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Opening the Black Box: An Examination of Structural Realist and Neoclassical Realist
Explanations of Foreign Policy

by

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Abstract

Structural realist and neoclassical realist theories each seek to explain international relations at different levels of analysis. Using the British strategy of appeasement in the 1930s as a case study, this thesis will evaluate how both theories explain British strategy. Structural realism will be shown to provide a general account by considering how the United Kingdom fit into the general distribution of power, with a number of British actions found to be inconsistent with what would be otherwise expected. A neoclassical realist account of appeasement will provide the means to help explain such inconsistencies, and identify particular ways in which domestic politics played an intervening role in impacting British power, helping to account for the inconsistencies noted in the structural realist account.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

An important question within the realist school of international relations theory is the extent to which domestic politics and concerns influence foreign policy. A (if not the) dominant theory within the realist paradigm, structural realism, generally argues that the main impact on the choices states make is the distribution of power within the international system, and that consequently, a state's relative level of power is what drives its foreign policy (Waltz: 1979). A later development in realist theory is that of neoclassical realism, which argues that although a states power has an important impact on foreign policy, a wide range of domestic factors, ranging from public opinion to the competence of its leaders, all act as intervening variables which shape the foreign policy outcomes (Taliaferro et al: 2009, 20).

However, the study of historical events can often raise questions that a strictly structural realist interpretation cannot fully explain, suggesting either that existing theory is limited on the basis of its assumptions and level of analysis, flawed or incomplete in some manner, or that these events are rare exceptions to the rule. This thesis will argue that by considering how domestic factors can impact a states power, neoclassical realism can improve upon explanations offered by a strictly structural realist interpretation of events. This additional explanatory power is gained through considering domestic factors which structural realism does not consider. This however, does not mean that a structural realist analysis of events is without merit, or suffers from explanatory poverty. At a minimum, it can provide an "ideal type" of behaviour to be

expected. When states diverge from this behaviour, neoclassical realism can be well suited to answer, and arrive at a more comprehensive explanation of events. By excluding certain variables, such as domestic factors, from consideration, it is also has the ability to provide a more parsimonious explanation to events. The question then under consideration is to what extent are domestic considerations necessary to account for apparent inconsistencies in the foreign policy choices made by states, or does an explanation relying on a structural realist interpretation provide a sufficiently compelling explanation.

In order to demonstrate how neoclassical realism might offer a more fulsome explanation, a case study of Great Britain's strategy for dealing with a resurgent Germany in the 1930s, popularly known as appeasement, will be explored. The British strategy of appeasement is a useful case study for a number of reasons. Importantly, there is no uniform consensus among historians as to why Britain pursued a strategy of appeasement. This range of explanations suggests that some theories may be more suitable than others at explaining what happened. Some, such as historian A.J.P. Taylor generally argue that appeasement was a rational policy which reflected the various political challenges faced by Britain (Taylor: 1961). Others suggest that it was less effective in dealing with Germany, and was intended to address a number of issues beyond simply addressing a resurgent Germany, and problems with such a strategy were caused by leadership issues within Britain (McDonough: 1998). Thus, with no clear explanation for British policy, it provides a useful case study to evaluate the effectiveness of differing theoretical approaches to see if one or

the other can provide a fulsome explanation. Although the principal focus is to test the explanatory of two branches of realist theory, an additional benefit may be to help generate further historical insight into the study of appeasement itself.

This thesis will proceed as follows. First, a review of structural realist and neoclassical realist theory will be made. In particular, it will focus on the underlying assumptions, theoretical tools and concepts, and causal logic of each theory. The strengths and weaknesses of each theory will also be considered and evaluated in order to better understand how they function with respect to one another. After the review is complete, two separate analyses of British policy will be made, using each theory. The structural realist analysis will come first, focusing on examining how Britain fits into the existing balance of power within Europe at the time, and evaluating whether or not British actions were in accordance with what would be expected behaviour within structural realist theory. It will show that while British behaviour was generally in accordance with what would be expected by structural realism, it deviates in some significant ways. Structural realism is generally unable to explain such deviations, although it must be stressed that this should not be seen as an inherent weakness in the theory, as this inability stems from the theory's level of analysis: structural realism never intended to explain such deviations. Following this, the neoclassical realist analysis will build on what was examined in the structural realist chapter through the introduction of domestic variables. It will focus on how while British policy was generally informed by factors that structural realism would emphasis, such as the balance of power in the

international system, additional domestic factors, ranging from issues of leadership, to ways public opinion could impact British power, caused deviations away from expected behaviour. Neoclassical realism is able to offer explanations for the deviations identified earlier in the structural realist analysis. Finally, some general remarks on the nature both theories and how they relate to one another will be made.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The two theories being considered are structural realism and neoclassical realism. This review will examine each of these theories with the intent to achieve several goals. First, it will introduce each theory and its relevant theoretical extensions, and describe them to a sufficient level of detail that it can be understood, and differentiated from the other. Second, it will assess and make specific criticisms of each theory, and identify particular weaknesses that each theory may have, either in the assumptions it makes, and how the two theories complement one another and fit together with the broader realist framework. The end goal of this review will be to lay ground work for establishing a framework for each theory to be used to assess the British policy of appeasement in the 1930s. This review will specifically focus on literature relevant to the case under consideration. Consequently, some particular aspects of each theory will not be considered, nor will debates between realism and other theories (except where noted) be considered, as it is of lesser relevance to the scope of work.

The System and the State: Structural Realism

Structural realism can be characterized as a more rigorous understanding of international relations than that espoused by earlier realist theories, or what is now referred to as classical realism. In turn, this rigor has helped structural realism generate a wide range of theoretical tools that are extremely useful in helping understand the conduct of international relations and provides significant explanatory value when examining particular historical circumstances. This

review will cover elements of structural realism that are useful in the assessment of the British appeasement of Germany in the 1930s. The review will focus on the foundations of structural realism, namely *Theory of International Politics*, the assumptions that have become broadly accepted by structural realists, further theoretical advancements within structural realism, such as offence-defense theory, the security dilemma, and further debates between structural realism and liberal institutionalism that highlight structural realist concerns with maintaining international agreements. The purpose of this is twofold. First, it highlights the key elements of structural realism, how a structural realist consideration of international relations functions, and helps identify potential weaknesses in various aspects of structural realist theory. In particular, this relates to the importance of unit level analysis and how those considerations can impact state behavior, despite structural realisms strict focus on system level analysis. Second, it will assist in allowing the distinction between structural realism and neoclassical realism to be more easily made.

Structural realist theory finds its origins in the seminal work *Theory of International Politics*, by political scientist Kenneth Waltz. Commonly accepted assumptions by structural realist scholars (see discussions of Grieco: 1998 and Mearsheimer: 2001), additional theoretical additions, debates within structural realism, and debates between structural realism and other theories all derive from this work. In a *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz first lays out the methods by which his theory is developed, and how it differs in this respect from earlier realist theories, before elaborating on what his theory

actually explains (and cannot) and why it offers the most compelling interpretation of international relations and how states interact in the international system. He refines and expands upon existing balance of power theory to explain recurrent patterns of war and peace within an anarchical international system.

The principal difference between structural realism and previous realist theories is that it applies a greater level of methodological rigor than other theories, particularly classical realism, to the study of international relations. By doing so, a method for scientifically testing claims could be established. The end result of this is that structural realism differs from classical realism primarily through its level of analysis. In seeking a rigorous theory of international relations, Waltz considers the nature of a law, and theory and how the two relate. A law is the relationship between variables, with a corresponding probability assigned to outcomes (ie. if a, then b with a p of x) (Waltz: 1979, 1). This implies repetition and reliability of observable outcomes over time. A theory is a statement that explains laws, and the relationships they describe. This moves away from previous inductionist practices seen at the time in political science. By attempting greater rigor, this moves towards approaches more commonly seen in the natural science, and other social sciences such as economics. The relationship between economics and structural realism is particularly important, as Waltz frequently draws on microeconomic theories of corporate behavior in the market, most notable game theory and rational choice approaches, as being analogous to the behavior of states in an anarchical international system.

To better understand how Waltz achieves this desired level of rigor, it is worth first briefly turning to his earlier work, *Man, the State, and War*. In *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz examined the three levels, or images of international relations, that realism identified as the possible causes of international conflict. The first image, man, suggested that human nature was a potential cause for conflict. As Waltz notes that according to this image, “Wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity (Waltz: 1959, 16).” Because man possesses an inherent will to power and desire to dominate, this drives the violence of states man controls. The second image is that of the state, or unit level. International violence can be seen as a function of social and political structures within the state (Waltz: 1959, 81). A revolutionary state may be more inclined to cause wars than stable states; alternatively, states may cause wars as a means of attempting to maintain order by focusing on an external enemy. States may seek to expand to accommodate or rectify some deficiency, either in their perceived “natural” frontiers, or to include additional peoples within the state (Waltz: 1959,83). Essentially, state characteristics, such as ideology, nationalism and other factors are the principal cause of war. The third image is that of the system itself. War is a consequence of the inherently anarchical nature of the international system. With no overarching authority on which to rely on for security, states are forced to provide their own. Uncertain of each other’s intentions, each state must be ready to use force at any time (Waltz: 1959, 159,160).

If a rigorous theoretical approach is sought, then the only level of analysis that can be used to derive laws and theory is that of the system, or third image, and the other two images set aside. Here, Waltz draws a distinction between reductionist and systemic theories, with systemic theories offering more explanatory value than reductionist ones. Reductionist theories must take the international system to simply be a byproduct of state behaviour, rather than the opposite, that state behaviour is a byproduct of the international system. Focusing on the character of states, or the behavior of states, does not necessarily lead to an adequate, or even accurate, explanation or understanding of international relations (Waltz: 1986, 51). Noting that there has generally been a recurring pattern of international behavior over the course of human history, the main question is how to best account for that behavior in a manner that can be consistently applied across a wide range of historical events and circumstances?

The one constant that Waltz sees throughout the history of conflict between states, is the anarchical nature of the international system. Though the individual actors might vary over time (ie. city states, empires, tribes etc...), they all coexisted under conditions of anarchy, lacking any overarching authority or power to impose its will upon them (Waltz: 1979, 66). Having found a constant variable, the next step is determining an independent variable that can be adjusted to observe outcomes. A reductionist approach that examines characteristics within the states is inadequate and would be inconsistent between states. Rather, the independent variable Waltz uses is that of the structure, or distribution of capabilities amongst the units, and the relationship between these

units of the international system. Changes in the structure consequently result in changes in unit behavior (Waltz: 1979, 80). As Waltz noted, consideration of structure is paramount because “units differently juxtaposed and combined behave differently and in interacting produce different outcomes (Waltz: 1979, 81)”. The unit of analysis of international relations is therefore the state.

This leads to two further elements of structural realism: state centrism and no differentiation between individual states based on their internal characteristics. Structural realism is state centric, in that states are the principal, if not only, unit considered in structural realism. They are all generally functionally identical, in that they each perform the same functions, and no other actor performs the same role (Waltz: 1979, 93). They differ only in terms of their capabilities and capacity to perform these functions. By treating states as equals in terms of function also contributes to the importance of sovereignty as a basis for their equality. The hierarchy of states is one of power and capability. By focusing strictly on the capability of states, and their relation to one another in terms of these capabilities, this effectively treats all states as the same.¹

By maintaining a state centric orientation and treating states as functionally identical, it also highlights the importance of focusing on the impact of the international system on state behavior. The anarchical system forces states to behave in a similar manner, effectively imposing a structure of states differentiated only in capability, but identical in functional respects. System and

¹ Waltz draws a useful parallel to firms competing within the market. Here, the market is treated as the system, composed of functionally identical firms, each fulfilling the same role: the selling of products. They differ only in their capacity to produce and sell their goods (Waltz: 1979, 97).

structure effectively impose behavior on states; the reverse is not generally true: states generally cannot alter the impact of the system (Waltz: 1979, 100). There can be no considerations for the second level of analysis, for doing so would effectively add additional variables that could not be controlled for. This leads to a further tenet of structural realism: that states are the principal actors of international relations. No other actor fulfills the same function, has the same characteristics, and can apply the same level of violence as can the state. Consequently, while other non state actors, such as NGOs and international institutions can have an impact, they cannot have the same structural impact that states do, and are therefore not included within the theory.

In an anarchical system, all states have similar concerns, and behave in a similar manner. This is a consequence of the system. Waltz accepts the view that states effectively exist in a state of war with one another. In this, he accepts a similar position to how philosopher Thomas Hobbes viewed the state of nature between individuals, and applies it to states. Waltz argued that “Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so – or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbors” (Waltz: 1979, 102).

While Hobbes was drawing on a explanation rooted in human nature for the state of war, Waltz would explain such behaviour in terms of rational choice. States exist in a self help system where they, and they alone, are ultimately responsible for their security. This leads to the main motivation of states, namely, survival. This is guaranteed through having sufficient economic and military power.

Waltz is largely skeptical about the ability of international organization and interdependence to regulate or even mitigate the power seeking behavior of states. Interdependence is generally understood as a form of specialization, where actors, such as firms each focus on producing goods or services that they can do best, and allow others to do the with different goods or services. This effectively eliminates competition, and allows for the highest quality of products to be made. Such specialization is not possible with states. Sovereign states are functionally similar. They cannot specialize in their functions to the point where they no longer fulfill certain functions, for at that point they would effectively no longer be sovereign states (Waltz: 1979, 105). Even if such specialization were possible, it would bring on additional dangers that security seeking states would be sensitive to. In instances where each actor specializes, and then engages in exchange with other specializing actors, all actors benefit. The issue that states are concerned with is not who benefits, but who benefits most? Simply put, states care about relative gains amongst all participants (Waltz: 1979, 105). If one state gains significantly more over time than the others, they may be able greatly increase their ability to harm others states. Consequently, states are often unwilling to put themselves in positions where they are put at risk. This is effectively a pareto inefficient outcome, but one that is rational for individually power maximizing actors.

Structural realism suggests that pareto inefficient outcomes occur fairly frequently in the international system, as they occur because of behavior imposed by the system itself. Collective action problems cannot be easily

resolved. Limiting arms spending, controlling pollution, and responding to natural disasters are all examples of problems that cannot be easily addressed. International institutions and organizations are perhaps the principal vehicle of resolving these, but such a solution is still hamstrung by systemic constraints. States are unwilling to fully adhere to the organization or institution as others may not, and they would consequently be disadvantaged. Alternatively, they may not want to participate, but encourage others to participate, and freeload off of any ensuing benefits. Regardless, states know that institutions by themselves cannot resolve their individual security concerns. If institutions had enough power to protect the states, then states would see the institution as a potential security threat and act accordingly. However, to a certain extent, states can, and do, self regulate to avoid completely self destructive behavior. They may realize that the costs of competition or war may vastly outweigh any possible benefits that may gain, and in some cases, limit their actions (Waltz: 1979, 114). One example of recognizing the value of restraint can be seen during the Cold War and the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction, where the costs of escalating to a nuclear conflict were understood to be exceptionally high.

