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**Global Gatekeeping: Domestic Politics, Grand Strategy, and Power
Transition Theory**

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**Global Gatekeeping: Domestic Politics, Grand Strategy, and Power
Transition Theory**

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Report

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Abstract

Global Gatekeeping: Domestic Politics, Grand Strategy, and Power Transition Theory

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Which grand strategies do Great Powers adopt towards rising challengers? When do Great Powers conciliate their potential rivals, and when do they opt for strategies of containment? In this master's report, I outline an argument to answer these and related questions. I add to the existing literatures on grand strategy and power transitions in several key respects. First, I model power shifts between Great Powers as contests over access to externally located benefits rather than as contests over power for its own sake. Second, I emphasize the weight of domestic politics in shaping states' preferences over the apportionment of these benefits. Third, I highlight the role of diplomacy in determining whether established Great Powers choose to conciliate or else contain potential rivals. Empirically, I provide four vignettes of Great Power responses to rising states: the United States' strategy towards Japan during the Cold War; Britain's appeasement of the United States, 1890-1914; the United States' containment of the Soviet Union under Ronald Reagan; and Britain's containment of Wilhelmine Germany.

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1. Introduction

Which grand strategies do established Great Powers adopt towards rising challengers? When do Great Powers decide to conciliate their potential rivals, and when do they instead opt for strategies of containment or rollback? The conventional wisdom—among policy makers as well as scholars of International Relations (IR)—is that powerful states will (or should) react with hostility towards emerging peer competitors. According to this view, rising powers are implacably opposed to the prevailing international order and those who seek its continuance. To paraphrase Thucydides, having “suffered what they must” under the old distribution of power, rising states understandably “do what they can” to improve their lot and change the world around them. On the other hand, established Great Powers are inherently status quo, opposed to any revisions of an international order that was constructed under their dominion and which serves their interests. Conflict between established and rising states is thus inexorable.

The historical record does not neatly reflect this supposed rule of international politics. Consider, for example, the mostly peaceful (even if piecemeal) power shift that characterized Anglo-American relations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even though the United States was an unambiguously rising state during this period, Great Britain as the reigning hegemon did little to curb Washington’s hemispheric and later global ambitions. Instead, successive British governments sought to conciliate the United States and welcomed its ascendancy to Great Power status. In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States

repeated this pattern with respect to the rise in power of West Germany and Japan. Rather than take measures to keep its former adversaries weak and defenseless, the United States provided the economic and security conditions necessary to foster their rapid growth, even insisting at times that each state pursue rearmament. Established Great Powers such as Britain and the United States are thus eminently capable of crafting conciliatory and cooperative grand strategies towards rising geopolitical competitors. What, then, explains why such peaceful policies are only adopted some of the time, while hostile responses prevail in other circumstances?

My explanation for an established Great Power's choice of grand strategy towards a rising challenger is based on three central tenets. First, the rise in power of a peer competitor portends a mix of benefits and threats from the perspective of a reigning Great Power. Second, whether or not the potential benefits to an established Great Power outweigh the threats depends upon the geopolitical environment and the configuration of domestic political conditions within established and rising states. Third, far from being passive respondents to these international and domestic structural conditions, the governments of established Great Powers are able to use diplomatic tools to maximize the potential benefits—and minimize the potential threats—to be derived from a peer competitor's rise. Taken together, these three assertions comprise the core of a parsimonious model of power shifts in international politics. The model is capable of explaining an array of grand strategies, from the warm acceptance of an emerging challenger to preventive war aimed at the reversal of a rising state's ascent.

The rest of this master's report is organized as follows. Following this introduction, I provide a review of the extant scholarly work on grand strategy and

power shifts. As I demonstrate, the literature contains several competing explanations of grand-strategic choice in the context of shifting power. None of the existing approaches are capable of accounting for both conciliatory and antagonistic Great Power responses to rising states, however. Next, I elaborate upon my own model, defining and operationalizing the independent and dependent variables and outlining the causal logic. In the penultimate section, I discuss four brief case studies. I focus on Anglo-American responses to rising states, namely, Britain's responses to the increase in power of the United States and Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and the United States' responses to the rise of Japan and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The final section concludes.

2. Literature Review

An understanding of what to expect from major shifts in power between states is of clear interest to students of IR and foreign policy-makers alike, yet the extant scholarship has produced contradictory explanations and mixed findings. Some scholars of grand strategy, particularly those of a realist orientation, argue that established Great Powers should view rising challengers as necessarily threatening to their interests on the global stage (Gilpin 1981; Mearsheimer 2001; Lieber 2005; Friedberg 2011). This explanation is rooted in an assumption that rising states have an intrinsic interest in revising the international political status quo, something that should be anathema to established Great Powers who shared in creating and continue to benefit from the current international architecture. In the first instance, rising states are assumed to seek hegemony in their own region of the world (Mearsheimer 2001; Elman 2004; Kagan, 2006). As their power increases, however, rising states are supposed to desire a free hand in other regions of the world, too, and ultimately wholesale revisions to the international order. According to Aaron Friedberg (2011, p. 1), “rising powers feel constrained, even cheated, by the status quo and struggle against it to take what they think is rightfully theirs.” Similarly, for Charles Kupchan (2012, p. 4), “rising powers will as a matter of course seek to adjust the prevailing order in ways that advantage their own values and interests. They have been doing so since the beginning of time, and the coming era will be no different.” This notion, that there is a fundamental incompatibility of interests between established or declining states and their rising peer competitors, is common to and underpins the vast

IR literature that explicitly deals with power transitions, which almost uniformly predicts hostile relations between states involved in a power-transitional dynamic (Organski 1958; Organski and Kugler 1980; Gilpin 1981 and 1988; Modelski 1987; Rosecrance 1987).

