

Assessing the Effectiveness of Diplomatic Strategies: A Quantitative Analysis of U.S.–Soviet Interactions

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ABSTRACT

What effect does implementing the strategy of containment, as opposed to one of high-level negotiations and principled diplomacy targeted at finding “win–win” solutions, have on the level of success in dealings with major-power authoritarian regimes? Although much attention has been devoted to the study of the U.S.’ containment policy during the Cold War era, most scholarly work examines how negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union seemed futile. The literature on contemporary U.S.–Russian relations makes a similar point. However, such literature often fails to mention how a hard-line military commitment to issues of strategic importance, and subsequent clear communication of such commitment, tend to lead to better outcomes for the United States—more so than diplomatic negotiations between heads of state. This paper argues that the existence of authoritarian regimes such as the Soviet Union necessitates a powerful enemy, primarily to justify the regime to their domestic populations. These regimes are therefore prone to seek out points of contention with their enemy, yet unlikely to enter unwinnable conflicts as it may damage their reputation before a domestic audience. Given their limited resources and a need to “win,” authoritarian regimes tend to forgo issues of high strategic importance to the United States when the potential costs of contention are clearly communicated. Such communication is best executed through the mechanisms of containment, including hard-line military commitment as well as a clear demonstration of that commitment. Current literature on the topic of outcomes of interactions with authoritarian regimes is substantively comprised of qualitative analysis. In contrast, this paper offers a quantitative analysis of containment and its relative effectiveness vis-a-vis high-level negotiations. To that end,

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this paper analyzes data from crises between the United States and the Soviet Union from the end of World War II through 1978.

Keywords: Containment, Diplomatic Strategy, Foreign Policy, U.S.-Soviet Relations

Evaluando la efectividad de las estrategias diplomáticas: un análisis cuantitativo de las interacciones entre EE. UU. y la Unión Soviética

RESUMEN

¿Qué efecto tiene la implementación de la estrategia de contención, en vez de una de negociaciones de alto nivel y diplomacia basada en principios para encontrar soluciones “ganar-ganar”, en el nivel de éxito en los tratos con los regímenes autoritarios de mayor poder? Aunque mucha de la atención hubiera sido dedicada al estudio de la política de contención de los EE. UU. durante la Guerra Fría, la mayoría del trabajo académico examina cómo las negociaciones entre los EE. UU. y la Unión Soviética parecían inútiles. La literatura sobre las relaciones contemporáneas entre Estados Unidos y Rusia hace una observación similar. Sin embargo, dicha literatura a menudo no menciona cómo un compromiso militar de línea dura con temas de importancia estratégica, y la posterior comunicación clara de dicho compromiso, conducen a mejores resultados para los Estados Unidos, más que las negociaciones diplomáticas entre los jefes de estado. Este documento sostiene que la existencia de regímenes autoritarios como la Unión Soviética requiere un enemigo poderoso, principalmente para justificar el régimen ante sus poblaciones domésticas. Por lo tanto, estos regímenes son propensos a buscar puntos de contención con su enemigo, pero es poco probable que entren en conflictos irreparables, ya que pueden dañar su reputación ante una audiencia doméstica. Dados sus limitados recursos y la necesidad de “ganar”, los regímenes autoritarios tienden a renunciar a temas de gran importancia estratégica para los Estados Unidos cuando se comunican claramente los costos potenciales de la disputa. Dicha comunicación se ejecuta mejor a través de los mecanismos de contención, incluido el compromiso militar de línea dura, así como una clara demostración de ese compromiso. La

literatura actual sobre el tema de los resultados de las interacciones con los regímenes autoritarios se compone de un análisis cualitativo. En contraste, este documento ofrece un análisis cuantitativo de la contención y su efectividad relativa frente a las negociaciones de alto nivel. Con ese fin, este documento analiza los datos de las crisis entre los Estados Unidos y la Unión Soviética desde el final de la Segunda Guerra Mundial hasta 1978.