Waltz identifies two primary behaviors states undertake that can be found in international relations under an anarchical system. These are balancing, and bandwagoning, respectively. Since bandwagoning involves one power forming a partnership with a much more powerful state in a lesser capacity, it is seldom seen amongst great powers, but more frequently among smaller states. In multipolar systems, bandwaggoning is a suitable strategy for great powers, as it

effectively forces them to concede to another power. This leaves balancing as the remaining behaviour for great powers. Balance of power theory remains a frequent theme in structural realist literature, as it makes two assumptions: that the system is anarchical, and states want to survive (Waltz: 1979, 121). It suggests that states will balance against one another to try to prevent a state from acquiring enough power to dominate the system. They can do so by internal balancing or external balancing. Internal balancing entails a state making itself stronger by increasing its military, economy, developing new technologies or tactics, or even acquiring additional resources by conquest. External balancing involves acquiring allies to contain the potential challenger(s). States will constantly shift and rebalance as the power of states waxes and wanes, as old threats fade, and new ones emerge. The most extreme form of balancing can be seen as attempting not to increase one's own power, but to hinder the growth of others. The most obvious example would be attacking an enemy outright. However, there can be many less extreme options, such as economic measures or encouraging or strengthening hostile third parties as potential allies to help balance against (or even attack) the enemy state.²

Structural realists have generally retained a number of assumptions of realist theory that form the framework of structural realism, and in turn, are used to help generate further insights into international relations, both by advancing realist theory, and generating a structural realist response to other theoretical perspectives. It is worth briefly examining the general conception of structural

² For a more complete list of ways states can externally balance one another see Mearsheimer: 2001, Chapter 5

realism to gain a better understanding of how these principals have been further developed into additional insights about state behavior and international politics. First and foremost, structural realists assume that the state is the primary actor in international politics (Grieco: 1988, 488) (Mearsheimer: 2001, 30). Other actors, such as international institutions, or subnational actors such as nongovernmental organizations or transnational actors such as corporations, though they may have an impact on the conduct of international relations, do not have the same overwhelming ability to use force and shape outcomes that states have. The focus must be on how states interact with one another. Second, structural realists assume states are rational actors (Grieco:1988, 488) (Waltz: 1986, 331). They can assess the costs and benefits of potential courses of action, and typically chose the best option. Third, that the causal driver for state action is the anarchical nature of the international system. This is largely unchanged from how classical realists characterized the international system. Because of this anarchy, states are inclined to be concerned with security, and compete with one another. As all states share a similar motivation (survival), secondary concerns, such as ideology can be set aside (Mearsheimer: 2001, 47). Some realists have gone so far as to characterized states as being like billiards balls of different weights and sizes that interact with one another by rolling and bouncing on a table; what happens inside the state has little impact on how they behave with others (Mearsheimer: 2001, 11). States are generally uncertain of each other's intentions. This uncertainty about the intentions of others requires them to maximize their relative share of power in the system in order to assure their

own security. They accept that they are all security seeking, and recognize that one state may increase its security not only by increasing its own power, but also by harming another state. Since all states possess some level of ability to harm each other, they must consequently view each other with a certain level of wariness, if not as outright rivals. This does not mean that states constantly lie to each other. John Mearsheimer observed that instances of states outright lying to one another are quite rare. However states can deceive one another (ie. in negotiations), manipulate, hide their strength, or simply not reveal any intentions at all (Mearsheimer: 2011, 25). He also noted that leaders are more likely to lie to their own people about their intentions than to other states (Mearsheimer: 2011, 13). This suggests that domestic politics can serve to as a potential indicator of a state's foreign intentions, and provides cues that other states can (or should) pay attention to in order to help reduce their own uncertainty about others intentions. This serves to reinforce the fact that states might only be able to rely upon themselves for assistance, for it may be difficult to say when the ally a state relies upon may become an enemy in the future. The difficulties for states in trusting others will be further explored in the following sections.

The security dilemma is a problem that states face that is a result of the anarchical international system, and the ensuing uncertainty that makes cooperation among states difficult. Because states are insecure, they seek to increase their security. They generally do so by military and economic expansion, either by increasing economic output, increasing the size of its military, or innovating technologically. However, increases in one state's

security can cause other states to feel increasingly insecure, causing them to increase their own security, essentially leading to a vicious cycle that cannot easily be broken.

In his article *Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma* Robert Jervis explored how state perceptions might be both a cause and means of mitigating the effects of the security dilemma (Jervis: 1978). Using a game theoretical approach, he argued that depending on the military technology and means and ease that states can attack one another, the security dilemma is either seen as a prisoner's dilemma style game, or a Stag Hunt style game (Jervis: 1978, 178).³ Though the security dilemma originates from systemic concerns, Jervis finds the solution to mitigating it is through unit level considerations. States must consider the question of "how much security is enough security?" They must also recognize situations where other states seeking to increase their security does not automatically make them potential aggressors, but merely rectifying a significant imbalance in the balance of power, without unbalancing it in their favor (Jervis: 1978, 183). Two conditions that relate to military technology further impact the security dilemma, and whether or not it is in effect. First, if strictly defensive weapons can be distinguished from offensive weapons, states may be less sensitive to the pressures of the dilemma. Second, if defense is generally considered to be more effective than offence, states may worry less about attacks from other states, and subsequently, less sensitive to the dilemma.

³ A stag hunt is a game intended to demonstrate problems of social cooperation. Players are given the option to either hunt a stag or a hare; if all players choose to hunt the stag, then all benefit greatly, but if some players choose a guaranteed smaller payoff of hunting a hare, players who hunt the stag will get nothing.

These two conditions are not without fault. It can be very difficult to differentiate between offensive and defensive weapons (Jervis: 1978, 199). For example, naval mines are typically used to prevent enemy vessels from approaching harbours and other waters. However, they could also be placed in enemy waters to inhibit the effective movement of merchant and naval ships. Anti aircraft guns are usually used to areas from bombers. Alternatively, they could accompany attack soldiers to prevent the enemy from using helicopters or ground attack airplanes.

Jervis further develops the concept of the security dilemma into “offence-defence” theory. This theory suggests that whether or not states are expansionist or constantly seeking to increase their security (ie. behaving as if the security dilemma was in effect) depends on whether or not offensive strategies, such as seizing territory or attacking enemies is more effective than defensive strategies, such as fortifying borders (Jervis: 1978, 187). When offence is more effective than defence, states have many incentives to behave in an expansionist manner. Striking first becomes a strategic necessity (Jervis: 1978, 189). In turn, this only increases the wariness and distrust that states regard one another with. When attacks can be easily stopped, states behave in a different manner (Jervis: 1978, 190). If states are less concerned about others striking first (or being the first to strike), mistrust is less of an issue. Depending on the circumstances, smaller states may even be able to adequately protect themselves from larger ones.

The balance is determined by two key factors: geography and technology (Jervis: 1978, 194). The combination of these two factors plays a significant role

in determining how sensitive states are to attack, and their willingness to strike first when potentially threatened. . Geography in particular can greatly impact how, or if, a state might feel vulnerable. The most obvious examples are states that have large natural barriers that make defense easy, such as rivers, oceans or mountain ranges. Having large amounts of land can also be advantageous for defenders, as it can often be traded for time, allowing the defenders time to mobilize and harass invaders. Mearsheimer later observed the “stopping power of water”, arguing that it played a great role in enhancing the security of states such as the United Kingdom and the United States (Mearsheimer: 2001, 83). Conversely, he also noted of the primacy of land power as the principal measure of strength of states. The other factor is that of weapons technology (Mearsheimer: 2001, 61). If weapons themselves are vulnerable, or can easily be destroyed by a first attack (ie. bombers, missile silos), then they must be used first. If they can be more readily protected, then the balance once again swings to the defence. For example, in the Cold War, land based nuclear missiles were vulnerable to a first strike. With the advent of submarine launched missiles, they could be protected from a first strike, diminishing the sensitivity felt towards sneak attacks and first strikes. Other times, certain technological innovations may favor offence. For example, the widespread adoption of mechanized armor working in concert with aircraft made offensive tactics such as the German *blitzkrieg* particularly effective when combined with strategic surprise. For example, when attacking an enemy whose forces require both time to mobilize, and are tied to existing fortifications, the attacking force can achieve significant

gains before an effective response be made, as was seen in the German offensive against France in the Second World War.

A significant theoretical challenger to structural realism is liberal institutionalism. Liberal institutionalism argues that international agreements and institutions can be an effective means of shaping state behavior in spite of the many of the consequences of the anarchical system (Keohane and Marin: 1995). The structural realist reply to this challenge is useful because it explains why states are often reluctant to enter in agreements with other states, and why those agreements often break down, namely that states remain concerned about maximizing power over in the short term (Mearsheimer: 1995, 82). Among the causes for the break down (or inability) of institutions are the inability for institutions to regulate state behaviour in an anarchical system, and since the system continues to be anarchical, concerns of the relative distribution of any gains made through the institution remain.

Institutions can provide a wide range of benefits to all participants who are a part of them. Realists do not deny this. However, the concern from a realist perspective is that some states benefit more than others. Institutionalism is correct in that participation can yield absolute gains for states. However, the issue to realists is that states care far more about relative gains than they do absolute gains, as the relative distribution of gains has strong implications for how states will balance (Grieco: 1988). This ties to several key realist assumptions, namely the fact that all states have the capacity to harm one another, and that states are uncertain about each others intentions. Relative gains

matter because today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy; if they greatly benefit from an agreement today, they may be able to easily hurt you tomorrow. This behavior is a direct consequence of the systemic anarchy that structural realism focuses on (Grieco: 1988, 487). This does not mean that states do not enter into agreements, only that they are wary and generally careful about doing so. For example, agreements, such as military alliances are often made as a type of balancing behavior against potential threats. As the threat passes, there may be questions about whether or not to continue the agreement. Similar concerns about economic arrangements exist. If one state greatly benefits from trade while the other benefits less, they may be at a disadvantage in the future. The uncertainty and mistrust between states, combined with dangers of the anarchical system causes structural realists (and most realists in general) to be skeptical about the ability of states to allow international institutions to permanently alter states to behave in a way other than suggested by realist theory and move beyond the security seeking struggle that the international system requires. Realists would be unsurprised (and generally opposed to the idea) that international institutions or agreements, in of themselves, would be sufficient to prevent interstate conflict (Mearsheimer: 1995, 82).

The above review of structural realism and its concepts has reviewed its theoretical model, assumptions, and extensions. By limiting itself to a limited number of principals and assumptions, structural realism offers a number of theoretical strengths, particularly the potential for rigor and replicability over a long period of time, allowing recurrent patterns of behaviour to emerge, namely

the repeated pattern of balancing behaviour observed by Waltz and others. Structural realists, beginning with Waltz, are likely correct in seeking to reduce the potential sources of state behavior in the international system, particularly by discarding the classical realist notion of human nature as a source of conflict. However, structural realism is also not without weakness. By overly focusing on the impact of the third image, that of system, on international politics it does not address how unit level considerations within the state can also impact the conduct of international politics. This is problematic, because many structural realist concepts, such as offence-defense theory and balance of threat would benefit greatly by making unit level considerations, particularly when considering issues of perception, as such considerations can have a considerable impact on the eventual outcome. To continue with Mearsheimer's analogy of comparing states to billiards balls interacting with one another, states are not just opaque balls of a particular mass that interact with one another, bouncing and knocking each other about. What goes on inside the ball can have a considerable impact on its mass, and direction and target. Thus, the principal thrust of this criticism is to demonstrate how unit level variables should be important to structural realism.

To take a brief step back, structural realism argues that states behave in a generally similar manner, on account of the inherently anarchical international system. This behavior generally entails a rational maximization of power for the sake of survival. However, this does not generally acknowledge that state actions are made as a results of how leaders and decision makers perceive the

international system and its dangers. These perceptions matter greatly as they impact who is seen to be a threat and what can be done to meet that threat. Other factors such as ideological and social developments may have an impact on state power and resources, and states that harness such changes may find themselves in more powerful positions.

To survive in an anarchical system, states should generally possess two things: sufficient power to ensure its security, and the capacity to utilize that power effectively. The capacity to utilize power effectively can be understood as a state's competence. The notion of state competence is somewhat problematic for structural realists to incorporate. For example, Waltz makes an extensive list of measures to assess a state's rank within the system, ranging from population, military and economic strength, and state competence (Waltz: 1979, 131). While the first several measures are easy to assess and weigh, the notion of competence is less so. A state's competence could be measured by effective leadership, organized bureaucracy, functional intelligence and diplomatic services and a well organized military. These measure however, are much more difficult to quantify than other measures of power, such as numbers of ships or soldiers or GDP. Nonetheless, state competency can be an important indication of power that is worth considering. How "state competency" can be assessed without making unit level analysis however, is unsaid.

State competence directly impacts several structural realist concepts. For example, offence-defense balance depends on whether or not military technology favors offence over defense (or vice versa). Correctly assessing this

is crucial, for leaders that fail to realize they are vulnerable may find themselves threatened by states that have correctly interpreted the balance. In a similar vein, interpreting intelligence and the intentions of other states is also a key factor for competent leaders. A good example of misinterpreting the offence-defense balance can be found in the post World War 1 Europe. Having witnessed the effectiveness of trench warfare in stopping offensive activity during the war, conventional wisdom suggested that the balance strongly favored defense over offence. Failure to realize how new technologies and strategies favored highly mobile offensive forces led some countries to assume they were more secure than they actually were. The Maginot Line proved ineffective in protecting France from Germany due to Germany circumventing the fixed defences by attacking through Belgium and other neutral countries. Effective diplomacy can also compensate for other weaknesses. For example in the 19th century, Austria Hungary faced a wide range of internal stability issues stemming from the multinational nature of its empire. However, it maintained its great power status largely due to the effective diplomacy and statecraft of its leaders such as Klemens von Metternich.

Social and ideological movements can also have a drastic impact on the state's power. For example, during the wars French Revolution, the National Convention declared a *levee en mass* that effectively conscripted the entire population for the defense of the new state. Such mass conscription was facilitated through the cultivation of nationalist feelings in the French population. This drastically increased the size of the French armies, especially

compared to the smaller militaries of the neighboring states that France was at war with. Such mass conscription was much more easily accomplished as a result of the ideological and social changes that resulted from the revolution. Though on paper, the other European great powers had comparable resources, they could not muster the numbers of the French. Social change can have a direct structural consequence on a state's position within the international structure. Only by looking into the previously opaque billiards balls can we understand how this might happen. Effective leadership is required to recognize and to take advantage of any opportunities that such changes may present. By only treating the state as a rational, unitary actor, structural realism does not see dynamics such as these. That being said, structural realism does not attempt to see such dynamics, for by doing so it would move away from a system level of analysis, and in turn, lose much of its rigor. Nonetheless, such structural realism should be interested in the consequences of such dynamics, given how they can impact a state's position within the international system.

Opening the Black Box: Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism is a more recent development within the realist school of thought. Neoclassical realism was first identified by Gideon Rose while reviewing work by Tomas Christensen, Randall Schweller and William Wohlforth. It was understood as a distinct theory, separate from other realist theories of the time (Rose: 1998, 146). It represents a synthesis of elements of both classical realist and structural realist theories in order to correct some of the perceived weaknesses of both classical and structural realist views, while

generating additional insights into state behavior. Like structural realists, there are debates between neoclassical realists on a number of points. However, they are all generally share a similar framework and assumptions. In particular, neoclassical realism generally argues that domestic politics can have an impact on state behavior in the international system. This does not mean that domestic politics is the only determinant of state behavior, merely that it can play an important role. The consequent impact of this influence is that states can sometimes act in ways other the unitary rational actor seen my traditional structural realism would, for depending on the circumstances, a state might neither be rational nor unitary.

This review will begin by briefly examining the key characteristics of neoclassical realism, and how it is distinguished from both classical realism, and structural realism. It will then examine how the neoclassical realist analysis functions, which actors are considered important, and what types of outcomes it might anticipate. Finally, it will assess the theoretical utility of neoclassical realism, and argue that although it must be careful about ascribing too much importance to unit level variables at the expense of system level considerations, it is a useful theoretical extension of structural realism, particularly in situations that require a greater examination of how states perceive dangers, and how domestic politics might constrain or enable particular types of responses.