There are other scholars, however, who maintain that friendly relations between established and rising states are possible. Contests over international order need not be zero-sum, pitching established and rising states against one another as unyielding foes (Kupchan et al 2001). Sometimes the prevailing international architecture is one that rising states can agree to, thus removing the need for Great Power rivalry in the context of power shifts (Ikenberry 2001 and 2011). Neither must states presume the worst about their adversaries, unable to gauge where common ground may be found (Chan 2008). Rather, adroit diplomacy can allow even erstwhile foes to forge cooperative relationships (Kupchan et al 2001; Kupchan 2010). Some argue that similar regime-types will find it particularly easy to cooperate in the context of power shifts (Lemke and Reed 1996). Either way, whether because of international institutions, domestic political conditions or effective diplomacy, the common assertion of this literature is that the emergence of rising states need not provoke a hostile response from prevailing Great Powers. On the contrary, this literature provides substantial reason to believe that the peaceful rise of Great Powers is eminently possible even if not the historical norm.

There is therefore a cleavage in the IR scholarship on Great Power responses to rising challengers. Pessimists caution that rising states are uniformly threatening and must be met with a firm and inimical response. Optimists counter that some (even if not all) rising states can be co-opted and befriended by established Great

Powers. Amid this dissonance, no single work—or even tradition—has produced a unifying and generalizable explanation for why some shifts in power occur in peace while others provoke conflict, why old and new Great Powers are only sometimes able to accommodate each other’s presence in international society. Pessimists are able to explain the numerous wars that appear to have resulted from changes in the distribution of power, yet important instances of peaceful rise—cases in which Great Powers have opted not to meet their rivals’ ascent with a firm hand—inescapably call into question the completeness of these accounts. Similarly, while optimists have provided empirical examples of peaceful rise and theoretical reasons for why cooperative relations can sometimes be sustained during periods of shifting power, they are unable to explain why such pacific relations only obtain some of the time. In what follows, I present a deductive argument to shed some light on both types of outcomes—that is, to explain why Great Powers sometimes adopt conciliatory approaches towards rising states while adopting strategies of containment or rollback in other instances.

3. Argument

Before presenting my argument, it is first necessary to justify my choice to focus on explaining the grand strategies of established Great Powers. Given that other scholars of power shifts have taken dyadic outcomes as their dependent variable of interest, why do I focus on the strategic choice of only one state? To be sure, power-transitional dynamics are multi-actor interactions; a focus on established Great Powers alone would necessarily be limited. For this reason, I incorporate the domestic politics of rising states into my model as a factor influencing the strategic choice of established Great Powers. Nevertheless, I maintain that an overall focus on the grand strategies established Great Powers is warranted. Reigning Great Powers occupy privileged positions from which to shape the opportunity structures open to their rising challengers, which makes their choice of strategy particularly important in a power-transitional dyad. No matter how mighty the rise, an emerging Great Power invariably possesses finite resources with which to overturn the extant international settlement—assuming that it harbors revisionist goals in the first place. Even the most powerful and dissatisfied of revisionist states must strategically select which components of international settlements to single out for change, and in which order. By promoting or opposing a state's rise—by agreeing to or denying the re-allocation of particular benefits—established Great Powers are able to shape the kind, extent and timing of the revisions sought by rising states and, in turn, significantly affect the contentiousness of international politics.

My argument is that established Great Powers will conciliate a rising state when there is geopolitical advantage to be derived from doing so and when domestic political conditions within both states allow for it, while Great Powers will move to contain a challenger when these conditions are not met. This argument is premised on the insight that states do not covet power in its own right. Rather, relative power is a currency that affords states access to particular benefits to be sourced from the international system. It is the relationship between a changing distribution of power and a pre-existing allocation of benefits that explains Great Power behavior in the context of power shifts (Powell 1996 and 1999). In what follows, I answer a series of questions that flow from this insight. What are the benefits being contested by states? Which factors govern a rising state's demands for more benefits? Under what conditions will established Great Powers agree to revisions of the international allocation of benefits, and when will they resist? What are the broader implications of this dynamic for power transitions?

Power transitions are episodes when new power differentials call into question old allocations of benefits between states. What are these benefits as they exist in international politics? While the total array of benefits sought by states is vast, I propose that all states have especially fundamental interests in two kinds of benefit that are directly sourced from their participation in the international system: external security, defined as a credible expectation of immunity from armed attack; and optimal economic access, defined as the ability to determine a preferable relationship with the international economy. In short, states want their participation in international politics to provide them with the maximum possible amount of security while also preserving a free hand to determine their relationship with the international

economy. For individual states, there are often trade-offs to be made between security and economic interests; sometimes states will sacrifice economic goals in order to achieve security; sometimes they will accept security risks in order to preserve economic opportunities. For states within a given dyad, however, these security and economic interests are not necessarily zero-sum; two states are often able to find diplomatic solutions to ensure that each simultaneously can increase its security and economic access, something that is true even during periods of shifting power. The point is that understanding grand strategy in the context of power shifts requires a prior understanding of what motivates states, that is, what do states *want* from their participation in international politics? What set of interests would lead states to conciliate or contain a potential rival? The proposition that states seek security and economic access and that these benefits are not zero-sum for states within a power-transitional dyad provides initial answers to these questions and a basis for proceeding.

