about whether the Confederate Diet or Prussia should assist Austria in bringing about the very same outcome, namely, the suppression of the uprisings there.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the form of the settlement that was largely imposed by Russia was a substantial victory for Austrian influence in Germany. In 1866, as we have seen, Prussia was more aggressive in its pursuit of expanded influence in Northern Germany, and Austria's position was closer to the status quo. There is no reason whatever to suppose that Austria's decreased ambitions relative to Prussia's, in the second crisis, resulted in a decrease of Russian support for Austria over Prussia.

Besides Austrian actions during the Crimean War, the most significant factors that partially explain the change in Russian policy were, of course, the interim policies of Prussia. First, as discussed above, during the Crimean War, Prussia secured a promise of Russian support in the struggle for control of Germany in return for resisting Austrian policy at the time. Second, Prussia gained standing in Russian eyes through its cooperation in suppressing the Polish revolt of 1862–3, even in the face of significant danger when Britain and France threatened to intervene militarily on behalf of the Poles.¹²² In Russian eyes, Prussia's response to this Western pressure must have contrasted sharply with Austria's response ten years earlier. To the extent that these actions on the part of Prussia were important in explaining the Russian policy shift, this serves to reinforce the central argument of this article. By declining to take a threatening posture against Russia in the Crimean War and in 1862–3, Prussia incurred Russian favor, leading to substantial material benefits in a separate crisis years later.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Gregory Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War: Austria's War with Prussia and Italy in 1866* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 283.

¹²⁰ See Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy" (PhD diss.), chap. 3.

¹²¹ Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, vol. 2, 25.

¹²² Lord, "Bismark and Russia"; Mosse, *The European Powers*, 114.

¹²³ Goddard, in "When Right Makes Might," argues that Prussia's rhetorical justification for its actions was a key factor in preventing other countries from balancing against it in the 1864 Schleswig-Holstein crisis and in later expansions of Prussian influence. There is no doubt that this is true, and, in particular, it is probable that Prussia's framing of its position as most in accord with conservative principles was a significant consideration for the tsar. There is no evidence, however, that this explains the shift in the Russian-German policy from a bias toward Austria to a bias in favor of Prussia. In 1850, Count Brandenburg was as skilled as later Prussians in representing his country's case in terms that would appeal to the tsar. See Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, vol. 1, 3–38.

For their part, Russian diplomats continued to stress the actions of Prussia and Austria during the Crimean War in understanding the rise of Germany. The Russian general and statesman Alexander Jomini wrote to Nicholas de Giers, a future Russian foreign minister, "Europe being broken up by the foolish Crimean War, that great Germany had to be made either by Prussia or by Austria. Between the two our choice could not be in doubt."¹²⁴ Gorchakov's view was that Prussia would not have "dreamt" of unifying Germany between 1866 and 1871 without "the profound disturbances caused by the Crimean War." "Probably no lesson so striking and so rapid," he wrote, "was ever taught by the connection between events and the logic of history."¹²⁵

GENERALITY OF THE FINDINGS

Although the long-run effects of threat making are difficult to disentangle from other sources of state foreign policies, in many instances, there is evidence that the three mechanisms that lead to long-term negative consequences for state relations are at work. Consider, for instance, the foreign policy calculus that resulted in the First World War. The Mansion House speech given by David Lloyd George in 1911 during the Agadir crisis was a factor in convincing Germany that Britain and France were hostile to German interests and that Germany therefore needed to break its encirclement. Changed German perceptions of the level of British support for France persisted after the end of the crisis and affected the thinking of German strategists through the start of the First World War.¹²⁶ The sense that the world was watching as Russia backed down in the Balkan crises led to a perception in Russia that it could not back down again.¹²⁷ And, as we have seen, the Austro-Russian rivalry had its roots in Austrian threats made sixty years earlier. These were key elements of the causal nexus that produced the First World War. Thus, in this period, it is likely that each of the three mechanisms leading threats to have long-term consequences played a role.

Other threats that arguably had long-term negative impacts on state relations include the US threats to China in the Taiwan Strait crises; German

¹²⁴ Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 154.

¹²⁵ Mosse, *The European Powers*, 76.

¹²⁶ Keith Wilson, "The Agadir Crisis, the Mansion House Speech, and the Double-Edgedness of Agreements," *The Historical Journal* 15, no. 3 (1972): 513–32; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism: 1860–1914* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), chap. 22. British diplomats at the time understood this clearly. In one memorandum from 1912, Eyre Crowe wrote, "It was not unnatural that the German Government should turn upon England and should complain, and never cease complaining that it was English intervention which prevented them from getting the terms from France which they had every reason to expect they would obtain." See John F. V. Krieger, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, part 1, series F, vol. 13 (University Publications of America, 1989), 449.

¹²⁷ Leng, "When Will They Ever Learn?"; Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), chap. 9.

threats to Britain and France at Munich in 1938; and US-Soviet threats throughout the Cold War, for example, during the talks in Vienna in June 1961. Still today, it is likely that US-Russian relations are worse than they would be had the United States not employed tacit threats to force Russia to accept the eastward expansion of NATO following the Cold War. It is even reasonable to ask, for instance, whether Russia would have been as aggressive toward Georgia in 2008 had such threats to Russia not been made.