Neoclassical realism diverges from structural realism on a number of points. The main distinction between the two is that while structural realism is a theory of international relations, neoclassical realism is a theory of foreign

policy. That is, structural realism explains broad patterns of behavior that can be expected to recur over time within the international system. Kenneth Waltz noted that using structural realist theory “We cannot know what state X will do on Tuesday” (Waltz; 1979, 121). What structural realism does do, is outline the range of possible actions, consequences of those actions, and make general predictions based on previously observed patterns of behaviour. What neoclassical realism does, is to attempt to answer not only what state X did on Tuesday, but how and why state X did the things it did. While structural realism predicts that states will balance against threats, or that states who fail to balance effectively will face consequences, it cannot say more, although it can perhaps highlight a range of potential courses of action. Jeffery Taliaferro noted that “It does not explain why and how states choose among different types of “internal” balancing strategies, such as emulation, innovation, or the continuation of existing strategies (Taliaferro: 2006, 466).” For example, during the French Revolutionary Wars, through the use of mass conscription, France vastly increased the size of her armies. Other states did not enact similar reforms, despite the obvious advantages that such reforms brought. Structural realism cannot answer why this was the case, since at first glance, other states would attempt to emulate such an obvious advantage. As these are unit level factors, structural realism cannot answer why, and because it is a systems level theory, can make to claim to being able to do so. While it may not be reasonable to criticize structural realism for being unable to offer such an explanation, it should simply be noted as a limitation of the theory. In this sense, neoclassical

realism can be seen as a tool used to confirm, or disprove, the general patterns of behavior that structural realism predicts, as many types of balancing behavior might not be readily apparent, or conversely, not seen at all.

As previously mentioned, that unlike structural realism, neoclassical realism does not accept that states always behave as rational unitary actors. However, there are many consequences of this. First and foremost, it changes how power is understood. structural realists are generally concerned with the general distribution of power within the international system. However, they do not adequately conceptualize what exactly that power is, and how it can be understood and measured. Some structural realists, such as Mearsheimer, have gone so far as reducing power to measurements of military strength, arguing that “power in international politics is largely a product of the military forces that a state possesses (Mearsheimer: 2001, 83). This approach to power oversimplifies many potential aspects of power, particularly matters of state competency, which neoclassical realism has the potential to understand, namely that a wide range of domestic factors can intervene to render a state much less powerful than might otherwise appear.

It is also worth briefly highlighting how neoclassical realism diverges from classical realism. The main divergence is how they understand the causal relationship of conflict in the international system. Unlike classical realism, neoclassical realism general eschews the first image explanations drawing on human nature, and tends to rely on the third level, that of systemic causes.

Neoclassical realism offers a much more nuanced approach to understanding power. Power is understood to be the ability of the state to mobilize domestic resources to respond to a threat (Taliaferro: 2006, 467). Political scientist Brian Rathburn further argued that ideas and domestic politics play a significant role in the composition of state power (Rathburn: 2008, 296). Ultimately, the neoclassical conception of power recognizes how power is not just the number of soldiers or warships or missiles, but encompasses much more, ultimately reflecting the relationship between state and society. If the state is not able to effectively mobilize its population and utilize its resources, then it may in fact be significantly less powerful than it might appear to a structural realist. Alternatively, a state that is able to effectively mobilize societal forces and marshal its resources may be far more powerful than otherwise thought (or perceived).

Neoclassical realism shares other realist theories conception of the international system, in that it believes it is inherently anarchical, and composed of states that are power seeking for the purpose of preserving and enhancing their own position within the system (Taliaferro et al: 2009, 4). States understandably care a great deal about their position within the international system, as that has a direct impact on the types of policies that they can pursue. At a minimum, they have a systemic imperative to care about their survival. However, it is important not to oversimplify this. Gideon Rose observed that:

Neoclassical realism argues that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by the country's relative material power. Yet it contends that the impact of power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex,

because system pressures must be translated through intervening unit level variables such as decision makers' perceptions and state structures (Rose: 1998, 146).

This analysis highlights the major focus of neoclassical realism. Rather than only examining the distribution of power within the system as structural realism does, the focus is on how states interpret and perceive that distribution of power.

The causal model of neoclassical realism begins at the same point as structural realism: that the anarchical international system imposes certain constraints and dangers upon states. The distribution of power within this system will cause states to behave in different manners in terms of how they engage in security seeking behaviour. Like with structural realism, this remains the independent variable. This independent variable incorporates a wide range of structural realists concepts, including the general distribution of power in the system, a states position within the system, geographical concerns and the overall offence-defence balance. However, an intervening variable is added to the equation. This variable consists of domestic constraints, perceptions of elites and other state-society constraints. The dependent variable is the observed foreign policy decisions and outcomes (Taliaferro et al: 2009, 20). This causal model, particularly the dependent variable, reflects the noted difference between the two theories. Structural realism examines systemic outcomes, such as the impact of the balance of power (or changes in the balance of power), patterns of war and peace; neoclassical realism examines foreign policy outcomes of specific states. The intervening variable is used to help explain the relationship between the cause and the observed outcomes.

Having established that domestic politics can act as an intervening variable to states reacting to the distribution of power, it is necessary to determine what exactly is “the state” in this context. The state is largely controlled by some sort of executive that is ultimately responsible for making decisions. In Steven Lobell’s view, this foreign policy executive (FPE) merits most of the analysis. This executive is composed of key decision makers for foreign policy decisions, typically heads of state/government, cabinet and key advisors within government departments. Since states respond to external threats, those who are ultimately responsible for assessing those threats and determining an appropriate course of action to meet them, merit examination (Lobell: 2009, 43). The FPE represents the nexus between the international system, and domestic politics, as it is concerned with both those realms. The fundamental role of the executive is to formulate a strategy to maximize the state’s security. In other words, the FPE adopts a very realist outlook of the international system, and the dangers and constraints it imposes.

However, the international system is not the only concern of the FPE. They also must respond to domestic political forces, either to respond to their pressures, or to help shape them as part of the response of the state to a potential threat. In other words, the FPE must have a strong understanding of the state’s extractive capacity to mobilize its resources, and the conditions that allow it to be maximized. For neoclassical realists, there are several questions that must be answered to understand the relationship between international threats, the FPE, and domestic politics: how are threats assessed, who has power to influence the

FPE, and what happens if there is a disagreement between domestic actors and the FPE about the severity of a threat (Lobell: 2009, 45)? Some domestic groups may have significant vested interests in not taking action against a potential threat, and attempt to prevent the FPE from acting against it; conversely some groups may want the FPE to recognize and act against a particular threat. The difficulty facing the FPE is that it must recognize the dangers of the anarchical international system; there is not a requirement for domestic actors to do so.

The role of the FPE is not simply limited to identifying threats. It must also determine the best way to respond to those threats. Structural realism has already identified the two broad categories of responses: external and internal balancing. States either form alliances with other states, or do what they can to increase their own strength. There are three broad categories of internal strategies states pursue: maintain existing strategies, emulate the strategies of others, or innovate new strategies (Taliaferro: 2006, 471). The FPE's role is to assess which of these strategies can be used to best ensure success. This should not suggest that the FPE is somehow free of systemic constraints. The same limitations that structural realism argues states are faced with still exist, and it is still possible for states to fail to address these challenges.

Domestic actors may have vested interests that are impacted by which of these strategies are pursued. The extent to which they are impacted can determine whether or not the FPE will pursue it, or choose an alternative. Thus domestic actors can further constrain (or potentially enable) the options available

to the FPE. This paints a picture of a state that is far from the rational, unitary actor envisioned by structural realism. Rather than being able to respond appropriately to threats, the state's ability to respond is partially limited by domestic actors. In circumstances where domestic actors recognize the same threats as the FPE, and the need to respond appropriately, then the state best resembles a rational unitary actor. In cases where there are disagreements about threats and how to respond, the state moves further away from the rational unitary actor envisioned by structural realism (Rathburn: 2008,296). This further highlights the importance of an effective FPE that can keep domestic actors from constraining state options, or minimizing its influence. If the FPE can align what domestic interests perceive as a threat with what it sees as a threat to the state, then these constraints may be lessened. For example, they can attempt to inculcate a sense of nationalism, or ideology to help shape these views (Taliaferro: 2006, 496). This in turn allows the state to act and to mobilize further resources.

Because of the impact of domestic actors on the FPE, or the inability of the FPE to effectively assess a situation, states do not always choose the best strategies or policies for dealing with threats. Rather than effective level of internal or external balancing, a number of additional alternatives exist. Depending on the threat, and the strength of domestic actors, states may overbalance, underbalance, bandwagon, or attempt to pass the buck to other states. The closer the state response is to an effective level of balancing, the closer they match the outcome forecasted by structural realists.

Neoclassical realism provides an effective means of addressing some of the weaknesses of structural realist theory that were identified earlier, namely the importance of the question of the perception of states, both in terms of their own capabilities, and the intentions of others. Realism in general is certainly correct to claim that states seek power in order to ensure their own security. However, understanding how to go about obtaining that power, and what could constitute a threat to that power is an essential component to understanding the power seeking behavior of states. After all, is a powerful state that cannot effectively use its power to further its security genuinely powerful (or secure)? Moreover, if other states recognize how domestic influences of rival states can weaken them, it offers another avenue for attempting to balance against them.

By reconceptualizing power to include the extractive capacity of the state and state-society relations, neoclassical realism offers a more nuanced view of power than structural realism. To be sure, the structural realist focus on military and economic strength is a significant, if not, principal component of power. However, unless the state has the capacity to translate those resources into useful capabilities, and develops the capability to utilize its developed strength effectively, then the state may be less powerful than structural realism acknowledges. This conception of power is similar to that used by classical realists. For example, Morgenthau argued that “The quality of government is patently a source of strength or weakness with respect to most of the factors upon which national power depends, especially in view of the influence the government exerts upon natural resources, industrial capacity, and military

preparedness. (Morgenthau: 1966, 138)” Without looking at unit level variables, structural realism may not be able to adequately account for it within the balance of power. By considering extractive capacity as an element of power, neoclassical realism helps make a more fulsome assessment of where a state fits within the existing balance of power among states, and may make more accurate assessments of significant structural shifts in power that structural realism may not be able to easily predict.

Neoclassical realism is correct to pay attention to domestic factors such as ideology, the relationship between state and society. The relationship between state and society plays a very significant impact on the potential power of the state. Changes in this relationship might allow states to better mobilize resources. Just as states tend to mimic successful practices and strategies of other states, so too can they gradually change their state society relations. Some have even argued that relationships, such as constitutional arrangements are in of themselves forms of strategy that states experiment and innovate with over time, adopting successful innovations and discarding failures (Bobbitt: 2002). Given that structural realism argues that states tend to emulate successful strategic practices over time, and that state-society relationships should be seen as a type of innovation, structural realism should be interested in many of these implications on state power.

Although neoclassical realism offers many advantages, it is still unclear in some respect to the impact of some domestic factors and how exactly they influence foreign policy. While it does acknowledge that ideas and ideology can

have a significant impact on the states power, specific questions about how this happens, and translates into additional extractive capacity for the state are more difficult to answer. For example, it can be difficult to determine the impact of different forms of government on the extractive capacity of the state. For example, authoritarian governments may find it easier to mobilize many resources using the increased power of the state. Conversely, many liberal forms of government may be more effective in exploiting highly engaged citizens to its cause. Nationalism would likely have an additional influence that might be easily observable, but harder to incorporate meaningfully into an explanatory model.

States seldom act in situations where they have perfect information about a particular situation. They may lack knowledge of other states intentions, their capabilities, or even fail to adequately understand their own capabilities. This makes neoclassical realism's emphasis on what states or state leaders perceive to be true particularly important (Rathburn: 2008, 315). Complete knowledge or awareness, let alone objective knowledge, of any situation is difficult to obtain. Reflecting how states cope with the possibility of uncertainty in their decisions. Waltz's structural realism suggests states balance against rival powers. Other structural realists have alternatively suggested that states may not automatically attempt to balance against power, but rather against states that are perceived to pose a threat (Walt: 1990). Neoclassical realism provides a useful tool to help further advance such arguments.

Concluding Remarks on Literature Reviewed

Ultimately, structural realism and neoclassical realism should be seen as complementary theories that seek to explain similar phenomenon at different levels of analysis. Although they differ in many respects, such as the assumptions they are based on, and what aspects of state behaviour they seek to explain, each explain the behavior of states in the international system in a different manner.

By focusing on a system level of analysis and by employing a straightforward causal model, structural realism offers many useful and relevant insights into international relations and the behavior of states. Its emphasis on how the anarchical international system and distribution of power shape state actions in turns helps further a number of useful concepts such as the security dilemma and offence-defense theory further explain the types of behavior structural realists observe, namely states acting in a rational security seeking manner, either be increasing their own power, or potentially attacking others that pose a threat to their own security. The principal weakness of structural realism is that it assumes too little about the nature of power, and how states acquire it. By effectively reducing power to measurable indicators, such as military and economic strength, a number of relevant dynamics are missed. Nor does it permit the influence of unit level variables to impact its analysis of a state's behavior. In turn, this causes structural realism to miss a wide range of behavior that can play a significant role in a state's power. Nonetheless, structural realism remains highly relevant, as states are always subject to the constraints imposed

by the international system; a theory that focuses on the impact of those constraints remains relevant so long as those constraints exist.

Neoclassical realism, as some have argued, is a logical, if not necessary, extension of structural realist theory (Rathbun: 2008). By retaining structural realism's emphasis on how states react to the constraints and influences of the international system, and recognizing how unit level variables can also influence state behavior, neoclassical realism effectively bridges some of the limitations identified in structural realism. These limitations should not be understood as weaknesses inherent in structural realist theory, but limits arising from its level of analysis. Neoclassical realism does not reject structural realism by examining foreign policy at a different level. Much of the causal logic remains the same: the international system and the distribution of power within the system determine the states behavior. However, domestic politics can cause states to deviate from what an ideal response might otherwise be. Neoclassical realism can be useful for identifying these domestic influences, and how states harness or mitigate their influences, or alternatively, fall prey to them. Its main weakness is that it must be careful about over ascribing the influences of domestic actors on foreign policy, or overestimating unit level variables, such as the impact of ideas and cultivation of particular ideologies and beliefs on state behavior. Regardless of these weaknesses, neoclassical realism remains a useful theory, particularly when employed in conjunction with structural realism, to provide more fulsome answers to questions of how states respond to the constraints and imperatives of the international system that both emphasize.

Chapter 3: A Structural Realist Account of Appeasement

The following chapter will explore the factors that structural realist theory would consider when evaluating possible outcomes in the international system. The question considered is whether or not the British foreign policy based around a strategy of appeasing a resurgent Germany can be adequately explained through structural realist considerations. It is worth noting that although appeasement had its beginnings in 1936 many earlier events should be considered as they may have a considerable impact upon the issues Britain was faced with, particularly as they had an impact upon both individual state's power, and the relative distribution of power within the international system.

The first, and perhaps most important factor structural realism would consider, is the distribution of power within the international system. The second factor to consider is how the United Kingdom might interpret the existing offence-defence balance, as this balance plays an important role in determining whether or not particular threats can exist, and the types of responses that would be appropriate to meet those threats. Third, the extent to which England could be certain of the intentions of other states must be considered. Such understanding such intentions are essential to making an assessment of the likely balance of power, and understanding which states are potential allies, and which ones might be potential foes. Finally, it will consider whether or not existing international institutions or agreements could be used in some capacity to mitigate the dangers posed by other states, either through collective security arrangements, arms control or other means.

The Distribution of Power

Europe in the 1930s was a multipolar system, containing a wide range of greater powers, and many smaller states. England's position within this system, as well as the positions of potential allies and enemies is a critical consideration in determining what actions would be expected by structural realist theory. In addition to considering the England, attention should be paid to the other great powers, namely France, the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy, the United States and Japan.