Even though benefits in the international system are not necessary zero-sum, traditional theories of power transitions are correct to suggest that, when power shifts, both established and rising Great Powers have reasons to doubt the desirability and the durability of the pre-existing allocation of benefits (Powell 1999). Enjoying an enhanced bargaining position vis-à-vis extant Great Powers, rising states can be expected to seek to convert their newfound power into an improved security order or more preferential economic arrangements. Recognizing that rising states have incentives for revisions to the political status quo, established Great Powers also have a stake in finding a new distribution of benefits that will secure international peace and security: unless a rising state's demand for increased benefits can be sated—and

if the growth in power of the rising state cannot be reversed—then the risk of international conflict gets greater with every unit change in material capabilities. Conflict is not inevitable, however, and critically depends upon the strategy adopted by the established state.

How will an established Great Power respond to the exigencies created by a power shift? First, an established state could assist in bringing a rising state's allocation of benefits into alignment with the new distribution of power. These are strategies of conciliation, aimed at ceding or granting benefits to a rising state in order to remove grounds for dissatisfaction and enmity. Second, an established state could work to halt the redistribution of power or even bring the distribution of power back into alignment with the pre-existing distribution of benefits. These are strategies of containment, which involve proactive measures to check or reverse a rising state's increase in power so as to avoid a revision of the international political status quo. Both of these options are viable—albeit opposite—responses to the stimulus of a shift in power and it is impossible to deduce which one an established state will adopt with reference to the power shift alone. Rather, because relative power is a means to particular benefits, the question is this: can a rising state be sated in a way that does not compromise the access to international benefits enjoyed by the established state? An established state will be open to facilitating a rising state's ascent only if the answer to this question is affirmative.

Independent variables

In order to model this calculation on behalf of established Great Powers, I point to two independent variables. The first independent variable is *geopolitical opportunity*,

which captures the extent to which an established state recognizes a viable opening to profit from a challenger's rise. Geopolitical opportunity is a composite variable that captures variation in international circumstances and the domestic politics of the rising state. The variable is dichotomous, with positive and negative values. All else equal, an established state has incentives to conciliate a potential rival if there is opportunity to profit from doing so. Conversely, established Great Powers have incentives to contain their rivals when there are no opportunities to profit from doing so. Again, the insight here is that the material aggrandizement of an emerging state is only sometimes a threat to an established Great Power's interests on the international stage (Walt 1987; Kupchan et al 2001; Kupchan 2010). Indeed, history is replete with cases of Great Powers promoting the ascent to material preponderance of other states because they recognized profit in doing so—a fact largely unexplained in the IR literature.

How is geopolitical opportunity measured? Several external factors lead to positive geopolitical opportunities to profit from a challenger's rise. The first of these is the existence of a common geopolitical foe. If an established Great Power and a rising state share a common threat, then it is likely that the established Great Power will recognize opportunity to profit from a challenger's rise. For example, a rising state's material strength could be harnessed to balance against the given threat, or else the threat can be used as a commitment device to ensure that the rising state will remain dependent upon the established Great Power (and thus non-threatening, even subservient, to the established Great Power itself). Second, complementary national economies and the potential for joint economic growth can lead to the established Great Power recognizing the potential for conciliation. Last, the existence of a third

party whose interests can be plundered in order to sustain cooperative relations between the established and rising Great Powers can facilitate conciliation. Absent a common foe, economic opportunities or an expendable third party, there will be no geopolitical opportunity to profit from a challenger's rise.

Even if an established state has *Realpolitik* reasons to conciliate a potential rival, however, its ability to do so will hinge upon the domestic politics of the challenger. For conciliatory diplomacy to succeed there must exist within the rising state a domestic constituency that is amenable to conciliation. This is not always the case. For some ruling coalitions, their hold on power is rooted in delivering success on the home front, or "butter." Such coalitions are open to compromising on foreign policy questions; while they undoubtedly expect some concessions concomitant with their state's increase in power, domestic-focused ruling coalitions will be amenable to accepting proposals made by established states about which particular international benefits they should receive. In other words, coalitions whose success is predicated on investment in butter are ones that established Great Powers can hope to conciliate. On the other hand, some ruling coalitions must deliver success in foreign affairs in order to maintain a grip on power. Their interests are tied to investment in "guns," not butter (Trubowitz 2011). Such coalitions are inflexible in terms of the foreign policy concessions they make; they are not willing to accept the offers made by established Great Powers because they face domestic political pressure to obtain a particular set of benefits from the international system. Established Great Powers will therefore struggle to find partners for peace when rising states are ruled by coalitions whose success is dependent upon investment in guns.

Because it is so important to have friendly interlocutors inside the opposing state, established Great Powers will seek to identify, strengthen, and promote the ascendancy of conciliation-minded interests within the rising state. Using all of the diplomatic tools at their disposal, established states will do their utmost to manipulate the domestic politics of the rising challenger (Lobell 2007 and 2008; Kupchan 2010), aiming to strengthen butter-focused coalitions and weaken guns-focused coalitions. Such diplomatic initiatives will work in some instances and will fail in others, but for the purposes of my argument it simply warrants emphasizing that there are two necessary conditions to be met in order for an established state to choose a strategy of conciliation towards a rising challenger: there must be geopolitical opportunity to derive profit from the rising state's ascent and there must be a coalition within the rising state amenable to conciliation. The established state will strive to foster these conditions for conciliation through diplomatic means but may opt for a strategy of containment if, in the final analysis, either one of the conditions is not met.