Palabras Clave: contención, estrategia diplomática, política exterior, relaciones entre EE. UU. y la Unión Soviética

外交战略有效性评估：美苏互动的定量分析

摘要

相比旨在寻找“双赢”解决办法的高级别谈判和原则性外交，实行遏制政策对于与大国权威政权打交道的成功程度有何影响？虽然大多数关注都聚焦于冷战时期美国的遏制政策，但大部分学术著作都表明美国和苏联之间的谈判似乎徒劳无功。关于当代美俄关系的文献也提出了类似的观点。然而，这类文献往往没有提到针对战略重要性问题作出的强硬军事承诺，以及随后该承诺的明确传达为何往往给美国带来更好的结果——比国家元首之间的外交谈判更为有益。本文认为，苏联这样权威政权的存在需要一个强大的敌人，很大程度上是为其政权向国民辩护。因此，这些政权倾向于发掘与敌人的争论点，但不太可能卷入无法取胜的冲突，因为这可能会在国内民众面前损害他们的声誉。鉴于其有限的资源和“获胜”的需要，当被明确告知潜在的争议成本，权威政权倾向于放弃对美国具有高度战略重要性的问题。这种告知最好通过遏制机制来进行，包括强硬的军事承诺以及这种承诺的明确表达。与专制政权互动主题相关的现有文献实质上由定性分析构成。相比之下，本文对遏制政策及其相对于高层谈判的有效性进行了定量分析。为此，本文分析了第二次世界大战结束至1978年间美国与苏联之间的危机数据。

关键词：遏制政策，外交策略，对外政策，美苏关系

Introduction

Does implementing the strategy of containment (playing hard-ball) in dealings with authoritarian regimes yield favorable outcomes for the United States, as opposed to high-level negotiations targeted at finding “win-win” solutions?³ Much of the scholarly literature on Cold War relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and on contemporary U.S.–Russian relations, addresses this issue by pointing out the futility of high-level negotiations (Gaddis 2005a; Garthoff 1992; Kennan 1946; Mastanduno 1992). Scholars ranging from George Kennan to Michael McFaul have made the case for containment’s effectiveness by emphasizing the authoritarian states’ inherent need for a major internal or external enemy for the purposes of regime justification (Kennan 1946; Stoner and McFaul 2015; Walt 1989). The notion of an authoritarian regime’s need for external conflict is equally supported by extensive literature expounding the diversionary theory of war (DTW) (Levy 1988; Shulman 1976; Sobek 2007; Weeks 2012). As a strategy, containment reckons this phenomenon in its assessment that the Soviet Union’s inherent need for an adversary cannot, by definition, bring about fruitful negotiations leading to any fundamental resolution of differences, nor lead to an era of a mutually beneficial relationship. Note, importantly, that to study the long-term effects from containment is nearly impossible on the quantitative level, and therefore, this paper focuses on the immediate effects of containment. As a differentiation can be made between general containment and immediate containment, for quantitative analytical reasons, this paper aims to examine the latter.

Most scholarly work on U.S.–Soviet Union relations addresses why negotiations in search of mutually beneficial outcomes between the two world powers were doomed. However, missing in both prior and current literature is a quantitative analysis of whether following the strategy of immediate containment produced better outcomes for the United States. Further, although the theory of extended immediate deterrence (EID) stipulates that decisive action and commitment to follow through does deter the adversary from engaging in conflict (Achen and Snidal 1989; Danilovic 2001; Huth 1988, 1999; Wu 1990), it primarily accounts for defensive deterrence. Put simply, EID theory argues that states which create clear boundaries and show resolve to defend their borders are more likely to deter the aggressor. EID theory does not address the concerns of a major power such as

3 Containment was first coined as a diplomatic strategy by an American diplomat, George F. Kennan. In his infamous “long telegram” written as a cable from Moscow, Kennan illustrated to the perplexed Washington foreign policy community and academia what he argued to be the underlying cause of Soviet conduct toward the United States. Kennan wrote that the Soviet Union’s psychic has an inherent need for an enemy as a way of justifying its own regime, that the United States was that enemy and that any effort at finding a resolution to the overall conflict was not a realistic possibility. Kennan later argued for containing the Soviet Union through military terms in cases of vital strategic importance to the United States. He called for selective engagement with the Soviets only in cases of no controversy and minimal possibility for conflict.

the United States in its quest to advance specific strategic interests abroad, while simultaneously obtaining concessions from an authoritarian regime such as Russia. Finally, the argument of general deterrence between enduring rivals, advanced by Huth and Russett, does address risks and stipulations of war-making between equal rivals, but fails to explain the effect of specific strategies (such as containment) in pursuit of the national interest of avoiding a direct military confrontation (Huth and Russett 1993; Snyder 2015).