Power in this context will follow the traditional realist understanding, namely hard power. This consists of factors, namely military and economic strength. Military strength is considered in terms of both number of soldiers, and the quality of equipment available. Economic strength consists of industrial capacity, the existence of adequate domestic infrastructure such as sufficient electrical capacity, communications and railways, financial stability, and adequate supplies of stable labour.

Compared to many other European powers, England was comparatively well situated, with numerous advantages. That being said, it still faced a wide range of challenges and had many weaknesses, both economic and military that made it difficult to adequately respond to the many challenges it faced.

England faced a wide range of financial and economic difficulties. As a predominantly maritime nation, it was dependant upon international trade a source of goods and revenue. However, since 1913, its share of this trade had been steadily dwindling. Combined with the significant resources spent fighting

the Triple-Alliance in the First World War, and the subsequent economic stagnation and the Great Depression which damaged the global economy and seriously harmed the important British financial services sector, depressed demand abroad for English goods, the English economy was facing many significant challenges that needed to be overcome. Some measures that were adopted, such as the decision to abandon the gold standard and to allow the value of the British Pound to float, had mixed results. On one hand, the reduced value of the Pound made the export of British goods more affordable for buyers abroad. On the other hand, the abandonment of the gold standard seriously shook confidence in British finances and further impacted the financial sector (Kennedy: 1987, 316). Other measures to boost trade included a range of tariffs on imported goods and attempts to increase trade from within the British Empire and other nearby markets that were largely involved with British trade, such as the Scandinavian countries (McDonough: 1998, 140).

Under these conditions of economic difficulty, the British government was nonetheless expected to continue to function, providing necessary social spending at home and to maintain its existing overseas commitments to the Empire. Without a sound economic footing, it would be impossible for the United Kingdom to effectively rearm; it is unsurprising that Chamberlain and other policy makers described having a sound economic and financial footing as being the “4th arm of defence”, next to the three military services (Caputi: 2000, 138). The issue of funding defence expenditures was straightforward, but difficult to resolve. Given the slow recovery of the British economy, there were

limited taxation revenues available for government spending. Defence spending had to come from these revenues, potentially diverting funds from other needs. The alternative was to borrow money to fund additional expenditures, which would risk increased inflation, potentially harming the recovering economy. Defence spending had to be balanced within these considerations.

British rearmament was further faced with a range of additional economic problems if industrial capacity was significantly shifted to military applications. The problem of skilled labour, or lack thereof, was a particularly difficult problem to overcome. Shortages of skilled tradesmen meant that as these workers were shifted to military production, there was less labour to produce commercial goods for export to help stimulate the economy. Shortages of skilled tradesmen also had a further impact on military production, as there was a wide range of military equipment which needed to be procured, ranging from warships to fighter aircraft, but often limited capacity produce all desired equipment. This was particularly true for the construction of warships. Building warships required a significant amount of manpower for a lengthy period of time, in some cases up to four years (Pedon: 1979, 113). The other industrial limitation facing the United Kingdom was shortages of production capacity and materiel.

Assessing exactly how much power the Soviet Union possessed, and where it fit into the European system is difficult to assess, for as historian Paul Kennedy noted, it was a very closed society (Kennedy: 1987, 230). On paper, the Soviet Union had the potential to be extremely powerful, by virtue of the

nature of the extensive powers of the government, which enjoyed considerable freedom to direct the economic activities as it saw fit. Policies such as collectivization of farms allowed the Soviet government to take control of what was a predominantly agricultural economy. Significant redistribution of manpower away from farming and agricultural activities and into industrial production, resulted in a significant increase in industrial capacity (Kennedy: 1987, 323). Much of this new industrial capacity was directed towards military ends. While defence spending in the beginning of the 1930s was relatively small, it dramatically increased, with particularly large increases in 1935 and 1938 (Kennedy: 1987, 297). This was accompanied by dramatic increases in military manpower itself, with the Soviet army having 1.3 million soldiers by 1936, considerably more than any other European state, and almost as much manpower as the armies of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy combined (Mearsheimer: 2001, 317).

There are nonetheless significant problems that the Soviet Union faced, in spite of its apparent strength. There were concerns within the British Foreign Office that the Soviet Union was in many ways extremely unreliable, particularly their military. While it might be extremely large, concerns about its quality were arising; these concerns were further exacerbated with Stalin's purges of the army between 1937 and 1938, removing much of its senior leadership, and leaving it with few experienced senior officers (Steadman: 2011, 149,150). The negative impact of these purges on the Soviet military cannot be easily overstated. For example, some have suggested that if Germany had

fought a war in the mid 1930s, the Soviet Union would have a considerable advantage; growing German strength combined with Stalin's purges completely undid that advantage by 1937 (Mearsheimer: 2001, 318).

There is some controversy as to how powerful France actually was during the 1930s. The French military in was on paper, relatively powerful. Until surpassed by Germany in 1938, France boasted the second largest military in terms of manpower, eclipsed only by the Soviet Union (Mearsheimer: 2001, 317). Furthermore, it possessed the second largest navy in Europe, behind that of the United Kingdom (Roskill: 1968, 577).

These numbers belie a number of significant problems with the French military that ultimately made it less powerful than would otherwise appear. It suffered from a wide range of inadequacies, ranging from leadership concerns, doctrinal limitations, poor training and reliance upon conscripts and equipment limitations. One historian went so far as to described the French military as “[...] a force suited only to a defensive conflict, hidden behind the outdated and crumbling Maginot Line” (Stedman: 2011, 139). France's military doctrine was particularly problematic, in that it was entirely focused on defensive operations, particularly in circumstances faced with a German offensive (Record: 2007, 26). It largely anticipated a war similar to the Great War, where it could slowly wear down a German attack over time, while relying on shorter supply lines and mobilization of reserves to ensure an eventual victory. It did not account for how recent revolutions in warfare, such as increased mechanisation, armoured

vehicles or airpower could be used offensively. French strategy was further hindered by weaknesses in its static defences, namely the Maginot Line.

Even after the First World War and the severe constraints imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany still retained a considerable amount of latent power that could be translated into military and economic strength. Coupled with the fact that Germany was announcing its rearmament 1935, looking to escape the limitations imposed by the Versailles treaty, meant that Germany was a revisionist power looking for some way to escape the status quo forced upon it by other powers. Germany had a fairly large military, composed of a peacetime army of a half million men (Parker: 1993, 26). That much of its forces remained standing was also a considerable advantage compared to other states such as France, which relied largely on reserves and conscripts which would need to be mobilized in the event of a crisis. In other words, Germany retained significant initiative in being able to respond (or create) crisis to its advantage. It expanded its naval forces, particularly after the Anglo-German naval agreement in 1935, allowing it to construct submarine forces once again.

Although it faced a range of economic difficulties, Germany employed an effective strategy for financing its early rearmament program. By having sufficient armed strength to deter any other powers from immediately attacking, it was able to leverage several diplomatic victories backed by its increasing strength, which in turn resulted in economic windfalls. For example, the eventual annexation of Austria resulted in gaining additional currency reserves and natural resources (Kennedy: 1987, 308). Germany's lack of colonies was

both a potential strength and weakness. While they did not have the potential resources that colonies granted nor did they need to focus on expending resources policing and maintain them either, allowing them to develop a wide range of domestic industry to help achieve self sufficiency. This would become particularly apparent during the Second World War, where the instead of imposing their own blockade, the United Kingdom found itself fighting a German blockade fought through unrestricted submarine warfare.

Japan was generally well situated in the 1930s. It had invested heavily in its military throughout the decade, and these investments had resulted in a very powerful military. Japan possessed an army of over one million soldiers, a navy which was modern, possessed many aircraft carriers (and secretly exceeding the limits of the Washington Naval Treaty), and an air force possessing aircraft comparable in quality to the best of Europe (Kennedy: 1987, 301).

Despite these military advantages, Japan faced several economic difficulties. These generally stemmed from having to fund such significant military expansion. By 1938, approximately 70% of government expenditure went towards the armed forces. Sustaining such spending and manufacturing was extremely onerous. The invasion of China in 1937 proved extremely expensive, and drained both the treasury of hard currency, and supplies of fuel and raw materials (Kennedy: 1987, 302). Military expansion to allow additional economic gains was one of the few potentially viable strategies, but came with a significant problem: while Japan could likely defeat the French or English in South East Asia, they lacked the power to successfully fight either the United

States or the Soviet Union, but if they attempted to expand, would run the risk of having to fight one, the other, or both.

Of the European great powers, Italy was by far the least powerful. Paul Kennedy described the Italian economy as being almost irredeemably weak, and its armed forces as being obsolete (Kennedy: 1987, 295). Its economy was overly agrarian and was unable to supply many needed raw materials forcing Italy to rely on imports. Its currency reserves were heavily depleted, and had little money to fund industrial expansion. This was compounded by the fact that it had numerous military problems. By 1935 the Italian army was the smallest of all the continental European armies (Mearsheimer: 2001, 317). Furthermore, much of the military budget was spent on operations, such as the occupation of Abyssinia, rather than training and modernization (Kennedy: 1987, 296). Despite these weaknesses, by virtue of its geographic location, it was nonetheless in a position to threaten British supply lines transiting the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal, making it of interest to the United Kingdom (Kennedy: 1987, 298).

The Offence Defence Balance

It is somewhat difficult to assess the nature of the offence-defence balance from the British perspective. The balance was influenced by a wide range of factors that made it difficult to accurately determine the extent to which it was preferable for states to prepare to attack others, or alternatively to simply defend against any potential aggression. These factors included the lessons learned from the previous war, the state of existing military technology and how

it could be used, the geographical position of the United Kingdom, and the actual foreign and defence policy goals of the United Kingdom.

It is difficult to overstate the influence of the First World War had on future defence planning. A number of lessons learned and assumptions drawn from that conflict shaped thoughts about any future wars between great powers. The main lesson was that wars would likely be lengthy and drawn out, requiring significant mobilization of all national resources. The principal reason that such wars would be so lengthy was that defensive strategies were far more effective than offensive strategies, leading to lengthy stalemates while both sides would attempt to find a way to break through enemy defences. Provided that a sufficient defence could be established, a war would likely be won by the side that could outlast the other, in terms of manpower, material and maintaining moral on the home front. Given the incredible costs of the First World War, avoidance of a similar conflict was a significant priority, as Britain was still recovering economically from the First World War. The principal lesson drawn then, was that should adequate defences be maintained, the odds of a successful attack could be significantly reduced, and the benefits of such an attack brought into question.

In spite of the view that adequate defences made offensive operations a risky prospect, there were some areas where this was not the case. In particular, the idea of strategic bombing strongly favoured the offence over defence. There was the ever present fear that "the bomber would always get through", regardless of any defences present. Until vast technical improvements in fighter aircraft

and radar in 1937, this was largely the case. The main means therefore, of dealing with this threat was through deterrence, namely possession of a strategic bomber fleet that could retaliate with equal impact upon the enemy. The fear of strategic bombing, and the damage it could inflict upon the civilian population, was extremely high. One subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence concluded that if the United Kingdom were attacked in such a manner that "[...] after being subjected for several weeks to the strain of such an attack, the population would be so demoralized that they would insist on an armistice (Howard: 1994, 54)." This fear was further compounded with several geographic limitations that the United Kingdom faced in attempting to cope with such a threat.

The United Kingdom had a number of geographic advantages. As an island separated from the continent by the English Channel and the North Sea, it was enjoyed an increased security from physical invasion. Such security provided by the oceans however, is a double edged sword. Being isolated presented a range of difficulties that rendered the United Kingdom vulnerable to a wide range of offensive actions. For example, it did not have sufficient resources on it's own to produce all that it needed, beginning with basic foodstuffs. Consequently, it was dependent upon other sources for much of what it needed. While it could get much of this from its overseas Empire, this insufficiency was nonetheless a difficult to cope with weakness. Since these goods had to be transported by ship, the British Isles were vulnerable to a naval blockade. While the size of the Royal Navy made a conventional blockade a

difficult prospect, less conventional forms of blockade, such as unrestricted submarine warfare represented forms of attack that were difficult to defend against, despite many technological advances made since the First World War.

The distance between the United Kingdom and Germany (and the intervening ocean) made for another geographic challenge when coping with the threat of strategic bombing. It was assumed that the threat of strategic bombing would have a deterrent effect on potentially hostile powers. However, there was a fear that a hostile Germany could invade France or the lowland countries, and use them as staging areas for a strategic bombing campaign (Howard: 1994, 54). This meant that German bombers had a much shorter distance to fly to reach British cities. The same was not true for British bombers, which still had to navigate their way across the North Sea to reach Germany. Striking such dispersed targets over a much longer distance was a difficult offensive task to achieve, at least given many of the technological limitations of existing strategic bombers. Thus, the United Kingdom faced a potential situation where a potential enemy had the capacity to attack first, and possibly remain relatively secure from any retaliation the United Kingdom might attempt.

In the interwar years leading up to the Second World War, the United States has been described as “an economic giant but a military middleweight” (Kennedy: 1987, 329). While the American economy was significantly damaged by the Great Depression (and suffered an additional downturn in 1937), it was nonetheless still formidable. For example, despite significant increases in unemployment, throughout the 1930s, the United States possessed the largest

share of manufacturing output in the world, and produced the most steel (Kennedy: 1987, 330). American industry was underutilized, waiting only for sufficient demand to rise to its full capacity. The rearmament program of 1940 would go a long way to creating that demand.

The military outlook of the United States in the 1930s was much different from its economic picture. In the early 1930s, it spent only moderately more than other powers such as France or Germany, and by the middle of the decade, was rapidly falling behind in defence spending (Kennedy: 1987, 296). In 1932, the United States Navy had parity or near parity with the Royal Navy in some areas, such as battleships and aircraft carriers, and a slight numerical advantage over Japan (Roskill: 1968, 577). However, between 1933 and 1939, it engaged in a significant naval expansion, with over 200 additional ships of all sizes and types, ranging from battleships to submarines beginning construction (Roskill, 1968, 584). After the First World War, its army was reduced to 140,000 active duty soldiers (Kennedy: 1987, 328). While the United States was not the front runner for military strength at the outbreak of the Second World War, it nonetheless retained several significant advantages. Most importantly, by not committing to any European powers, it had no obligation to deploy its limited resources. Second, by being separated from potential aggressor states by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (with the exception of Hawaii), it had a significant defensive advantage which could allow it to rearm in relative security should the need arise.

Certainty and Uncertainty

A common problem faced by all states is that they are often uncertain about the intentions of other states; this was entirely true for the United Kingdom in the 1930s. The main concern is that it can be difficult to determine which states are intending to violently upset the status-quo to their advantages, versus those states that merely seek to redress legitimate grievances. In the United Kingdom's case, they had to be sure not only of the intentions of potential enemies, but the intentions of its allies as well.

France, the United Kingdom's principal ally on the continent, could be counted on being anti-German. Despite these anti-German views, it often lacked the power (or the political will) to act upon them. France, however, did have a pact with the Soviet Union, ratified in 1936. This pact was formed as a bilateral agreement for the purpose of attempting to contain German aggression. The difficulty from the British perspective, is such a pact might embolden France in their dealings with Germany. Feeling secure of Soviet support, France might be willing to run greater risks that could provoke Germany into starting a war. This was a particularly difficult problem to resolve, as on one hand, the United Kingdom wanted to avoid another European war, but should war break out over a relatively non-vital issue, such as German occupation of the Rhineland, it would be difficult to justify British involvement in a war. Thus, while the Britain could be confident in France's anti-German stance, it needed some assurances that it would not be taken so far as to provoke a war.