Established Great Powers are not purely reactive, of course, and their domestic political circumstances (my second independent variable) also affect their choice of grand strategy. This flows from the insight that foreign policy decision-makers within states are not just diplomats with antennae pointing towards the international system; they are also politicians with a deep interest in their domestic standing (Trubowitz 2011). Again, I model domestic politics as a contest between those with incentives to invest in guns and those with incentives to invest in butter. Established Great Powers whose ruling coalitions have incentives to invest in guns will be willing to spend more on foreign policy—particularly their militaries—in order to execute their grand strategies; this is because their success depends on achieving certain international

priorities and they have the resources to obtain these goals. On the other hand, when a Great Power's ruling coalition has incentives to invest in butter—for example, when powerful domestic groups insist upon high social spending or low taxation—then leaders will be forced to find comparatively cheaper alternatives.

Dependent variable

My dependent variable is an established Great Power's choice of grand strategy towards a rising challenger. These strategies differ along two dimensions: ends and means. To relate this to my independent variables, described above, geopolitical opportunity determines the *ends* of grand strategy while the domestic politics of an established Great Power determines the *means* available for a grand strategy's implementation. In terms of ends, grand strategies for dealing with rising states can be geared towards either conciliation (bringing the international allocation of benefits into alignment with the international distribution of power) or containment (refusal to countenance a reallocation of international benefits). Means refers to the amount of national resources to be devoted to foreign policy, particularly in terms of military spending. Will the state devote resources to its external grand strategy as a matter of priority, or are there priorities on the home front that mean foreign policy must be side-lined? Taken together, these considerations generate four values of my dependent variable—that is, four strategies for responding to rising states: appeasement, binding, external balancing and internal balancing. I discuss each in turn.

Strategies of appeasement are aimed at conciliation. They occur when an established Great Power has diplomatic opportunities to conciliate a challenger and

when its domestic politics favor investment in butter over guns. Essentially, strategies of appeasement involve the established Great Power ceding benefits to a rising state across a range of security and economic issue-areas as part of a diplomatic package aimed at husbanding the rising state's material strength to its own ends. States appease because they have incentives to invest their resources in butter and not guns, and so must find a way to share international burdens. In other words, the goal of appeasement is to use a rising state's increasing power to compensate for reductions in the established state's own military and security budgets. Appeasement does not simply involve the passive or submissive wholesale surrender of benefits, however. Instead, appeasement requires an engaged diplomatic presence. Rising states that are amenable to appeasement are often the very same states that are reluctant to adopt active (and expensive) roles in world affairs; they must be enticed into doing so with diplomatic carrots. At the same time, established Great Powers must constantly seek reassurance and guarantees from the rising state that its concessions will not lead to its own exclusion from international benefits. Should the established state suspect that the rising state cannot be relied upon, then the strategy of appeasement will likely give way to a strategy of binding or even containment. The British appeasement of the United States after 1890 is one of the most famous examples of appeasement, but the Anglo-American appeasement of Hitler is another common—even if ill fated—example. Indeed, as historian Paul Kennedy (1976; 1981; 1983) has shown, Britain frequently adopted strategies of appeasement towards its peer competitors during its era of global primacy.

Like strategies of appeasement, binding strategies are also aimed at the conciliation of a potential rival. They also occur when an established Great Power

has diplomatic opportunities to promote the ascent of a rising challenger, but when domestic politics favor guns over butter. In such circumstances, an established state faces an apparent conundrum: how to reconcile the goal of conciliating a rising state while still satisfying those domestic groups that demand maintenance of high military spending? In fact, there are options open to a Great Power facing such circumstances (providing that the ruling coalition within the rising state is inclined to cooperation with the implementation of such strategies, of course). In particular, established Great Powers can offer generous security benefits to the rising state—essentially, “free security”—so that rising states are provided with tangible benefits, but in such a way that justifies high military spending in the established Great Power. This focus on the extension of security benefits is the core feature of binding strategies. Such strategies will appeal to ruling coalitions in rising states who are focused on improving their country’s performance in the international economy rather than securing particular foreign policy or military objectives. At the same time, the expensive provision of security guarantees to another state satisfies domestic constituencies within the Great Power who stand to benefit from investment in guns. Aside from the security umbrella, other varieties of binding strategies include the establishment of a protectorate over the rising state or an offer of incorporation into the established Great Power. The integration of militaries is another way of binding a rising state in way that satisfies its demands for international benefits while maintaining high levels of military spending. The United States’ security guarantees to Japan, West Germany and its other Cold War allies are perhaps the best examples of binding strategies in action. Indeed, in the next section I present the United States’ strategy towards Japan during the Cold War as an archetypal example of binding.

In terms of containment, external balancing occurs when an established state has no cause to conciliate a rising challenger but when domestic preferences are for butter over guns. External balancing aims at preventing the international distribution of benefits from changing in line with power shifts, but through comparatively cheap measures such as relying on collective security alliances, buck-passing, and other less militaristic alternatives. The Stresa Front, an alliance of Britain, France and Italy created to contain German expansionism in the 1930s, is one example of external balancing in international history, as are the various coalitions constructed to defeat Napoleonic France. During the Cold War, the United States often erred on the side of leveraging its allies to externally balance against the Soviet Union when pressure to invest in domestic priorities became great—for example, Eisenhower’s New Look and the Nixon Doctrine of relying upon the United States’ allies to provide the manpower for their own defense (Gaddis 2005).