As discussed above, however, threats sometimes appear to have positive effects because states take steps to avoid the sorts of negative effects described here. Thus, when Russia saw that its behavior had increased the prospects that Russo-German relations would deteriorate further, it initiated alliance talks with Germany, leading to the signing of the Three Emperors' League in 1881. Similarly, the Fashoda crisis of 1898 may have helped to precipitate the entente between France and Britain.¹²⁸ It is even likely that the Cuban Missile Crisis led the sides to seek means to moderate the level of security competition between them.¹²⁹

Among the factors argued above to determine whether threats have negative, positive, or no long-term effects on state relations, the attractiveness of alternative alliance combinations consistent with a worsening of relations of the two states involved in a crisis is likely to be of particular importance. Thus, because Russia determined in 1881 that the German alignment was preferable to a realignment with France, Russia took steps to ensure that Russo-German relations improved. Following the Crimean War, by contrast, Russia was content to develop closer relations with Prussia to Austria's detriment.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

An implication of some models of crisis bargaining is that states should appear as tough (or resolved) as possible in their diplomatic relations; many would characterize the diplomatic philosophy of President George W. Bush's administration this way. The more public and pronounced the threat, the harder the table is pounded, and the longer and harsher the threatened punishment, the better deal a state can get for itself in the international arena. The case analysis above makes clear that this view is false and, indeed, dangerous. Aggressive behavior, and threat making in particular, not just power, creates perceptions that can be long lasting. It causes other states to adapt their security postures so that they stand a better chance of achieving

¹²⁸ Stephen R. Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Raprochement in Historical Perspective* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

¹²⁹ Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), chaps. 8 and 9.

their foreign policy objectives when an opportunity presents itself. Thus, the intersubjective world of perceptions of intentions, on which foreign policy decisions regularly depend, is constructed in part by diplomatic interaction. Threats lead to policy shifts even when the distribution of material capabilities remains unchanged.

Far from being of marginal importance, these shifts redrew the map of Europe. No account of the causal factors that led to the existence of Germany can leave out the effects of Austrian diplomacy fifteen years earlier. The origins of the federal system adopted by Austria in 1867 when it became Austria-Hungary also cannot be understood without appreciating Russia's unwillingness to behave then as it had in 1849. The timing of Italian unification and level of security competition between Austria and Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also derive in part from this same source. This Austro-Russian rift encouraged the decline of Austria as a European power and, ultimately, as Paul Schroeder argues, brought about the end of the long peace between the two nations in the form of the First World War.¹³⁰

In foreign policy, then, there is a case to be made for policies of moderation and restraint. No such absolute judgments are possible in the field of diplomacy, however. Threats and other commitments are sometimes worth the costs—both short and long term. The art of diplomacy involves uncertain appraisals of state intentions and beliefs, the imperatives of power politics, and carefully calculated projection of images that suit state objectives.

Together, the process tracing and comparative analysis presented above also demonstrate how much the history of the international system is contingent upon the decisions of individual leaders who were not forced by circumstances to act as they did.¹³¹ If the 23-year-old Franz Joseph had followed the advice of the elder statesman Metternich to refrain from taking sides in the Crimean conflict, history would likely have followed a different course. Austria might not have lost control of Northern Italy or ceded power to Hungary. Germany would likely not exist in its current form. On the other hand, if Austria did lose Northern Italy in any case, Russia might have allowed the French proposal of Austrian compensation in the East. It is plausible that in 1914, without the heightened level of security competition between Austria and Russia that originated with Austria's behavior sixty years

¹³⁰ Paul W. Schroeder, "The Life and Death of a Long Peace, 1763–1914," in *The Waning of Major War*, ed. Raimo Väyrynen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 33–63, argues that Russian actions from the 1870s onward eventually led Austria to understand that Russia was willing to take actions that would endanger the very existence of the Austrian Empire and thus led Austria to take desperate actions in 1914.

¹³¹ For recent work that puts individual leaders at the center of international relations, see Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Goemans, *Leaders and International Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Michael C. Horowitz and Allan C. Stam, "How Prior Military Experience Influences The Future Militarized Behavior Of Leaders" (paper presented at the 2010 American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 2011).

earlier, Austria would not have felt so closely tied to Germany and would not have felt the need to precipitate WWI. Russia too might then have exercised greater restraint.

Had the rivalry between Russia and Austria been less intense at the end of the nineteenth century, Germany—or Prussia—might not have angered Russia through its support of Austria, and Germany might then not have tied itself so closely to Austria. Even if a Franco-Prussian war occurred, in the absence of the Austro-German alliance directed against Russia, Russia might not have tied itself to France. Without potentially hostile nations in alliance with each other on either side, it is even possible that Germany too would not have pushed so hard for war in 1914.

History may have taken this particular alternative path, or it may not have. There is no certainty that each of these counterfactuals would have transpired in this way, but such a scenario is not implausible. Of course, the elimination of the Austro-Russian enmity would have evoked entirely new causal chains that are impossible to foresee. We cannot say what course history would have taken if Germany existed in different form. Had Austria chosen a different policy during the Crimean War, we cannot know what would have happened, only that subsequent international history would likely have been entirely different.