It was also difficult to assess the intentions of the United States. In the post war era, the United States acted in both an isolationist and somewhat expansionist manner. On one hand, the United States had never joined the League of Nations or actively made security guarantees for any European countries. Although failure to join the League was a result of Republican opposition to the actions of a Democrat president, it raised the issue of how, when and if, the United States would engage in foreign affairs in the future. It was difficult to predict if the United States would intervene if another power in Europe attempted to upset the status quo, and on whose side they might intervene on, and what kind of circumstances might be required for such an intervention to occur at all. Paul Kennedy went so far as to suggest that uncertainty as to the stance of the United States was one of the greatest diplomatic challenges facing Great Britain and France (Kennedy: 1987, 320). There were some indicators that the United States was at least cognisant of the potential threat of Germany and Japan and was willing to start to act, such as the secret Anglo-American naval talks in 1938. However, isolationist forces at home and domestic problems limited President Roosevelt's ability to act abroad (Kennedy 1987, 330).

The intentions of Japan and Italy were less difficult to assess. Japan had been identified early on as the principal naval threat to the British Empire (notwithstanding the potential for unrestricted submarine warfare) (Peden: 2007, 120). One of the larger defence projects by the mid 1930s was the construction of a naval base in Singapore that could serve as home to the British fleet, should

its presence be required. Italy was also seen as a revisionist power that had acted aggressively in recent years, most notably its invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. Here, there were concerns that should Italy prove hostile to British interests, its relative proximity to Egypt gave it some ability to pose a threat. The main conclusion drawn by British policy makers and military staff was that neither Italy nor Japan would likely be the first to initiate hostilities with the United Kingdom. However, should any other state first go to war, Japan and Italy would likely soon follow in order to take advantage of British weakness (Levy: 2006, 59).

International Institutions

The principal international institution which attempted to regulate violence between states was the League of Nations. It was the principal way of maintaining peace between states was through it. Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations noted that: “The Members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations” (Northedge: 1986, 320). It is also worth noting that Article 10 required other states to take action to preserve the integrity of the member states against external aggression; in effect a collective security requirement (Northedge: 1986, 320). This left the League’s members coping with somewhat of a contradiction. On one hand, they were required to disarm as much as practicable; on the other hand they still had to protect one another from aggression. Having sufficient arms to repel aggressors left members having

sufficient arms to be seen as potential aggressors themselves, while having insufficient arms meant they might be unable to fulfill their obligations under Article 10.

The military weakness of many member states left the League with economic sanctions as a tool to use against aggressor states that had sufficient power to deter other states from taking military action. Such sanctions were implemented on occasion, such as when Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935. Such sanctions were also of questionable impact, as states have a certain incentive to continue trading so as not to impact their own economies. The League's membership was also a problem, in that many states were not members, or chose to leave. Other states, such as Germany, Japan and Italy chose to leave the League altogether. This in turn made it even more difficult for the League to influence their behaviour.

The Structural Realist Interpretation

Having laid out the above conditions that Britain was faced with, the following section will lay out the structural realist analysis of both the facts, and actual events. It will first determine what types of behaviour could be expected. Second, it will determine what actions would be in accordance with the behaviour. For example, questions of how many and what types of military equipment should be obtained, and which states should be allied with will be considered. Finally, it will examine to what extent actual events were in accordance with the expected actions.

That at least one state would attempt to unbalance the system by going to

war is very consistent in these circumstances. Considering that at the time there were seven great powers in the international system, such an outcome is consistent with Waltz's view of multipolar systems with more than five members being more prone to instability. He notes that "Uncertainties about who threatens whom, about who will oppose whom, and about who will gain or lose from the actions of other states accelerate as the number of states increases (Waltz, 1979, 165." This provides an accurate outline of the questions Britain faced in determining which threat was most pressing and who could be counted on to balance against any threat(s).

In an inherently anarchical international system, and faced with rival powers, states are first and foremost, power seeking. Structural realism generally suggests that states cope with these rival powers by either balancing against the rival with others, passing the buck to another power or bandwagoning with their rival in circumstances where they can no longer compete. At a minimum, the chosen actions must ensure survival. An ideal course of action should go beyond ensuring survival, and work to enhance a states relative share of power in the system. Given the relative power between the United Kingdom and Germany, bandwagoning was not a particularly suitable course of action, as it only might help survival, and would not enhance Britain's position. As Mearsheimer noted, "the threatened state abandons hope of preventing the aggressor from gaining power at its expense and instead joins forces with its dangerous foe to get at least some small portion of the spoils of war (Measheimer: 2001, 139)." It is difficult to see how such an arrangement could

be justified, let alone made to work with a resurgent Germany. Though Germany had been significantly expanding its military and industrial base, so too had the United Kingdom, with the United Kingdom having a significant advantage in the resources provided by its overseas colonies. Although the German military, particularly its army and air forces may have been larger, the British forces were also growing, and the Royal Navy was still significant barrier against any harm German surface forces could inflict on British trade. The German decision to engage in unrestricted submarine warfare had the potential to significantly alter that calculation. Given Germany's desire to expand primarily to its south and east, it is difficult to see how the United Kingdom could obtain a share of such expansion. Nor would it be in the United Kingdom's interest to see any particular state on the continent become significantly more powerful than the others, as then maintaining a balance on the continent would become more challenging. A stable balance of power could not be maintained if the United Kingdom were actively assisting Germany in becoming the dominant European power, nor was Germany so overwhelmingly powerful that the United Kingdom ought to simply accept a lesser partnership with Germany. Ultimately, since both Germany and the United Kingdom were great powers that were not in any particular state of decline, there was no advantage for the United Kingdom to make any sort of concessions to Germany as part of a bandwagoning strategy, something fully consistent with what structural realism would expect.

If bandwagoning with Germany was not an option, two options remain: buck passing and balancing. Unlike bandwagoning, these two strategies are not mutually exclusive and to a certain extent, could be employed in concert. Buck passing entails attempting to not be the first to be attacked by a revisionist state, hoping that in the ensuing conflict the attacking state is sufficiently weakened that it is no longer a threat. Balancing requires a state to increase its power, either by growing its own military and economic strength, or by forming alliances with other states, so as to contain a revisionist power, or defeat it should war break out. The two strategies are to a certain extent complementary, as a buck passer needs to find some way to successfully pass the buck to another state, and to not catch it. The simplest way to pass the buck is to not be the weakest state or easiest target. To accomplish this, a certain level of balancing must take place, in order to ensure that there are always weaker targets to catch the buck.

Given the wide array of problems faced by the United Kingdom, employing both these strategies would be a sensible course of action. Since Germany had a relative head start in rearmament, fighting a war early on would not be a productive course of action. Training men and supplying equipment take time, as does forming alliances with other powers. Allowing Germany to expand, for example the annexation of Austria through the *Anschluss*, or part of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference, could be used to buy time for rearmament programs to complete. Furthermore, by allowing Germany to grow, it increases the threat it poses to neighbouring powers, such as France and the

Soviet Union. Ideally, those powers, being more threatened due to their proximity, might have a greater incentive to contain Germany. If neighbouring powers could bear most of the brunt of containing Germany, then fewer British resources would need to be spent on potentially needless rearmament and focused on other needs.

The risk with such a course of action is that allowing an aggressor state to grow relatively unopposed will further strengthen it; any potential gains that the buck passing states make must offset any gains the aggressor makes. Such risks were very real. Paul Kennedy observed that Germany's early rearmament programs strained the Germany economy. However, it was then able to leverage its military strength into further gains, for example, successfully annexing Austria in March of 1938. This in turn gave Germany access to significant natural resources and gold and foreign currency reserves (Kennedy: 1987, 308). This is the greatest risk of buck passing: that the aggressor state is not weakened by any conflict, but is instead greatly strengthened. The only thing that the passing states might gain is time. That time must be employed to successfully balance against the aggressor state, by rearming and forging alliances.

Having determined that the proper course of action of the United Kingdom ought to be a combination of buck passing and balancing, how exactly should such a strategy take form? The question of how to balance against Germany is a particularly difficult question to answer. Ideally, to effectively balance against another state, that state must have sufficient force to deter the other, or should deterrence fail, defeat the other state in war. It would be

difficult, if not impossible for the United Kingdom to pose a sufficient threat to Germany to successfully deter it alone. The distance and geographic barriers between the two states, namely the North Sea, made it difficult to send a land force to invade (for either side). This was further compounded by the fact that the British Army was not sufficiently large to fight the Germans, and was furthermore deployed throughout the British Empire on policing duties. Although a blockade (or threat of) could be used, such a strategy would take a long time to reach fruition. It posed additional difficulties as although the Royal Navy could potentially cut lines of supply into Germany from the sea, it could not do so by land. Aerial attack had not yet matured to the point where it could be sufficient to successfully subdue the enemy, contrary to the fears of military and political leaders. Ultimately, by itself, the United Kingdom was not in a position, regardless of how much it rearmed (to a feasible extent), to deter or defeat Germany by itself.

Nonetheless, some level of rearmament to help counter the threat of Germany was needed. After all, if the United Kingdom could do little against Germany, what value would it have to other states as an ally to balance against Germany? What kind of rearmament would be required to achieve this?

If its own strength was insufficient to balance against Germany, then the United Kingdom would require allies to contain Germany. Since Germany would need to be contained by land, its two largest neighbours, and best candidates as allies, were France and the Soviet Union. An alliance with one of these powers could potentially be sufficient to deter or defeat Germany. France

at first glance appears to be a worthwhile ally, on account of its significant numerical military strength, proximity to both Germany and the Mediterranean theatres, where Italy was also a potential concern. The proximity of France to Germany also meant that should a British expeditionary force be formed, it was relatively easy to supply and support as the distances across the English Channel to the continent were relatively short.

For all these advantages, there nonetheless remained a significant disadvantage with France as an ally against Germany. The fact was, France was often unprepared for war with Germany. It was overly reliant on conscription and had not developed very many tactics or strategies to employ recent developments in warfare, such as armour or aircraft (Record: 2007, 26). French military doctrine and preparations heavily favoured defensive action over offence. This ranged from the reliance on the Maginot Line, to a longer strategic outlook that relied upon mobilizing large numbers of reservists in order to outlast Germany in a war of attrition. A defence oriented strategy was also required to allow time for conscripts and reservists to mobilize. The French had minimal plans, and indeed, ability, to respond to German aggression. This was readily apparent through the French response (or lack thereof) to Germany's remilitarization of the Rhineland in March of 1936 (Record: 2007, 28). This raises an obvious question whose answer undermines the utility of France as being the only state for the United Kingdom to ally with: If France was so focused on defence, and unable to effectively attack, how could it effectively deter Germany if it had no way of attacking? Consequently, as an ally against

Germany, France, while having many advantages, had a disadvantage that could not be overcome.

If France was insufficient as an ally against Germany, the only remaining ally on the continent that was candidate for an alliance was the Soviet Union. On paper, the Soviet Union could be a much more suitable potential ally than France. It possessed a considerably larger military than any other major power in Europe, including Germany. It had begun an earlier rearmament program early in the 1930s, which began to show significant results. This could have helped counteract the damages done by the purges of the Red Army in earlier years that eliminated a significant number of experienced officers. Nor did the Red Army possess the defensive outlook that dominated French military thinking. If Germany was to be deterred by the damage that could be inflicted upon it, then the Soviet Union had a reasonable chance of succeeding in carrying out such a threat.

Equally important were geographic considerations. Germany's growing borders in eastern Europe meant that there was likely to be increasing friction between the two states. German strength, and its proximity to the United Kingdom made it a much more significant threat that the Soviet Union would have to deal with, one way or another. The Soviet Union was also beginning to experience tensions with Imperial Japan in the Far East. Having an additional common antagonist with the United Kingdom would suggest that they both stood to gain from acting in concert to stem Japanese ambitions.

That being said, it is worth considering the extent to which the Soviet Union would benefit from an alliance with the United Kingdom. The Soviet Union did possess sufficient strength to deter against German aggression, and it is entirely possible that they felt that they did not need British or French strength to contain Germany, effectively buckpassing the problem of an aggressive Nazi Germany to France and Britain, while remaining relatively secure themselves. They may have seen little benefit to risking becoming committed to a war they did not need to fight.

Ultimately, the actions of the United Kingdom are only partially consistent with the behaviour expected by structural realism. In general, many aspects of British foreign policy are consistent, however, many further decisions, most notably, not seriously perusing an alliance with the Soviet Union, were fundamentally inconsistent with what structural realism would expect as the most logical course of action.

The manner that Britain pursued rearmament was in general, sound. Early concerns among the military and political leadership about the potential of strategic bombing drove them towards pursuing a strategy of deterrence, by building their own strategic bomber forces. As developments in technology such as radar made defence against such a threat more feasible, they shifted production away from bombers, and towards fighter aircraft instead. It is somewhat debatable as to the extent to which the original fear of the threat of strategic bombing had been over inflated in the first place, and the resources what went into building a deterrent may have been better spent elsewhere. That

being said, how Britain balanced internally made sense. The decision to not balance externally until war was all but inevitable was not.

Faced with a resurgent Germany that was rapidly growing in power, the choice to not provoke an immediate confrontation that the United Kingdom was ill prepared to fight, let alone win, was a sensible choice. Beginning with Germany remilitarizing the Rhineland in 1936, provoking another great power conflict over a relatively small territorial matter would not likely render the United Kingdom more secure in the long term. However, the United Kingdom did recognize that it would need to balance against Germany in some form, and worked to rearm. Not forming a balancing coalition in advance however, was a mistake. British leaders recognized that if a war broke out, other powers like Italy and Japan would likely join in fighting against Britain. Building a sufficiently strong coalition to contain Germany without provoking a war also came with the advantage of preventing, or at least delaying, confrontations with other powers as well. By simply passing the buck, Britain all but guaranteed that it would not only have to fight Germany, but Italy and Japan as well.

Ultimately, structural realism provides a generally accurate account of British strategy for dealing with a resurgent Germany. At a system level, that all the states were engaging in security seeking behaviour can be seen. That they all exhibited a certain level of mistrust for one another can also be clearly seen. International institutions also proved to be incapable of preserving peace between states. The number of great powers in the system made the system much less stable, and likely contributed to the outbreak of war. Britain correctly

understood which states were potential threats, and carried out a generally successful internal balancing strategy to meet those threats, as structural realism suggests. That being said, there is one central issue which structural realism cannot explain: why Britain did not pursue a strategy of containing Germany, and instead pursued a strategy of buckpassing and internal balancing. To be sure, both strategies could be justifiable given the circumstances, but at first glance, containment appears to be more consistent with what structural realism would expect. That being said, this should not suggest that structural realism suffers from explanatory poverty, given that it was able to successfully explain both the broad patterns of behaviour that were observed, and identify which potential responses were likely to be seen, and which ones were not. Being only able to explain what could happen, rather than explain why something happened is simply a function of structural realism being a system, rather than unit level theory. Rather than being understood as a weakness, this should simply be understood as a limitation, given that explain why was never something that structural realism set out to do. To help explain why, other approaches, such as neoclassical realism, must be turned to.