The theoretical framework behind this paper's argument hinges on authoritarian regimes' willingness to sacrifice strategic interests and instead focus on cases of contention that can be demonstrated to their internal publics as successes over the enemy. We argue that authoritarian regimes not only require a powerful enemy (Gent 2009; Levy 1988; Levy and Vakili 2014; Miller 1995; Smith 1996), but also require public contention with these enemies. These regimes find points of contention that are more likely to deliver "cheap wins" in order to demonstrate on the domestic front the regime's ability to thwart enemy complots. Authoritarian regimes such as Russia, however, will acquiesce in cases where costs of contention can balloon and the likelihood of a "win" is low. Hard-line military commitment and communication of such commitment are more effective at extracting concessions from authoritarian regimes because they clearly demonstrate the high potential costs of contention. High-level negotiations, on the other hand, produce noisy information on potential costs of contention and provide the authoritarian regime with both a public forum for nationalist rhetoric and an opportunity to showcase the enemy's advances—without risking a costly conflict. Following a cost-benefit analysis, the authoritarian regime recognizes that the price of participating in negotiations is relatively low, more than counterbalanced by the opportunity to convey to their domestic public the "outrageous" demands made by the other side.

The policies of containment during the Cold War and neo-containment in more recent years have derived their prominence and appeal primarily through offering a behind-the-mirror view of the Soviet/Russian psychological thought processes. These insights have offered a skeptical perspective on the benefits of engagement and negotiation and have created a sense of normalcy and structure in Washington's previously perplexed foreign policy agenda (Gaddis 2005a; Kissinger 1994).

This paper rests on the nexus of three theoretical frameworks: immediate containment, DTW, and EID. Although containment has been validated by many scholars, it has been mostly seen as a philosophical framework for understanding the internal psyche of the Soviet Union. By illustrating the irreconcilable road blocks to finding win-win solutions, containment is mostly understood as a strategy that can save time and energy potentially used on already-doomed negotiations. This paper shows immediate containment's superiority to the strategy of negotiation, in ways beyond simply saving wasted time. It offers a theoretical

framework for the tactical advantages of immediate containment in times of crises and contention. Its analysis and findings make a novel contribution to current literature not only regarding U.S.–Soviet relations, but also in terms of potential interactions between any duo of rivals pitting a democratic and an authoritarian regime. Here, this paper offers a first step into that territory, with the stipulation that further work needs to be done in this sphere, as well as testing the theory on other sets of interactions.

By running regression analysis on 93 separate Cold War crises between the United States and the Soviet Union, this study finds that hard-line approach and military commitment has a greater positive effect on the success of outcomes than does active engagement and high-level negotiation. The introductory section is followed by a section that weaves existing scholarship with a new theoretical argument. The foundation for this theoretical argument rests on prior literature and culminates in a novel contribution and hypothesis. This hypothesis is tested in the methodological section of the paper which is followed by a discussion of the results. The final section of the paper outlines the implications of findings on both policy and further scholarship.

Literature on Containment and Our Contribution

When dealing with an authoritarian regime, implementing the strategy of immediate containment yields higher rates of success⁴ for the United States than does the strategy of diplomatic engagement and high-level negotiation. This section explains why elements of containment allow for more concessions from an authoritarian regime like the Soviet Union, as opposed to other diplomatic strategies. First, this section will briefly define and provide a preliminary justification for the definitions chosen for the following concepts: (1) containment, (2) success, and (3) high-level negotiations or diplomatic engagement, followed by a summary of metrics used to measure these concepts. Next, this section will illustrate the theory behind the decision-making processes of authoritarian regimes, as well as their approach to cost–benefit analysis on the domestic and international stages. Finally, this section will explain how decision processes within authoritarian regimes are susceptible to the workings of containment. Consequently, this paper’s argument lies on the nexus of utilitarianism (Mill 1901; Sidgwick 2012) in addition to, on the one hand, the rational choice theory of economics (Simon 1955), and on the other, the neo-realist school of thought within international relations (Walt 2002; Waltz 1959, 2010). It grapples with the clash of rational choice model of decision making within the regime leadership (Harrison 2005, 2006) and the neo-realist argument for the balance of power in the context of rational decision making on a state level (Bull 1966, 2012; Haslam

4 Success is defined as the quality of the outcome of a crisis as measured against the strategic interests of the United States.