On the other hand, internal balancing occurs when an established state sees little diplomatic gain in conciliating a rival (and thus resolves to keep the balance of power in line with the prevailing distribution of benefits) but when domestic preferences are for guns over butter. Internal balancing strategies are characterized by unilateral spending on the military in order to check revisionist tendencies in the rising state. Internal balancing may include pre-emptive or preventive war—attempts to ‘roll back’ the increases in power accrued by the rising state. Steve Lobell (2012) has adapted the concept of internal balancing to include balancing against specific elements of an adversary’s capabilities, rather against a challenger’s overall aggregate military potential. Using this definition, Lobell characterizes Britain’s building up of its navy and air force in the 1930s as a form of internal balancing. The Reagan

build-up during the Cold War is a more traditional example of internal balancing, which I discuss in the next section.

Table 1. Theoretical model

		Diplomatic opportunity	
		<i>Conciliate</i>	<i>Contain</i>
Domestic circumstances	<i>Guns</i>	Prediction: Binding Assist the rising state gain more benefits from the international system, but do so in a way that retains security control.	Prediction: Internal balancing Oppose the rising state's ascent to material preponderance through investment in guns.
	<i>Butter</i>	Prediction: Appeasement Assist the rising state gain more benefits from the international system with few strings attached.	Prediction: External balancing Oppose the rising state's ascent to material preponderance through the cheapest measures available.

Table 2. Dependent variable: Established state's choice of grand strategy

		Ends	
		<i>Conciliation</i>	<i>Containment</i>
Means	<i>Low</i>	Appeasement Non-aggression pacts Military cooperation Trade concessions Diplomatic support Territorial concessions Spheres of influence	External balancing Alliances Collective security International institutions Buck-passing Containment <i>Cordons sanitaire</i> Economic sanctions
	<i>High</i>	Binding Security umbrellas Protectorates Military dependence Economic dependence	Internal balancing Rollback Military buildups Preventive war Pre-emptive war

4. Cases

In this section, I outline four vignettes of Anglo-American responses to rising states. The cases have been selected on the dependent variable and are intended as “plausibility probes” of my argument rather than stringent tests of predictive power (Eckstein 1975). I use process tracing to show that causal mechanism that I outline above is evident in Great Powers’ grand strategies towards rising states (George and Bennett 2005), but I refrain from making claims about generalizability. As I note in the conclusion, developing and testing the argument outlined above is a task to be taken up in future iterations of this project.

Binding: The United States towards Japan, 1945-1989

Between 1945 and the end of the Cold War, Japan went from being a nation prostrate to the second largest economy in the world in possession of a formidable military. Although it is not always considered as such, Japan was a rising power during this time—militarily as well as economically (Lind 2004). In response, the United States conducted variations on a binding strategy towards Tokyo. That is, the United States provided Japan with generous security benefits and economic access in return for a tacit agreement from Tokyo that Japanese external policy would be subordinated to the foreign policy goals of the United States. This strategy of binding was driven by a common geopolitical threat (the Soviet Union and, to lesser extents, China and North Korea) and the configuration of domestic politics within the United States and Japan.

How did the United States stand to profit from Japan's rise? At the end of World War II, the United States initially planned to turn Japan into a demilitarized, agrarian society (Schaller 1985). The presumption was that a revived Japan would threaten regional security and undermine the United States' interests in East Asia—just as it had done prior to 1941. However, a series of international events that took place during 1949-1950—namely, the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb in August 1949, the “fall of China” in October 1949, and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950—convinced Washington to change course (Williams 1968). In short, the onset of the Cold War made it so that the United States stood to gain from a strong ally in East Asia. The loss of nationalist China deprived Washington of its preferred client state in the region, while South Korea and Taiwan looked prone to invasion by communist forces. As such, it appeared to the United States that there was significant geopolitical opportunity to profit from a resurgent Japan. An economically strong and politically stable Japan would provide a bulwark against communist expansion. Ideally, Japan could also be encouraged to remilitarize in order to help balance against the Sino-Soviet threat more directly.

Broadly speaking, this assessment of Japan's rise in power—that is, the perception that it was in the United States' interests to see Japan reclaim its Great Power status as an ally against global communism—continued for the rest of the Cold War. If the United States had *Realpolitik* reasons to promote the rise of Japan, however, it nevertheless depended upon compliant domestic forces within Japan itself. Japan's rise would still be detrimental to American interests unless its foreign policy was in the hands of a reliably friendly regime. Fortunately for the United States, a party dominated Japanese politics throughout the entire Cold War period that

was eminently amenable to conciliation: the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Under the American occupation, left- and extreme right-wing individuals had been purged from Japan's political establishment meaning that centrist political leaders were bound to take charge in post-war Japan (Williams 1968; Moore 1981; Schaller 1985). The first few rounds of democratic elections in the 1940s and 1950s spawned a milieu of political parties, with no recognizable party system taking shape. However, the LDP's sweeping electoral victory in 1955 heralded a dominant-party system that would last for the rest of the century (Masumi 1988; Kohno 1992; Köllner 2006). The LDP had strong political-economic incentives to invest heavily in domestic economic growth ("butter") and saw few advantages in investing in an activist foreign policy ("guns"). Its main constituencies were business and agriculture, which saw opportunities to benefit from statist industrial policies and access to western markets but few advantages in bankrolling Japanese expansionism. Under LDP leadership, Japan was ripe for conciliation by the United States: Tokyo's foreign policy objectives, such as they existed, were to improve trade relations with other countries while sheltering under the United States' security umbrella—the so-called "Yoshida Doctrine" (Calder 1988; Heginbotham and Samuels 1998; Heginbotham and Samuels 2002; Chai 1997; Samuels 2007).