Chapter 4: The Neoclassical Realist Account of Appeasement

The following chapter will explore how neoclassical realist theory would explain the British strategy of appeasing Nazi Germany in the 1930s. To this end, this analysis will draw from the previous chapter, which outlined a structural realist exploration on appeasement. As the previous chapter reviewed the general distribution of power within the international system, and how states could be expected to behave given such circumstances, the focus of this chapter will be on the two additional variables that neoclassical realism considers. First, instead of treating the state as a rational unitary actor, it will focus on the decision makers within the state, namely the foreign policy executive, and they it interpret the distribution of power and other relevant factors such as any particular predilections towards other states or strongly held beliefs that may influence policy preferences. The second consideration to be considered will be the impact of other elements of the state apparatus must be assessed. In particular, the civilian departments such as the Foreign Office and Treasury Board, the military leadership, and intelligence services will be considered. These departments formed a wide range of interdepartmental committees and subcommittees that played an important role in determining potential courses of action, reviewing policies and presenting options to cabinet for consideration. Finally, the third factor that this chapter will explore are other intervening variables, namely domestic influence, that impact the foreign policy executive and played a role in shaping foreign policy preferences, either by enabling

particular courses of action, or alternatively, restricting which actions could be feasibly undertaken.

The Foreign Policy Executive

To explore how exactly the foreign policy executive could interpret and understand the impacts of the distribution of power, a number of steps must first be taken. First, who/what constitutes the executive must be determined. Having determined who the executive is, and how it functions, the next step must be to determine how exactly it does understand the distribution of power and other structural realist considerations. If it functions well, it should correctly identify threats, and how best to mitigate them. If it functions poorly, it may respond inappropriately, if at all.

Ultimately, the foreign policy of the United Kingdom was determined by cabinet and particularly, the prime minister and foreign minister. Senior bureaucrats such as departmental undersecretaries and the highest level of military leadership also should be considered as part of this executive. To a certain extent, the executive in the United Kingdom during the 1930s was marked by frequent transitions, as both politicians and bureaucrats moved in and out. At the highest level, there were three different prime ministers during this period: Ramsay Macdonald, Stanley Baldwin, and Neville Chamberlain. With the exception of Macdonald early in the decade, all these prime ministers held the post during a national ministry, or coalition government, which comprised members from many political parties. This meant that cabinet was often comprised of a wide range of differing viewpoints, not all of which could

necessarily be controlled or brought into line through traditional means such as party discipline. This period of National Government was ostensibly intended to allow all parties to come together to solve the country's issues together.

However, unlike previous National Government Prime Ministers such as Stanley Baldwin, Chamberlain was very partisan within Parliament, earning the ire of other parties, rather than their collaboration (Charmley: 2011, 180). Despite this, Chamberlain would wield considerable power as a cabinet minister before rising to the premiership. At one point, Chamberlain himself noted that "I have become a sort of acting PM – only without the actual power of the PM (Leibovitz: 1993, 22)." What is particularly interesting is that Chamberlain wrote this in 1935, well in advance of him rising to the post of Prime Minister in 1937. This is indicative of the influence he was able to wield as a cabinet minister holding a very influential position (Chancellor of the Exchequer) over policy at the time. Given that the majority of British appeasement took place with Neville Chamberlain in a position to greatly shape policy, most of the focus on the foreign policy executive should focus on his leadership of the executive, although it is worth briefly discussing some particulars of his predecessors as well.

Neville Chamberlain was generally regarded to have significant input into the policy of appeasement, both as Prime Minister and his previous cabinet position as Chancellor of the Exchequer (Pedon: 1979, 17). As Prime Minister, he kept very effective control over the cabinet, particularly in terms of keeping ministers in line and managing the formulation of policy. This often went as far

as having significant sway over the direction of departmental papers and options that his ministers prepared for cabinet in the first place (McDonough: 1998, 46). Although this meant that he had significant control over the cabinet, rivals within his own political party, such as Winston Churchill, still had ways of hindering his agenda by criticizing his policies within the party caucus, or through sympathetic members of the press (McDonough: 1998, 108).

It is also worth discussing the extent to which the National government had an influence on foreign policy making. As a result of the Great Depression, coalition governments had been a feature of British politics since 1931, and continuing through subsequent general elections. This gave the Liberal and Labour parties more input into decision making than they would have had otherwise, particularly since one goal of National Government was cross party cooperation (Stewart: 1999, 197). Despite that stated goal, the majority of important cabinet roles, such as finance and foreign affairs, were generally held by Conservatives, despite a few exceptions, such as Ramsay MacDonald (Prime Minister from 1931-1935) or Sir John Simon, who held posts including Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, given the need for a cooperation of parties under National Government, a window allowing the smaller parties some influence was nonetheless open. One other impact of the National Government was that the context of cooperation imposed a certain limitation on the Conservative party itself, by allowing the party leadership to promote a more moderate form of conservatism (Stewart: 1999, 219). Nonetheless, by 1938, notwithstanding some

of the constraints of National Government (and internal politics with the Conservative Party), Chamberlain was described as a Prime Minister who was “dominating Parliament (Faber: 2008, 169)”. The setting of government policy and how it was to be implemented was well within Neville Chamberlain’s hands.

To a very real extent, Chamberlain often ignored or disregarded advice given to him by others when his mind was made up (McDonough: 1998, 47). This in turn led to a number of policy problems, where having made up his mind on a particular issue, changing course when other alternatives should be considered did not happen. Even his close political allies in Cabinet were aware of this shortcoming, with some, such as his friend, the Secretary of State for Air, Lord Swinton describing Chamberlain as “autocratic and intolerant of criticism” and “intolerable self-assertive (Faber: 2008, 170)”. Other potential policy ideas ran the risk of being rejected outright if they strayed too far from Chamberlain’s established view, or perhaps even on account of who raised them.

Chamberlain’s personal views on a number of relevant issues very likely impacted how he directed foreign policy. He held staunchly anti-Soviet and anti-communist views. This antipathy towards the Soviet Union was so great that he both felt that an alliance for any purpose, such as containing Germany or balancing against Japan was out of the question for the majority of the 1930s, despite the fact that the British Chiefs of Staff acknowledged these two benefits (McDonough: 1998, 82). Even by 1939, when it became apparent that appeasement had failed and that a war with Germany was likely, he was not supportive of an alliance with the Soviet Union. According to some accounts, he

felt that an alliance with the Soviets was of little military value, and wished that the negotiations which were ongoing would fail, even with the looming threat of war (Leibovitz: 1993, 493).

Chamberlain generally recognized that the United Kingdom could not defeat Germany by itself should a war in Europe break out. However, he was simultaneously reluctant to commit the United Kingdom through a series of alliances to fighting against Germany. In his view, England would be best off with militarily strong allies which were unlikely to draw England into a conflict. The trouble from his perspective, was that there were no real candidates that would meet this criteria (Steadman: 2011, 147). He was already concerned with the Soviet Union on ideological grounds. He had additional misgivings about other potential allies such as France. For example, he recognized the potential military weaknesses of France (Steadman: 2011, 139). He was further concerned that French antagonism towards Germany might help precipitate a war. Simply put, a firm guarantee by England to assist France in a war against Germany might embolden France into antagonizing or helping spark a war, and consequently dragging England into the fight over what may very well be a matter not in the United Kingdom's national interests (McDonough: 1998, 18). Chamberlain further felt that while France may not have the power to successfully attack Germany, it was certainly strong enough to defend itself from German aggression (Mommsen: 1983, 205). A British guarantee of France security was therefore unnecessary. This reluctance even went so far as to express discomfort with simply planning and staff talks between French and

British militaries, for such talks could potentially lead to a continental commitment of the British army (Howard: 1972, 118). War in Europe could potentially be avoided as long as both the French and the Germans could both be reined in from any aggressive action towards one another.

Chamberlain was also aware of the shortcomings of relying on collective security arrangements through the League of Nations. This lesson was likely learned in 1936 after witnessing the public reaction to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. The British public strongly condemned the invasion, and wanted to League to take strong measures, but that Britain remain unaffected. Chamberlain suspected that although there were demands for military measures to be taken, had those measures specified a British military response, the public would not support such a contribution (Northedge: 1986, 247). If the British people would not truly support intervening to protect others, could they reasonably expect others to do differently? Chamberlain felt not.

In 1935, Stanley Baldwin assumed the role of prime minister. He retained Chamberlain in the role of Chancellor of the Exchequer, who would be tasked with helping find funds for rearmament. There was however, a problem with extensive rearmament. During the election, Baldwin had made the promise that “there had not been, there is not, and there will not be any question of huge rearmament and materially increased forces (Parker: 1993, 273).” The question then became what would (or wouldn't) be considered to be “huge rearmament”. Chamberlain felt that the limit was on what could be funded without any taxation increase. The weak economy meant that interference in the production of goods

could adversely impact exports and the overall health of the economy, which could lead to lower tax revenues (Parker: 1993, 275). He noted to his sister that:

If we were now to follow Winston's advice and sacrifice our commerce to the manufacture of arms, we should inflict a certain injury on our trade from which it would take generations to recover, we should destroy the confidence which now happily exists, and we should cripple the revenue (Gilbert: 1994, 35).

Chamberlain was further concerned that the problems were compounded by the fact that armament production required much in the way of skilled labour, but less unskilled. If manufacturing capacity drained all the skilled labour for armaments, there would be a significant rise in unemployment as the unskilled labour was out of work (Parker: 1993, 276). Despite these concerns, limited rearmament began by 1934, and a much larger program began in 1936. He would always balance the costs of rearmament with, in words of one historian, "a rigid fiscal orthodoxy and Victorian parsimony" (Fuscher: 1982, 63). Despite his commitment to rearming, he was still aware of the economic risks it entailed not only to the nation itself, but the impact of economic health on the pace of rearmament.

Similarly to the transitions in leadership previously discussed, many prominent cabinet posts were also subject to very similar transitions, with a wide range of different ministers being brought into each post over the decade. For example over the course of the decade, the three different ministers held the role Chancellor of the Exchequer. There were five different Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, and the Secretaries of State for Air, War and First Lord of the Admiralty also experienced regular changes. Given the nature of coalition government, members of different parties, each with their own particular agenda

and preferences, held these posts on a regularly rotating basis. Some of these changes were part of regular cabinet shuffles. Others were due to fundamental disagreements over policy. Perhaps the best example can be found in the resignation of the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who left in 1938 over his opposition to the policy of appeasement. It is somewhat difficult to accurately determine just how much impact further opposition to appeasement had in Cabinet, for Chamberlain eventually formed an inner group of advisers, primarily with the goal of counteracting the influence of the foreign office (McDonough: 1998, 48). This in turn allowed Chamberlain to further dominate the policy agenda.

The State Apparatus

Having reviewed the how the foreign policy executive functioned, the following section will discuss how other apparatus within the state impacted both the foreign policy making and policy implementation of the executive in response to a resurgent Germany. A number of factors will be explored in order to examine how these processes impacted the decision to appease Germany. In particular, the following parts of the bureaucracy (both particular officials and departmental process) will be examined: the foreign office, treasury board, intelligence services and military.

Any discussion of the role of the foreign office on the decision to appease Germany should begin with an examination of the views of, role played by Sir Robert Vanistart, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1930 until 1938. To a very real extent, there was opposition between the foreign office, and the cabinet over whether or not a hard line should be taken

with German infractions of the Versailles Treaty and other agreements.

Vanisttart took a hard line stance with regards to German expansion, favouring containing Germany over allowing it room to rearm and expand in eastern Europe (Roi: 1965, 91). Some of his notes concerning various reports and memoranda paint a picture of him being outright hostile towards any notion of German expansion. For example, concerning a report in 1937, that Germany was likely to expand in Europe, Vanisttart noted:

Here we have again – for the nth time – more ample evidence of Germany’s intention to expand at the expense of her neighbours, by force if necessary. That is a policy of violence and robbery. What separates us is really a fundamental difference of conception of morality. And that is the real answer to all the weak stomachs who would like us to be immoral because they prefer to be blind (Leibovitz: 1965, 270).

This quotation is revealing, in that the strong language indicates several things.

First it shows just how opposed he would be to policies which allowed Germany the ability to expand her borders. Second, it also reveals how he felt towards those which advocated such policies to be implemented. It is not a great leap to imagine specific members of Cabinet that Vanisttart had in mind when he wrote those words.

He was also particularly aware of the potential importance of the Soviet Union in balancing against Germany, despite the ideological differences between the radical communist state and the United Kingdom. Indeed, despite the fear of the Soviet Union starting a revolutionary crusade across Europe to spread its ideology, he argued that the Soviet Union remained less of a threat than a resurgent Germany under the Nazis (Roi: 1965, 104).

To this end, Vanisttart advocated balancing against Germany by both rearming, and forming alliances with other states. The main thrust of this strategy would be a firmer alliance with France, and working with the Soviet Union to prevent German expansion. He also advocated attempting to isolate Germany from potential allies such as Italy. To this end, Vanisttart supported the Stresa Front agreement in 1935, where France, the United Kingdom and Italy reaffirmed their support for the principals of the Locarno Treaty although this agreement ultimately failed and Italy moved further into the German camp (Roi: 1965, 92). This failure had a number of potential causes. For example, some argued that animosity held by Anthony Eden, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, towards Italy helped drive Mussolini towards Hitler (Steadman: 2011, 124). Others have noted that there was a some level of personal friction (despite their agreement on policy) between Eden and Vanisttart (and between Vanisttart and the rest of Cabinet over matters of policy), which doubtless made implementation of these policies somewhat difficult (Roi: 1965, 1997).

This animosity however, also extended the other way. Chamberlain himself felt that the foreign office, beginning with the secretary, Anthony Eden, was stymieing his own directions on how Britain should aim to resolve the European issues. At one point Chamberlain himself expressed his frustration, noting that he was “really horrified... another opportunity [a formal visit by Halifax to Germany] to be thrown away. But really, that F.O.! I am only waiting for my opportunity to stir it up with a long pole (Faber: 2008, 27).” Disagreements rooted in such mistrust between the Prime Minister and the

Foreign Office could only adversely impact the formation of an effective policy for dealing with Germany. Comparing the views of Vanistart and Chamberlain, it is not difficult to see how the two could be seen to be working at cross purposes in matters of foreign policy. It is also worth noting that Vanistart thought it likely that regardless of any concessions made to Germany, that a war might still break out (Roi: 1965, 120). Consequently, allies and other material preparations were essential in both the long and short term. This notion was fundamentally at odds with Chamberlain's goal, which was to prevent war altogether; that war could still occur was to a certain extent, possible evidence of his policy having failed.

There were additional practical reasons for the Foreign Office being in favour of forming alliances to contain Germany early on. The formation of an alliance could take a significant amount of time to negotiate. It therefore made significant sense for these alliances to be negotiated well in advance of, rather than during, a crisis. By the time of the Munich Conference in 1938, the Foreign Office was concerned that there may not be time to form an alliance with other powers to contain Germany before another war broke out (Steadman: 2011, 149).

The Treasury Board played a significant role in the decision to pursue a strategy of appeasement on account of the role it played in determining how the financing British rearmament occurred. The Treasury Board was generally responsible for much of the financial and economic policy of the United Kingdom, and as such, had a significant expertise in the overall state of the

economy, as well specific industries such as banking and manufacturing as well as other matters such as the lending and borrowing of monies and international trade. Given the financial difficulties that the United Kingdom was facing due to the slowing world economy, the Treasury Board had significant input into many defence spending decisions.

The Treasury became the main conduit through which defence proposals were reviewed to determine which should be funded, and which should not. This was for a number of reasons. The principal reason for this was that the Board was better equipped to handle and consider the wide range of proposals that were brought by the military. In effect, because the Treasury, and not the military, were making many of the funding decisions, this allowed a certain level of objective decision making unburdened by inter-service rivalries (Peden: 1979, 33). This also had a side effect of creating several additional layers of bureaucracy as additional committees and sub committees were created, which often did not have sufficient knowledge or expertise to properly evaluate all the proposals (Peden: 1979, 57). The Treasury's role in evaluating proposals also had the impact of exacerbating interdepartmental rivalries between military branches and other government departments. The Treasury Board's knowledge of British industry was also beneficial in evaluating the various spending proposals. For example, the Navy's proposals for ship building often would have consumed a significant portion of available capacity, leaving little left for the manufacture of other materiel required by the other services (Peden: 1979, 113).