2002; Morgenthau 1982; Walt 2002; Waltz 1959, 1993, 2000, 2010). In sum, this section illustrates the theoretical framework underlying containment's effectiveness as a diplomatic strategy.

In the context of U.S.–Soviet relations, containment is defined as the middle ground between the policies of detente⁵ and rollback⁶ (Hansen 1987; Podhoretz 1984), advocating for diplomatic nonengagement and hard-line military approach on issues of vital strategic importance to the United States (Gaddis 1997, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). For the purposes of this paper, immediate containment will be defined as deployment or intention to deploy military tools for protecting U.S. interests on any specific issue, clear communication of such intention coupled with diplomatic nonengagement.⁷ Success is defined as the quality of the outcome of a crisis as measured against the strategic interests of the United States. High-level negotiations or diplomatic engagement are defined as diplomatic meetings and formal dealings between high-ranking members of respective executive branches.

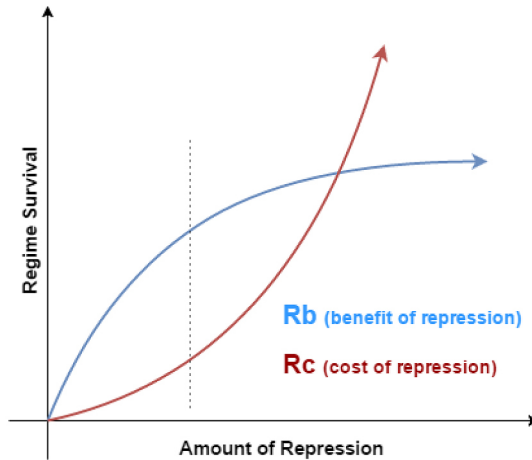
To illustrate the decision-making processes of authoritarian regimes, specifically the Soviet Union, one begins with the regime's desire to survive. By their nature, authoritarian regimes need to self-perpetuate (De Mesquita 2005; Walt 1989; Waltz 1959, 2010). The strong desire to survive and maintain total power is a bedrock of the structure and mechanisms leading the actions of authoritarian regimes (De Mesquita, 2005). This argument is widely supported by academic literature in various fields, including international relations, economics, and sociology (Harrison 2005, 2006; Mill 1901; Sidgwick 2012; Simon 1955).

Regime perpetuation being an essential task, authoritarian regimes deploy a plethora of tools aimed at securing their survival, a significant number of which can be classified as repressive. Such techniques, directly aimed at protecting the status quo, include the absence of free and fair elections, consolidation of power within the executive branch, and imprisonment of political opponents (De Mesquita 2005; Frantz and Ezrow 2011; Schedler 2009). Although effective, repression comes not without a cost to the regime: its effect on regime survival can be expressed as benefit of repression minus the cost of repression. Over time, repression becomes prohibitively expensive. The relationship between the costs and benefits of repression can be illustrated by the graph shown in Figure 1.

5 Detente—translated as release from tension in French is a term often used to refer to a period of improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

6 Rollback is a term often used to refer to the strategy of actively changing the behavior of another state and/or to curtail the current status of another state.

7 It is important to note that clear communication of intentions and diplomatic nonengagement are not mutually exclusive concepts. Clear communication can be achieved through a variety of means signaling tools such as a military to military hot-line, a concrete statement by a representative of the executive branch, etc. Diplomatic engagement on the other hand implies high-level negotiations at the heads of state or ministerial level targeted to find specific solutions that are acceptable to all sides.