The United States had both the incentives and an opportunity to conciliate Japan as a rising state during the Cold War. But what was the domestic political balance within the United States during this time? Did the United States' leaders face domestic pressure to appease Japan, perhaps by ceding international benefits to Tokyo in the hope that the Japanese would pick up the buck in East Asia, or was there pressure to maintain high levels of defense spending in the region? In fact,

preferences for guns versus butter varied throughout the Cold War, depending upon the shifting political-economic bases of the Democratic and Republican parties, the United States' public finances, prevailing views about economic theory, and public opinion about national security issues. In short, however, I suggest that presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford and Carter (1977-1978) possessed preferences for butter over guns while Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter (1978-1980) and Reagan possessed preferences for guns over butter (the literature on these presidents is vast; see, *inter alia*, Brune 1989; Fufeld 1998; Hogan 2000; Gaddis 2005; Zelizer 2010; Trubowitz 2011; Greenstein 2012).

What strategy did these presidents, with their differing preferences over means, adopt towards the rise of Japan during the Cold War? Overall, from the Korean War onwards the United States pursued a strategy of binding towards Japan. The bilateral security treaty of 1951 codified Japan's dependence upon the United States for its national security, while progressive additions and revisions to this treaty (in 1954, 1960 and 1978) clarified Japan's role in its own defense but maintained the basic architecture of an American security umbrella over Tokyo (Kamiya 1972; Lind 2004). The *quid pro quo* was that Japan's rise would be harnessed towards the foreign policy goals of the United States through non-offensive means, such as by granting basing rights, providing foreign aid to the United States' allies, helping to bankroll international organizations like the United Nations, and through latent regional balancing against the Soviet Union, China and North Korea (Bowen 1992; Wan 1995; Miyashita 1999; Lind 2004; Pyle 2006).

To be sure, binding was not the only option for dealing with Japan's rise. Indeed, initially binding was adopted in lieu of Washington's favored strategy, which

was to encourage Japan to become a standalone ally in East Asia without the extension of an expensive US security guarantee (Williams 1968). The Japanese leadership, laboring under a recently imposed pacifist constitution and governing an overwhelmingly anti-war public, was simply not in a position to accept Washington's demands for rearmament in 1950. Domestic political pressure precluded a military build-up so soon after Japan's decisive defeat in World War II. As such, Japanese leaders were not amenable to a strategy of appeasement whereby the United States would 'allow' Japan to remilitarize. In the 1950s, then, binding was chosen as a second-best alternative. Later in the Cold War, presidents with preferences for "butter" over "guns" such as Richard Nixon again struggled to entice the Japanese to provide more towards their own defense (Lind 2004). In part, such leaders were successful in doing so because of eroding anti-militarist norms within Japan and Tokyo's fear of abandonment by the United States (Hook 1988; Funabashi 1999; Reed 1983; Green and Cronin 1999), but, overall, efforts to cajole Japan into providing for its own security failed because of domestic politics within Japan itself. Under the LDP, governing coalitions within Japan simply saw no advantage in investing more in the military than was absolutely necessary to retain the United States' security guarantee. The result was a continuance of binding as Washington's strategy.

The case of US-Japanese relations during in the Cold War therefore highlights the importance of domestic coalitions within rising states. For strategies of appeasement to work, rising states must be willing to accept the package of benefits envisioned by the established Great Power. Counter-intuitively, this is not always the case: rising states wish to be appeased in different ways, depending upon their

domestic preferences guns versus butter. Some states may wish to be appeased in terms of the right to militarize, but not all do. Sometimes, at least, rising states want to prosper in peace.

Appeasement: Britain towards the United States, 1890-1914

The Anglo-American power transition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the canonical, and probably the most studied, example of a peaceful power transition in international politics. In explaining this so-called “Great Rapprochement” (Perkins 1967), most scholars stress cultural commonality between British and the United States or else Britain’s need for a strategic partner in the Western Hemisphere. In my account, I emphasize an under-studied factor that led to conciliation between Britain and the United States—that is, the United States’ need for a strategic partner given its emergence from isolationism and ascension as a Great Power on the global stage. It was the United States’ fear of strategic exposure, I argue, that explains the occurrence and timing of its rapprochement with Britain.

For most of the nineteenth century, Britain and United States did not share a common threat; conciliation between the two erstwhile foes looked unlikely. Indeed, the countries went to war in 1812; endured strained relations for much of the following period (including during the *Caroline* incident); and came close to open hostilities during the American Civil War (Ovendale 1998). However, when the United States’ emerged as a global Great Power towards the end of the nineteenth century (Zakaria 1998; Kagan 2006; Mead 2007), it found itself inhabiting a hostile international system, competing with geopolitical rivals in various regions of the world: Japan in East Asia, Spain in Latin America, Russia in the Pacific Northwest,

Germany in the South Pacific and Eurasia. The United States' newfound sense of insecurity opened up diplomatic doors from the perspective of those in London. Arguably for the first time since the Thirteen Colonies had left the British Empire, Britain and the United States now shared common geopolitical foes, at least potentially. British leaders recognized that they could leverage the United States' insecurity for geopolitical gain; for Britain, facing its own set of geopolitical rivalries in the late nineteenth century, the prospect of a strong and reliable ally in the Western Hemisphere portended huge advantage. The scene was set for a rapprochement.