It is also worth noting that the Treasury policies on when and how public funds could be spent had a negative impact on the pace of rearmament as well. A not infrequent problem was that industrial capacity was so limited that funds were often available, but could not be spent as there was no manufacturing capacity to take the contract (Peden: 1979, 172). Industry required funds upfront in order to make the significant investments to expand their capacities, but regulations prohibited the Board from releasing such funds in advance. This in turn created a problem of industry not having sufficient funds to expand to meet the expansion desired by the government. While the Treasury Board policy may have been sound from an accounting and accountability for public funds perspective, it did often limit the pace of rearmament.

In the 1930s, the leadership of the British armed forces were faced with a number of challenges, both in terms of meeting the needs of the government, in understanding the potential wars and conflicts that might arise, and in understanding how new developments in military technology, such as aircraft and increasing mechanization should be best employed.

The British military establishment was not optimistic concerning the ability of collective security agreements to ensure the security of the British Empire (Mommsen: 1983, 177). They recognized that rather than come to their aid, other states may very well seek to take advantage if the Empire were to come under attack. They opposed early proposals by Chamberlain in 1934 for limited collective security arrangements (Parker: 1993, 21). By 1935, the Committee for Imperial Defence, a joint committee of the highest military and

civilian leaders, identified that Germany was likely to be the most likely to precipitate a European war. They also noted that if Germany and England were to go to war, Italy or Japan (or both) would likely also seek to exploit Britain's vulnerability for their own advantage. They concluded that the United Kingdom could not, by itself, survive a war with all three potential enemies at the same time (Record: 2007, 33).

In many cases, the British military had a difficult time understanding many of the technological changes that had occurred, and how they changed how wars were fought. In some cases, they had known of these changes for a long time, and had simply chosen to ignore them. Perhaps the best example of this can be found in the Royal Navy's continued focus on how surface warships would fight other warships in the future (Pedon: 1979, 121). This expectation generally ignored several significant developments in naval warfare, such as the potential for submarine warfare. The lack of consideration on the Royal Navy's part for the impact of submarines is particularly curious, given the earlier experiences in the First World War when Germany first attempted to employ unrestricted submarine warfare against the United Kingdom. Examination of naval expenditures for the 1930s shows a curious pattern of ship construction. Very few anti-submarine vessels were constructed, with the bulk of monies being allocated towards battleships and cruisers of various sizes, as well as aircraft (Pedon: 1979, 166). Only by 1939 were large numbers of antisubmarine escorts such as corvettes constructed in large numbers (Roskill: 1968, 584). To a certain extent, this reflected the how the Royal Navy expected it would fight

future wars. After defeating the enemy navy, and securing control of the sea, it could impose a blockade, and slowly destroy the enemy's trade and commerce. This was the case with its plans for a future conflict with Germany. However, as some historians have noted, this plan was overoptimistic in the impact it would have on German industry and its ability to erode Germany's capacity to carry on fighting (Mommsen: 1983, 179). Nor did it contemplate that the Royal Navy might be unable to maintain control of the seas when faced with the u-boat threat.

The Royal Air Force was still in its infancy at this point in time, and still attempting to develop its own doctrine, tactics, and indeed, purpose. There were questions as to whether or not the air force was best suited to operate independently, or in support of the other service. Generally, the Royal Air Force was not supportive of close cooperation with the other service, whether it be providing air support for the army, or anti-submarine warfare for the navy (Pedon: 1976, 116). Rather, a principal question for the air force was the how it should balance between a strategic offensive role against potential enemies, and a defense against those same enemies. For most of the 1930s, conventional wisdom suggested that strategic bombing had the capacity to inflict significant casualties upon the enemy civilian population and industry, and potentially cause such damage that the enemy may sue for peace before armies even had the time to fight any battles. The general consensus among military experts suggested that "the bomber would always get through", and manage to inflict significant casualties, regardless of the defences available. This mean that rather than

defending against such threats, the only practical way of preventing this was to build one's own strategic bombing force to deter others. The Royal Air Force saw that maintaining a bomber deterrent was to be one of its principal roles (Mommsen: 1983, 180). Thus, in the eyes of the Air Force, the offense-defence balance of the time firmly favoured the offense.

In the 1930s the United Kingdom operated a range of intelligence services, with each focused on particular aspects of intelligence gathering. These ranged from signals intelligence and code breaking (GC&CS), to overseas work (SIS) and domestic and imperial intelligence (MI5). At this time, these three organizations had minimal funding and were haphazardly organized. They were furthermore extensively focused on gathering information on subversive groups and activities stemming (or inspired by) the Soviet Union (Quinlan and Walton: 2011, 205). This was particularly true of the GC&CS. In other words, they were not generally in a position to provide accurate information concerning the long term intentions of potential enemies. That being said, it is debatable as to what impact accurate intelligence would have had if it had been available to decision makers. Intelligence information was often regarded as being of little use, and the Foreign Office was skeptical of its value. The Cabinet Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey, considered the information to be nothing more than "useful pointers" (Quinlan and Walton: 2011, 211). It took significant events for the Cabinet to take a serious interest in the state of the intelligence services at all. Only after Hitler announced the reintroduction of conscription and the announced that the German air force had achieved parity

with the Royal Air Force were additional funds made available to ensure the services had the resources to ascertain needed information (Andrew: 2009, 195).

A principal question that British policy makers needed answered was to what extent Germany was actually rearming. The intelligence services were unable to provide a particularly accurate answer to this question. A particularly pressing issue that required investigation was the extent of German production of aircraft, for this would determine Britain's own requirements. The resulting information was inconclusive and conflicting, and ultimately, of little value (Quinlan and Walton: 2011, 213). That being said, the intelligence services did provide some intelligence of value in a timely manner. During the Munich crisis, they were able to determine that Germany was actively courting a military alliance with Japan. Such knowledge was useful in that it contained information about potential aggressive intentions in a timely manner during a time where German intentions needed to be known (Quinlan and Walton: 2011, 210). Despite some small successes, the intelligence services had a mixed to poor performance in providing useful information to decision makers the 1930s concerning Germany. Poor (and almost nonexistent) interdepartmental coordination, a lack of method in organizing and collating available information, assessments and distributing analyzed information and a poor training of personnel all contributed to this failure (Quinlan and Walton: 2011, 218).

The British Public

Public opinion in Britain was generally consistent on a number of relevant issues. Broadly speaking, the public was antiwar, supportive of

institutions such as the League of Nations, and not in favour of rearmament. Indeed, having run in the 1935 general election as part of the Conservative Party (and National Government) on a platform of minimal rearmament, there was a strong expectation that this would be the case. In addition to being widely held among the general population, a number of interest groups came together for the purposes of advancing these views. Unions expressed a distrust of spending on weapons on grounds of social policy. Industry groups opposed excess spending on arms on fiscal grounds. Support for peace and disarmament initiatives was generally high. One of the best examples of this was the Peace Ballot Initiative of 1934-1935, which reaffirmed the public's broad support for disarmament and the use of the League of Nations to resolve international disputes (as long as no military commitment was involved). There was little to no support for specific alliances for the purpose of containing other states.

Political parties also stacked out particular positions to reflect these views. For example, the Labour party was strongly supportive of the League of Nations (McDonough: 1998, 104). Whether this support of the League extended to committing to military action to enforce League resolutions is a different matter. Parties also had strong links to unions, with very close links between the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. This in turn gave the labour movement a clear means of making demands of government on a wide range of issues, including foreign policy (Schmidt: 1983, 112). Government also regularly consulted with industrial groups.

When first faced with a resurgent Germany, the public did not react in a hostile manner to the events. When the Rhineland was remilitarized, there was little public outcry to take steps to reverse it. As German rearmament became public knowledge, there was little support to contain them by either disarming the Germans, or having more arms than the Germans. When the Munich Crisis in 1938 occurred, there was widespread support for defusing the possibility of war. It is also worth noting that while there were many anti-Nazi sentiments in public groups such as unions (and by extension, the Labour Party), that were not necessarily anti-German. However, these anti-war sentiments did not last. The Trade Union Congress eventually grew to favour rearmament (Stewart: 1999, 261). Furthermore, by 1938, the Labour Party had reversed its earlier position and expressed concerns that rearmament was not going fast enough (McDonough: 1998, 104). Despite this support for rearmament, there were still some inconsistencies in public groups in how to deal with the possibility of a German threat. For example, despite supporting rearmament, the Trade Union Congress was opposed to the partial and limited conscription bill which was passed (Stewart: 1999, 362). By 1939, there was much more support for an alliance including France and the Soviet Union to contain Germany (McDonough: 1998, 84).

The Neoclassical Realist Interpretation

The structural realist chapter provided a summary of the distribution of power in the international system that the United Kingdom faced, and argued what sort of behaviour should be expected in such circumstances. In general, it

argued that balancing both by internally rearming, and externally, by forming an alliance to contain Germany was the most sensible course of action, expected in these particular circumstances given the distribution of power, although buckpassing could be a reasonable alternative to containment. The structural realist discussion noted that structural realism could not explain why a particular course of action was taken. By examining how decision makers interpreted and understood the systemic constraints, and how other intervening domestic factors can influence their decisions, a better understanding of why specific outcomes occurred can be gained.

The first question to be considered is that of whether or not an accurate assessment of threats (or potential threats) was made. Chamberlain and the Chiefs of Staff of the British forces correctly identified that Germany was the most likely aggressor state they were likely to face. They furthermore correctly identified that Italy and Japan would likely to bandwagon with Germany on any war that Britain found herself fighting.

Having correctly identified who the potential threats were, the next question addressed is how to best respond to these threats. At the outset of appeasing Germany, British decision makers correctly determined that they did not have sufficient military strength to deter Germany by themselves. Failure to deter Germany would likely lead to conflicts with Japan and Italy, which they also did not have the strength to fight. Consequently, they determined that rearmament was required to meet the German threat; disarming Germany through existing international institutions and agreements was simply not

feasible. They further (correctly) understood that existing international institutions would not be able to maintain the peace. Ultimately, while they correctly understood that Germany was a threat, how to meet it, when it needed to be addressed by, and who might help meet that threat were all questions that were to varying degrees, unanswered.

There were two main factors in considering rearmament. First, the correct armaments had to be chosen to meet the threat. Second, rearmament had to occur in a fiscally sound manner, in order to prevent further economic difficulties from emerging. The understanding of how they were vulnerable, and how they could potentially hurt their enemies played an important role in rearmament. An accurate assessment of this meant that scarce funds would be spent effectively; an inaccurate assessment meant that these funds would be wasted. Chamberlain, along with much of the military and cabinet, did not accurately assess their vulnerability to aerial attack. The view that strategic bombing could inflict significant damage quickly was widespread, and could not be defended against was held by Chamberlain and others. This view however, was only partially correct. It was indeed difficult to defend against a bomber attack. As the Battle of Britain showed, the fear that “the bomber would always get through” was correct. That being said, that fear must be heavily qualified. The damage that could be done by these attacks was vastly over estimated. The real damage was much less than was feared. This overestimation was important for a number of reasons.

The fear that Britain was vulnerable to a bomber attack drove the need to put off fighting a war while either a deterrent, or a defence could be constructed against such an attack. If they fought a war before they were ready, Britain ran the risk of being subject to bombing attacks that they could not protect against, and with little means of retaliating against. Until 1937, the focus was on constructing a deterrent bomber force. Given the limitations of bombing, it is entirely possible that these were a less effective use of funds than might have otherwise been made. Despite the fear of strategic bombing, they correctly determined that with the advent of technological improvements, a feasible defence could (and should) be made, and did so by constructing fighter aircraft and other anti-air defences such as radar stations and anti-aircraft guns. This in turn addressed the threat of German bombers.

The Foreign Policy Executive also did not correctly act upon the threat that German u-boats represented. This is particularly curious for several reasons. First, they were well aware that Germany was constructing u-boats, with this being permitted in the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. Second, they were aware of the dangers that submarine warfare posed, having already experienced it. Yet to counter this potential threat, Britain did not make significant additions to their anti-submarine forces. This would suggest that they did not appreciate how their own plan of blockading the enemy could be applied against themselves. The focus on other types of warships however, could be rationalized when considering that Japan also posed a naval threat that ships such as cruisers would be needed to counter.

Decision makers, particularly Chamberlain, were well aware that a sound economy was critical to the long term security of the United Kingdom. This was particularly well reflected in his view that the economy was the fourth arm of defence. His personal observations previously noted also suggest his opposition to rearmament was on economic and fiscal grounds, rather than any particular moral aversion or concern for public opinion. Without a sound economy, little could be done in the long term to rearm, or finance any wars or conflicts. The realization that financial expertise needed to play a role in defence spending was acted upon in a timely manner and by 1926, the Treasury had significant input into strategic policy (Ferris: 1989, 4). Recognizing that a sound economic footing was essential to fighting a war, and acting to ensure that rearmament occurred at a sustainable pace was a sensible and prudent course of action.

Given that much of Britain's strategy for dealing with Germany involved long term plans such as a blockade, allies would likely be needed to contain Germany on the continent while the blockade took effect. While this may seem obvious, decision makers did not readily accept this logic. The fears that a greater commitment with France to containing Germany would potentially embolden France and draw the United Kingdom into another war on the continent was fundamentally flawed. Notwithstanding the views of some of both Chamberlain's contemporaries, and present day researchers, France had little means of attacking Germany. Chamberlain and others had evidence of France's military problems (Schweller: 1998, 152). Perhaps the best example they had could be found in France's reaction, or lack thereof, to the

remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936. If the Rhineland was viewed as such a crucial piece of territory which must remain demilitarized of any German presence, why did the French not react? This was further compounded by the fact that French military doctrine and planning was based around the idea of defending against a German attack. Ultimately, the idea that an alliance with France would encourage France to act aggressively towards Germany was fundamentally flawed, had little compelling reason for not making a firmer commitment with France early in the 1930s.

From a structural realist perspective, the decision to not pursue an alliance during peacetime with the Soviet Union is just as curious as the reason for not pursuing an alliance with France. Considering many of the circumstances, the Soviet Union should have made a natural ally for Britain. On one side, it could provide a front against Germany in Eastern Europe. However, it had also had numerous clashes with Japan throughout the 1930s. Considering that Japan had been identified as a potential enemy in the Far East, the Soviet Union could also help contain Japan. That the decision to not pursue such an alliance may have been the result of ideological discomfort with socialism, and friction between Chamberlain and the foreign office, is difficult to rationalize from a structural realist point of view. While there were indeed potential strategic reasons, such as military weaknesses, those do not appear to be the driving factors for not doing so. Rather, it appears that ideological conflict played a significant role in preventing such an alliance from occurring early on, and only when it appeared that war was all but inevitable. In these

circumstances, domestic variables intervened in such a manner that made an alliance impossible.

The lack of intelligence about German capabilities is also difficult to justify. By failing to be aware of the extent of German rearmament and production capabilities, it made it increasingly difficult for proper decisions to be made. With better information available, other alternatives might have appeared to be much more feasible. For example, the lack of good intelligence led to vast overestimations in the strength of the German air force (Watt: 1984, 261). This may have had a deterrent effect in Germany's favour, and had led to the belief that much more time was needed to rearm, before any practical containment or opposition to German expansion could take place.