Figure 1. Cost/Benefit of Repression

A good extreme typical example of this theory is North Korea. Although the regime uses almost entirely repressive techniques, such repression comes at a very high cost. Almost the entire leadership circle of North Korea are cut off from the rest of the world (Byman and Lind 2010; French 2007). Further, repression is not an unlimited resource and most authoritarian states are limited to the amount of repression that they can exert upon their populations (Linz 1975).⁸ Owing to this, authoritarian regimes do not achieve the perpetuation of the status quo through purely repressive techniques. Regimes are rational actors (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965; Keohane 1986, 1993; Mearsheimer 2001) and being rational, they strive to acquire the good will of their populations and create ideological frameworks for regime justification that can be beneficial to regime survival and can supplement their repressive tools of survival.

Scholars of DTW have long argued that creating a nationalistic ideology to confront a perceived enemy can serve as a helpful mechanism for regime justification (Gent 2009; Levy 1988; Levy and Vakili 2014; Miller 1995; Smith 1996). DTW stipulates that authoritarian regimes will seek out internal and external enemies and launch campaigns to confront such enemies in order to divert the attention of the public away from regime change and toward the perceived “enemy” (Lai and Slater 2006; Weeks 2012). This paper, however, argues that large regimes will seek out different types of enemies than will smaller authoritarian regimes. Smaller regimes will often exaggerate the threat of terrorism and the capability of terrorist or

⁸ Most regimes vary on a scale of both authoritarianism and repression. The Soviet Union, for example, for the most part of its history did not match the repressive techniques deployed by the North Korean regime. Further, the modern Russian regime, although authoritarian in nature, exhibits many degrees of freedom that are foreign to most authoritarian regimes around the world.

rebel groups (Wilkinson 2000). They will purport to “sell” stability in exchange for public’s acquiescence to regime’s authoritarian behavior (Wilkinson 2000). If necessary, regimes will even make up a nonexistent terrorist group for the purposes of regime justification (Kendzior 2006). On the other hand, large regimes with big populations face a more unique set of challenges in terms of regime justification. These regimes are often so large that the internal threat from terrorist or rebel groups is not sufficient to generate enough anxiety within the population. The extent of terrorist or rebel groups’ capabilities, made up or real, is not sufficient to unite the nation or to inspire a nationalistic ideology toward the “enemy.” This is the case because both terrorist and rebel groups are often region-specific and do not pose a serious threat to a large state with massive military capabilities⁹; therefore, having an external enemy such as a nation state is better suited for this purpose.

Now that it has been discussed that authoritarian regimes of large size need an enemy to rally support of their populations, the next logical conclusion is that the enemy needs to be roughly of the same size in terms of power as the authoritarian regime. The Soviet Union could not have used Finland as a credible threat to unify the national ideology against the enemy. For the Soviet Union, such an enemy was the United States. At the same time, authoritarian regimes do not have an interest in appearing weak to their internal publics. They need to show that the regime, entrusted with public support, can in fact handle the confrontation with the enemy and is well equipped to protect both the borders and the nationalistic identity from the foreign threat. To do so, these regimes are in the business of not only seeking out confrontation, but also winning or at least not losing the confrontations they take on. Confronting the enemy and winning can supplement repression to ensure regime survival. Of course, winning, just like repression, comes at some cost. For example, confrontation and consistent deployment of forces is costly. In addition, the enemy in concert with its allies can impose some additional costs through various tools such as economic sanctions. The following equation (where W = wins and c = cost) illustrates how adding confrontation and wins to repression can raise the probability of regime survival.

$$\textit{Regime Survival} = (Rb - Rc) + (Wb - Wc)$$

Regimes cannot win all confrontations, especially against an equally powerful enemy. To redress this, authoritarian regimes will disentangle themselves from conflicts that they are not likely to win and instead focus attention on cases where the likelihood of losing is low or zero. Negotiations create an expectation that all sides can walk away with some gain. Therefore, even in cases of vital strategic im-

⁹ Additionally, populations can sympathize with internal rebel groups or organizations that the state labels as terroristic. External enemies often have no control of the flow of information within the regime and are easier targets for nationalistic rhetoric.