Was the United States amenable to conciliation? To be sure, there were domestic forces within the United States that railed against the British Empire. Nevertheless, the preponderance of forces was in favor of a tacit alliance with Britain (Trubowitz 1998). The broad package of benefits offered to the United States by Britain were certainly of interest to the United States—indeed, they were ‘benefits’ that Washington had mostly claimed for itself already: confirmation of the Monroe Doctrine, support for the Open Door policy in China, and acquiescence to the United States' colonization of the Philippines and other former Spanish territories (Perkins 1967; Ovendale 1998; Kagan 2006; Campbell 2007). As such, unlike in the Japanese case described above, American statesmen during the period 1890-1914 *were* in a position to take up the international responsibilities wanted of it by the appeasing state; there was no mismatch between what Britain wanted of the United States and what the United States wanted for itself. Overall, Britain found willing and able partners for peace within the United States, allowing conciliatory diplomacy to proceed unhindered.

Within Britain, too, there were powerful domestic forces agitating for détente with the United States. This impulse was driven by a demand within Britain for investment in domestic programs. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, British politicians faced acute pressure to reduce the nation's spending on overseas commitments and divert resources towards the home front. This was the era of "social imperialism" in Britain, fuelled by the extension of the franchise to most of the working population, when the foundations of the British welfare state were being laid (Monger 1963). Britain's ruling class of "gentlemanly capitalists" recognized that the country's overseas commitments must be trimmed in order to maintain domestic order (Cain and Hopkins 2002). In this context, the appeasement of the United States mirrored Britain's conciliation of other Great Powers, too (Nish 1966; Monger 1967; Rolo 1969; Siegel 2002). The strategy of conciliation towards the United States was thus not an aberration; it was symptomatic of a broader trend of Britain ending its "splendid isolation," itself an outgrowth of tectonic shifts in Britain's domestic politics (Monger 1967).

The Anglo-American case demonstrates the importance of a common geopolitical foe for conciliation to take place. During the premiership of George Canning in the 1820s, Britain had extended conciliatory overtures towards the United States by proposing a kind of bilateral Monroe Doctrine regarding the Western Hemisphere (Murphy 2005, 12). Canning was keen to exclude the Holy Alliance of European powers from expanding into the Americas and saw the United States as a valuable ally in this endeavor. At that time, however, the United States refused Britain's offer of a tacit alliance because it did not recognize any commonalities between Washington and London in terms of geopolitical priorities; the United States

enjoyed a relatively calm regional security environment during the 1820s and saw collaboration with Britain as anathema to retaining this placid situation. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the United States' geopolitical situation and strategic exposure had changed and Washington saw eminent advantage in concluding an entente with Britain. Within both countries, domestic politics was critical in allowing a rapprochement to occur, but it is really the United States' ascent to preponderance and the strategic exposure that this brought that helps to explain the timing of the Great Rapprochement.

Internal Balancing: The United States towards the Soviet Union, 1981-1985

During Ronald Reagan's first term in the White House, the United States undertook a dramatic shift in its posturing vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Although some have questioned whether the return to militarism associated with Reagan actually began under his predecessor (Nichols 2002), and while others argue that it is the era of détente that represents an aberration in US-Soviet relations rather than Reagan's policy of remilitarization (Williams 1985), the fact remains that under Reagan the United States engaged a military build-up on a scale not seen since the 1960s. Here, I treat the Soviet Union as a rising power in relation to the United States because of its perceived gains in the 1970s at the expense of the United States (Gaddis 2005). The question is: why did the United States under Reagan internally balance against the Soviet Union instead of pursuing conciliation?

The most obvious reason for why the United States adopted a strategy of containment towards the Soviet Union is because there was no common threat against which the two countries could ally. During the Cold War, each side saw the other as

its major geopolitical competitor. To be sure, the Soviet Union also had security concerns about China on its southern flank. However, the United States had ceased to see China as an imminent threat to its allies in East Asia following Nixon's opening to China and, in any case, saw Moscow as the more proximate and potent foe; it was Beijing that could help to balance against Moscow, not vice versa. Overall, there was little scope within a bipolar world to leverage the rise in power of the Soviet Union to the United States' advantage. Moreover, even if the United States had seen such advantage in conciliating the Soviet Union, there was no domestic coalition within the Soviet Union amenable to such a strategy—at least, not until the ascent of Mikhail Gorbachev as the Soviet leader (Matlock 2004).

Seeing no advantage in conciliating the Soviet Union, the United States under Reagan adopted an expensive strategy of internal balancing. But why internal balancing and not external balancing, as had been advanced—and implemented—under other Republican presidents such as Eisenhower and Nixon? Part of the answer is that the Reagan coalition had substantial interests in investment in guns over butter. Both the American public and sectional interests within the Republican Party supported a militaristic policy of confrontation predicated upon high levels of defense spending (Mintz 1989; Bartels 1991; Trubowitz and Roberts 1992; Trubowitz 1998; Wiris 2010). Reagan could have pressed allies such as NATO and Japan to increase their share of the burden for balancing against the Soviets, but he was under no fiscal pressure to do so; instead, Reagan saw investment in the military as a way to bolster the United States' economy and put pressure on the Soviets' (Gaddis 2005). Preferences for guns over butter determined that Reagan pursued a military build-up and internal balancing over the cheaper options that were available to him.