The impact of public opinion and interest groups on the decision to appease Germany was somewhat indirect, although nonetheless very tangible. Although public opinion did not support rearmament or actions that might be seen to provoke another war, that in of itself was the reason for appeasement. Rather, the reason was that these groups had the means of adversely impacting Britain's capacity to fight. Commercial interests, such as banks and industry were concerned that excessive spending on rearmament would shake industry confidence, and in turn, potentially act on those concerns. If industry confidence was shaken, then another recession could be triggered, quickly destroying the British economy, and with it, any ability to reasonably rearm. For example, Chamberlain attempted to impose an increased graduated tax on business profits, for the purpose of helping fund rearmament, called the "National Defence

Contribution". This in turn caused a sharp downturn in the stock exchange and had business organizations strongly opposed (Fuchser: 1982, 72). Chamberlain likewise recognized that trade unions and similar groups were opposed to confrontational approaches to dealing Germany, and even excess rearmament. This opposition could prove to be costly for the United Kingdom if it resulted in general strikes, resulting in significant economic disruption. Indeed, he had only to look to France where social tensions and disorder, such as strikes, significantly hampered their ability to prepare for war (Hucker: 2011, 144). Taking steps to avoid such disruptions were essential to maintaining the pace of rearmament. Measured responses to German expansion were required to avoid such disruptions.

It is also worth briefly considering a range of potential alternative situations, such as how changes in leadership or public opinion may or may not have resulted in a different outcome, and how neoclassical realism would explain outcomes given these different circumstances. One important question worth considering would be whether or not a different outcome may have occurred had there been a different prime minister in power, as this could significantly change the considerations of the Foreign Policy Executive. For example, had Winston Churchill been prime minister, would any specific decision been made differently? Churchill was a staunch advocate of entering into a wider alliance including the Soviet Union in order to contain Germany. As early as 1936, Churchill was adamant that restraining Germany was a greater priority than all other goals (Stewart: 1999, 259). Given this, a number of

different outcomes could have resulted. For example, some prominent government officials, such as Vaninstart, may have remained in their roles longer, and been able to steer policy towards a much earlier alliance. Thus, rather than simply engaging in a buck passing and slow rearmament program, a much more active balancing strategy may have been pursued.

Like Chamberlain, Churchill was also in favour of rearmament. That being said, Churchill generally felt rearmament should occur at a much faster pace than it had been otherwise, with Cabinet often working to limit and reign in his demands (Stewart: 1999, 215). Given just how sensitive Chamberlain was to the budgetary implications of rearmament, it is difficult to say whether or not the same sensitivity would have been held by Churchill had he been Prime Minister. If he proved to be less sensitive to financial constraints, then the economic issues that the Treasury Board was concerned with if too many funds were spent on rearmament may have indeed materialized. This lack of sensitivity to preserving Britain's economic strength might be balanced against the perception that an aggressive and well armed Germany posed a great threat, one which could not (or should not) be delayed in addressing. Alternatively, it may be possible that Churchill may have become cognizant of the fiscal constraints once he was no longer a back bencher, and the importance of keep a sound economic footing as part of a long term strategy to maintain British policy and adopted a rearmament program similar to Chamberlain. This highlights how the foreign policy executive can face similar systemic concerns, and yet reach very different conclusions about how to address those concerns.

It is also worth considering how a difference in public opinion might have enabled a different outcome. The public opinion faced by Chamberlain was opposed to measures which were seen to be aggressive or which could help precipitate another war. Consequently, there was opposition to significant rearmament, aggressively opposing German actions such as when it remilitarized the Rhineland, or forming alliances for the purpose of containing Germany. It is important to note that this public opinion was not in of itself the reason for appeasement. Rather, many public groups had the means to express opposition to rearmament and other more aggressive policies that would adversely impact British power. For example, the labour movement and unions could strike, causing significant economic disruption and delaying the production of necessary armaments. Consequently, Chamberlain was required to take this into account.

If public opinion was in favour of more aggressive responses to Germany, it would have enabled (although not guaranteed) different possible outcomes. Some actions, like attempting to form a balancing coalition might have been attempted. Increasing the rates of rearmament however, may not have been possible, regardless of public opinion. Fiscal constraints imposed by a weak economy would not be eliminated through public support. Low government revenues would still restrict the pace of rearmament. If the public had demanded an aggressive response to German resurgence, such as forcibly removing German troops from the Rhineland, it is also doubtful that Chamberlain would engage in such a course of action. The United Kingdom

lacked the power to intervene on its own, and would require the assistance of France, which still suffered from a range of military difficulties. It is also worth asking if an alternative such as building a more robust alliance would be a more effective approach to dealing with Germany, avoiding the possibility of a potentially costly conflict while still restraining a rival power. All this suggests that it is not public opinion in of itself that was a driver of British foreign policy. Rather, the public had several ways of directly impacting power, which in turn dictated what types of responses were possible.

Conclusion of Neoclassical Realist Account

Based on the above considerations, it must be understood that the decision to appease Germany was largely a result of a wide range of factors beyond simply assessing the distribution of power in the international system. If that was the only consideration, then a containment strategy expected by structural realism would have likely emerged. That however, was not strictly the case.

A foreign policy executive functioning as a rational unitary actor would have likely looked to balance effectively. Since Chamberlain and the cabinet was not the embodiment of a rational unitary actor, intervening variables, ranging from their own prejudices, intragovernmental problems and the need to accommodate certain aspects of public opinion all led to a different outcome. Rather than an effective balancing response against Germany, consisting of effective rearmament and the formation of a balancing coalition of other states, a less effective response occurred. A lack of knowledge of German capabilities

led to a overcautious fear of German strength. An ideological fear of the Soviet Union and interdepartmental friction led to what should have been a natural ally being ignored, making balancing much more difficult. Similarly, there was little strategic reason for not forming an alliance earlier with France. Concerns that an alliance with France would in turn embolden France and lead to them provoking a war did not make sense; France did not have a sufficient military capability to attack Germany, only to defend. These factors consequently led to the buckpassing behaviour actually observed, rather than a more vigorous balancing strategy.

That being said, if the alliance forming aspects of British policy were unsound, the management of their own rearmament program was largely the opposite. To be sure, there were problems, with over emphasis on bombers at first, and little production of anti-submarine forces obvious examples. Nonetheless, an effective process was developed to ensure that scarce defence funds were spent effectively and in a manner that did not jeopardize the recovering economy. This was crucial given the potential consequences for ineffective rearmament, both in terms meeting the potential German threat, and maintaining the economic recovery. They also correctly understood how in the long term, industry and labour support was important in rearming, given their capacity to disrupt the process if they opposed it too much.

One neoclassical realist, Randall Schweller, suggested that British decision makers understood appeasement as a tradeoff between having to choose between internal domestic stability, or stability in the international system

(Schweller: 2006, 70). If steps such as building a coalition and aggressively rearming had been taken, then British leaders such as Chamberlain in turn feared it would have led to domestic instability. Since domestic stability had to be preserved, a strategy of buckpassing had to be adopted. Policy makers had learned of the consequences that domestic instability, such as industrial action on the part of labour movements and unions, could have (Schweller: 2006, 71). Taking time to help ensure the willing cooperation over industrial conscription of labour was the only way to avoid such instabilities. By gradually gaining the cooperation of both industry and labour, such problems were averted, and the British government retained its independence in decision making without becoming beholden to any particular group (Schmidt: 1983, 106).

Ultimately, a neoclassical realist evaluation of Britain's strategy of appeasing Germany would conclude that Britain's actions were only partially limited by the constraints of the international system, with many further constraints being self imposed, or originating from within the state, rather than from without. These constraints formed a wide range of intervening variables, which in turn impacted Britain's power. These ranged from their own biases, to internal processes and ways that the public could impact the economy. The end result of these variables helps explain how rather than form an effective coalition to balance against Germany, Britain ultimately engaged in a slow process of rearmament and buckpassing the problem of coping with a resurgent Germany to other European states.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The greatest advantage of the structural realist analysis of events is that it offers a straightforward explanation, and provides a reasonable prescription for what could happen, and reasons for why it happened. structural realism argues that states seek security, and to do so, will engage in a wide range of potential behaviours to this end. In the instance of Great Britain, the behaviors observed were a combination of balancing and buckpassing, which is entirely consistent with structural realist theory. structural realism further accepts that states which fail to take effective actions to ensure their own survival may be punished by the consequent imbalances of power in the international system. In the case of the United Kingdom, this was also correct, as a failure to balance sufficiently against Germany eventually resulted in a costly war, which in turn saw Britain begin a gradual decline in relative power as other powers steadily grew.

That being said, upon closer examination of Britain's strategy, there are a number of problems, or at a minimum, further questions, which structural realist theory cannot provide a compelling account for. These issues all focus around how states balance against potential enemies. The two main means of doing so are internal balancing, which consists of increasing one's own strength, and external balancing, consisting of forming alliances with other states.

Britain's internal balancing was generally sensible in that it correctly identified threats, and how they might be vulnerable to particular types of attack such as enemy bombing, although they did not seem to appreciate how they might be vulnerable to other types of warfare such as unrestricted submarine

warfare. Internal balancing was further slowed by the relatively slow rate of rearmament, largely on account of the significant economic uncertainties faced by the British government.

On the other hand, Britain's strategy of alliance formation was generally at odds with what structural realism would expect. Having correctly identified that Germany was the most likely state that they would be fighting against in the future, and having further determined that other states such as Italy and Japan would likely take advantage of British weakness to work to their own advantage in the Mediterranean and the Far East. Although there were certainly some valid reasons for being skeptical of the efficacy of France and the Soviet Union as allies, to entirely reject the notion of alliance with them until war was all but inevitable (or underway) is difficult to justify. The decision to ignore potential benefits of the Soviet Union as an ally is particularly troublesome from a structural realist perspective, given that the Soviet Union was in a position to help contain not only Germany, but Japan as well. To be sure, all states mistrust one another to various extents. Examination of the concerns of Chamberlain and other policy makers indicates that they were more concerned about the ideological threat, rather than strategic threat posed by the Soviet Union that they were unable to consider how the Soviet Union could act as an ally, given that Germany, Italy and Japan posed a more immediate threat. As Waltz notes, "Close competition subordinates ideology to interest", which should suggest that given the dangers of Germany, an alliance with the Soviets should have been a greater possibility (Waltz: 1979, 205).

It is also worth noting that while Britain was a party to a wide range of international institutions and agreements, they did not rely upon these agreements to preserve their security. While they indeed did enter into a number of agreements, there were sound reasons for doing so. First, there was always the possibility that such agreements, whether it was the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, or the Munich agreement in 1938, would be abided by, and keep the piece. Just as importantly, if such agreements were not abided by, they helped ensure that Britain had more time to rearm. That Great Britain did not ultimately rely on such agreements to preserve its security, and that such agreements failed, is entirely consistent with structural realist theory.

Ultimately structural realism appears to provide a reasonable explanation for why Britain pursued a strategy of appeasing Germany in the 1930s. This strategy was based around making a series of concessions to a resurgent power for the purpose of either fulfilling the possibility of averting war through addressing any perceived grievances, or alternatively, ensuring that there was sufficient time to grow in strength to prevent (or survive) another war. To be sure, structural realism falls short on some points, most notably being unable to explain the lack of balancing behaviour observed. This however, is a result of the theory's level of analysis, rather than any inherent weakness of the theory. Despite this lack of explanation, using structural realist theory as a tool to understand specific foreign problems can be a useful application of structural realism. Tools and assumptions developed by structural realism to explain broad patterns of

behaviour in the international system can be successfully applied to a specific foreign policy problem in order to explain the outcome.

Rather than offer a fundamentally different account of appeasement, neoclassical realism offers a useful supplement to the structural realist explanation. The best way it does so is by being able to offer an explanation of what structural realism cannot. By beginning with the same assessment of the international system, and then looking at how intervening variables within the state impact the outcome, neoclassical realism can explain why specific foreign policy outcomes that might be expected did not materialize. The study of appeasement also helps demonstrate that neoclassical realism offers a much more nuanced, and ultimately, correct conception of power than does structural realism.

It is worth recalling that neoclassical realists consider power to be more than just material resources, but is the capacity of the state to mobilize and utilize its resources (Taliaferro: 2006, 467). When considering this, it is very likely that the United Kingdom was much less powerful than a structural realist might otherwise consider. Simply put, there were strong limitations on how the material resources, such as the economic power of the United Kingdom could be used. These limitations were largely domestic in nature, stemming from both the leadership and public groups such as industry and trade unions. Understanding how these constraints functioned, and what needed to be done was essential to being able to increase the extractive capacity of the state over time. This was best demonstrated by the gradual increase in armament production to meet the

German threat, and the willingness of Chamberlain to accommodate Germany diplomatically was essential to neutralizing the impact that intervening domestic politics could have. If such considerations had not been taken into account, then it is possible that trade unions could have organized general strikes, consequently causing serious disruptions to British economic power. The consequences of failing to take these considerations into account can be seen by the reaction of French trade unions to the possibility of France taking a more hostile approach to Germany, which resulted in a wide range of disruptions and further political instabilities.

The other aspect of resource mobilization that neoclassical realism sheds light on are the external resources that were (or were not) mobilized. In this instance, such resources are other states which were potential allies. In this instance, neoclassical realism identifies a range of intervening variables that precluded such resources from being mobilized. Ideological prejudices held by Chamberlain and the cabinet towards the Soviet Union played an important role not actively seeking an alliance to contain Germany. This was further compounded by personal clashes between the foreign office and Chamberlain which often seemed to be working at cross purposes. This offers a significant challenge to the structural realist assumption that states can be treated as black boxes, with their foreign policies dictated by their material strength, divorced of domestic politics. Because domestic politics can have an impact on the material strength of a state, they must be taken into account.

As the study of appeasement in this instance shows, neoclassical realism offers a better conceptualization of power than does structural realism. By understanding power as the state's capacity to mobilize resources, rather than simply a measure of those resources, a better understanding of what states might choose to do (or not do) can be made. By showing how there were a wide range of limitations drawing on domestic factors, neoclassical realism can show that Britain was much weaker than a strictly structural realist interpretation would otherwise understand. This in turn offers a better understanding of why Britain pursued a strategy of buying as much time as possible in order to grow in strength. In other instances, while neoclassical realism offers an explanation for why balancing behavior did not occur, such as in alliance formation, this explanation is not particularly satisfactory, as it significantly strays from the assumption of states as rational unitary actors.

Ultimately, rather than employing one particular theory over another in order to examine specific foreign policy problems, a better approach must be to look to apply both theories in conjunction. By examining a problem from a strictly structural realist perspective, a baseline understanding of what should be reasonably expected to happen can be established. However, by then examining how domestic variables can intervene to either allow states to help behave as expected, or alternatively, identify why states might be deviating from the expected behaviour. Such deviations might arise from examining how states might be less powerful than otherwise expected, or alternatively, simply does not approach the assumption of states behaving as a rational unitary actor.

This also identifies potential areas for additional research to better understand how to best assess state power. As the study of appeasement shows, domestic politics can have a tangible impact on a state's power. Understanding the circumstances which can increase or decrease domestic politics influence are essential for making accurate assessments of power, and in turn, the range of expected behaviors which can be predicted.

Neither approach can be said to be inherently superior to the other. Although they diverge on matters such as levels of analysis, the two theoretical approaches can effectively complement one another. By applying both approaches in conjunction with one another, greater understanding of specific foreign policy issues can be found. The principal strength of a structural realist based approach is that by examining how all the state in a particular system relate to one another in terms of their power, straightforward, testable explanations can be made to understand state behaviour. The main weakness is that all too often, states often behave in ways which do not conform to what would otherwise be expected. In circumstances such as these, structural realism can help identify specific issues or decisions which need to be explained by neoclassical realism. By using neoclassical realism to supplement and enhance a structural realist analysis of events, a better understanding of not only why certain outcomes occurred, but why some alternatives did not.

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