portance to the United States, negotiations can signal that a win/win solution is possible when such a solution does not exist. Negotiations also often call for public attention to the specific crisis or contention and once entangled in negotiations, an authoritarian regime cannot back down due to high expectations it has placed on itself in the eyes of its population. Finally, authoritarian regimes need to be given room for some contention and some wins, especially if those wins are not detrimental to the national interests of the United States.¹⁰ Challenging these regimes on all issues across the board indiscriminately will push authoritarian regimes to pick cases of contention at random and by doing so take away the effectiveness of the strategy on the cases of significant importance. Three important take-away points are: (1) authoritarian regimes are selective in types of cases they contend and their selection can be influenced by strategically placing resources in a way that signals high stakes and a very low possibility of a win or even a stalemate for the authoritarian regime in certain cases, (2) negotiations create noise and distort the signaling of possibility of a win for the authoritarian regime and by doing so make it more attractive for the regime to entangle itself, and (3) authoritarian regimes need not be confronted on all fronts.

Now that the behavioral traits of authoritarian regimes have been illustrated, it becomes clear why the elements of containment allow for more concessions from an authoritarian regime, such as the Soviet Union, as opposed to other diplomatic strategies. As discussed above, containment consists of military commitment to issues of high strategic importance to the nation implementing containment, for example, the United States (Gaddis 2005a). The strategy of containment also calls for clear and straightforward communication of such commitment to the adversary. Finally, containment, when implemented as originally designed, calls for restraint in the process of case selection (Gaddis 2005a). In other words, the policy of containment advocates for selective confrontation and careful discrimination. Only cases of high strategic importance should receive the “treatment” of containment. All of these “elements and characteristics” of the policy of containment are parallel with the behavioral traits of authoritarian regimes.

The leadership of the U.S. foreign policy and military community had to come up with a strategy to deal with the Soviet Union. Given the behavioral patterns of authoritarian states described above, resolution of crises through diplomatic negotiation was impossible. Soviet behavior appeared sporadic and without a clear trajectory when viewed from Washington. The policy community in Washington was completely bewildered by the Soviet behavior immediately after World War II. The discussed characteristics of authoritarian regimes created a need for a grand strategy that is neither veiled in a naiveté of idealism nor in a trigger-happy militaristic approach aimed at total victory. This is when the concept of contain-

¹⁰ Presumably, wins for the authoritarian regimes can also include cases of strategic importance to the United States. However, for the sake of this argument, such cases are highly unlikely as these would result in a stalemate rather than a “win” for the authoritarian regime.

ment as a strategy was introduced by the then little known, mid-level diplomat, George Kennan. A prominent scholar of the Cold War, John Lewis Gaddis, in his book *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* noted the following about George Kennan's long telegram that had paved the way for containment: "What Kennan opened up, on that bleak day in Moscow in 1946, was a way out: a grand strategy that rejected both the appeasement and the isolationism that had led to World War II, on the one hand, and on the other the alternative of a third world war, the devastation from which, in a nuclear age, could be unimaginable" (2005a, n.p.). Containment offered a way forward and conceptualized a framework of military and foreign policy tools aimed at dealing with the Soviet Union—tools that aimed to strike at the heart of the Soviet Union's need for an external enemy and the desire to dwell on constant conflicts without publicly losing such conflicts.

The logical conclusion that follows is that in lieu of diplomatic engagement, authoritarian regimes are better dealt with by hard-line military commitment to issues of strategic importance as long as this approach does not choke off all venues for potential contention. The ingredients of immediate containment are best suited for the execution of such an approach. As opposed to negotiation, containment is an immediate call for a hard-line military approach to issues of vital strategic importance and clear communication of such military commitment. Faced with this information and diplomatic nonengagement, authoritarian regimes will forgo issues of vital importance to the United States and instead focus on issues that are more likely to yield contention and higher probability of "wins" for the authoritarian regime. This gives rise to the following hypothesis:

H1: While dealing with an authoritarian regime, implementing the strategy of immediate containment has an effect of yielding higher rates of success for the United States than does the strategy of diplomatic engagement and high-level negotiation.

Testing Containment versus Alternative Strategies

The hypothesis of this paper links the effect of immediate containment (the independent variable) on the success of the United States in dealing with authoritarian regimes such as the Soviet Union (the dependent variable). Data on international crises during the Cold War was taken from U.S. and USSR Crises Data: United States, 1946–1976; USSR, 1946–1975 (ICPSR study number: 7702). This study attempted to quantify crisis behavior by both superpowers during the height of the Cold War.¹¹

11 The dataset was produced by the consulting firm Consolidated Analysis Center, Incorporated (CACI). This firm was founded in 1962 by two RAND corporation alums, programmer Herb Karr and Nobel prize winning economist Harry Markowitz.