External balancing: Britain towards Germany, 1890-1914

The final vignette in this section is Britain's policy of external balancing towards Imperial Germany in 1890-1914. It was noted above that Britain pursued strategies of appeasement towards several of its peer competitors during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Upon ending its "splendid isolation" from world affairs (Monger 1967), Britain sought to mollify potential adversaries in all corners of the globe through the conclusion of peace treaties: the United States in the Western Hemisphere; France in Africa; Japan in the Far East; and Russia in Central Asia. The glaring omission to this trend in British diplomacy was the British containment of Germany. Indeed, Germany seems to have been singled out as the one rising power that Britain did not appease during this period, the one state that Britain prepared to fight a war against. Why? Here, I show that Britain did in fact have ideal preferences to conciliate Wilhelmine Germany but that there was no domestic coalition within Germany to allow such a policy to take hold. Britain's conciliatory overtures fell on unreceptive ears in Berlin and so London moved towards external balancing out of reluctant necessity.

I have already discussed the domestic situation within Britain during 1890-1914. To recapitulate, the country's leadership was under significant domestic pressure to find ways to divert resources from foreign policy to domestic purposes. But was there diplomatic opportunity for Britain to conciliate Germany? In fact, there was ample opportunity—in theory, at least—for Britain to persuade Germany that there existed a common foe between them. Ever since the Franco-Prussian War, German planners were wary that France would one day try to take back Alsace-

Lorraine (“the lost provinces”). Meanwhile, Russia was growing in power on Germany’s eastern flank, causing Berlin to doubt the stability of peace in Eastern Europe (McDonald 2011). Spats involving Britain, Germany, France, Portugal and the United States in the colonies (southern Africa and Samoa) provided additional impetus for Britain and Germany to find common ground and remove grounds for enmity (Porter 1980; Kagan 2006). Britain was willing and able to offer Germany important access to colonies and also guarantee its maritime security, which could have been a generous boon to a country fearing land wars on both of its borders. The failure of Britain and Germany to reach a rapprochement, then, cannot be attribute to lack of geopolitical opportunity.

These diplomatic opportunities were not lost on British decision-makers, chief among who was Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain. Chamberlain recognized that an agreement between Britain and Imperial Germany would defend Britain’s interests in Africa and the Far East while helping to eliminate a threat to the Home Islands. As Germany was a rapidly industrializing and rising power, Britain had every interest in mollifying its continental rival and avoiding a dangerous arms race, particularly in terms of naval capabilities. Pursuant of these ideas, Chamberlain embarked upon a vigorous diplomatic initiative towards Berlin, attempting to persuade the Germans that alignment with Britain was more conducive to Berlin’s interests than opposition (Koch 1969; Porter 1980; Balfour 1985). In the event, however, Chamberlain found Germany’s rulers to be unreceptive. Perhaps because of an unprofessional and inexperienced diplomatic corps in the post-Bismarckian period, or more likely because of the powerful influence on Kaiser Wilhelm of the Germany navy and industrial sector, Germany eventually decided to embark upon a massive

naval program that was intended to project German power abroad but which flew in the face of Chamberlain's conciliatory diplomacy. Faced with this political reality, the British Cabinet turned towards external balancing—the alliances with France and Russia, and ultimately the United States—as a way to contain German expansionism. The opportunity to conciliate the rising power had been missed due to the domestic politics of the rising state; a critical ingredient for conciliatory diplomacy to succeed was absent.

5. Discussion

The extant scholarship on power transitions has so far failed to explain why only some shifts in capabilities between Great Powers create conflict and others do not. In this master's report, I have aimed to shed some light on this puzzle by analyzing the grand-strategic choices made by established Great Powers in the context of their relative decline. Because of their control over important levers of power in international politics, established Great Powers possess a significant ability to shape what kinds of influence rising states are able to wield; their choice of strategy has enormous implications for future settlements of international order. However, as my theory predicts and as my initial empirical work shows, Great powers are not always able to implement the grand strategies that they would prefer; rising states must be treated in ways that are conducive to their domestic political circumstances. Even when established Great Powers have incentives to appease a rising state, sometimes those rising states are insistent upon militarization and expansionism and therefore eschew attempts at conciliation; at other times, rising states cannot be cajoled into such policies, which can create a different set of problems for established Great Powers.

The fundamental point is that power shifts alone do not determine whether established states will conciliate rising challengers or else check their rivals' growth in power. The potential for peaceful rise depends upon an established state's assessment about whether conciliation is beneficial, which in turn depends upon geopolitical considerations and the presence within a rising state of suitable

interlocutors. The domestic politics of the established state determine the extent and ambition of any attempts at conciliation or containment. In future iterations of this work, I propose to test my theory through in-depth historical case studies of British and American responses to rising states. As noted above, the vignettes provided in this master's report were selected on the dependent variable and, because of space constraints, have not been treated in enough detail to provide a rigorous test of my theory. Through careful case selection and rigorous empirical work, however, it will be possible in future iterations of this project to offer tests of the plausibility, explanatory purchase and generality of my argument while simultaneously creating opportunities to inductively theorize about power transitions through analyses of cases that do not conform to my deductive expectations.

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