This dataset was one of a series of datasets on U.S., Soviet, and Chinese crisis management commissioned in the 1970s by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). These datasets were compiled from open (nonclassified) sources, primarily media accounts. Data on U.S. crisis behavior was derived from western media sources, while the dataset on Soviet behavior was coded from Soviet news outlets. Only the U.S. datasets were used for this analysis, as we argue that containment was an American policy doctrine.

The U.S. crisis data spans two datasets, one with detailed data on 93 international crises, and one with summary data on a larger set of 307 crises. The detailed dataset contains variables for a wide range of U.S. actions, strategies, and problems for each of these events. Using the variables for U.S. actions, we are able to identify the use of containment, diplomatic, or rollback approaches for each of these crises.

Diplomatic actions were those which use nonmilitary tools of statecraft such as “modify treaty,” “lodge protest,” or simply “employ diplomacy.” Some combination of diplomatic actions was taken in 85 of the 93 cases in the detailed data file. The total number of diplomatic actions taken ranged from zero to five, and this number is used as our variable “Diplomacy.” The set of actions coded as diplomatic actions is presented in Appendix A. Rollback actions were aggressive uses of military force and five possible actions were coded as “Rollback.” Some combination of these was used in 24 crises. Immediate containment actions are those which involve deployment of military assets or the threat of military actions. Containment actions were grouped into three broad categories, and weighted according to category. The 15 actions which involve sending military or logistical support, for example, “provide supplies from US depots,” were given a weight of 1. The eight actions involving the deployment of U.S. military assets such as “military blockade or quarantine” were given a weight of 2. Finally, the three actions which threaten nuclear retaliation such as “change alert status of nuclear forces as a deterrent” were given a weight of 3. Some combination of containment actions appears in 84 of the 93 crises. For each crisis, the number of containment actions used by the United States was summed to arrive at a score for the variable. The detailed list of actions included in each category is included in Appendix A.

The summary data on 307 Cold War crises includes an indicator of the outcome of the crisis. Given the complexity of these crisis outcomes, the researchers who compiled the dataset were wary of providing a false precision “on the order of ‘U.S. Eagles 24; Soviet Bears 21’” (E2). Their original design coded crisis outcomes on a seven-point scale, but intercoder reliability was improved by condensing outcomes onto a three-point scale (see 3-21). In this dataset, crisis outcomes are coded as “Positive (U.S. objectives and interests advanced);” “No Change”; and “Negative (U.S. objectives and interests damaged).” Ninety-three of these crises are also included in the first U.S. file of 307 crises. Carrying the outcome variable over to the second dataset allows for an analysis of the association between U.S. actions

and crisis outcomes. The distribution of the outcome variable across three possible values is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the Outcome Variable across Values

Negative Outcome (1)	41	48 %
No Change (2)	15	16%
Positive Outcome (3)	37	40%
Total	93	100%

Table 2. Correlations of Level of Containment, Diplomacy, and Rollback

	Diplomacy	Rollback
Diplomacy		
Rollback	.83	
Containment	.024	-.204*

*Indicates $p < .05$

It would be reasonable to suspect that crises differ in their importance to U.S. policymakers, and that a general increase in U.S. effort across all policy tools would be expected for crises which are particularly salient to the United States. Overall, the data do not support this. The use of containment does not correlate highly with the use of other policy tools. The correlation coefficients reported in Table 2 suggest that the use of containment is not a reflection of overall policy engagement with a crisis, as the use of these policy tools correlates quite weakly, and even negatively in the case of containment and rollback.¹²

Results and Discussion

To test the effectiveness of each of these strategies on crisis outcomes, the measure of outcomes was regressed on the three indicators of containment, rollback, and diplomatic effort. The dependent variable is categorical with possible values of Failure, Neutral, and Success. The clear order to these categories

¹² However, rollback is correlated with diplomacy. This is likely the case due to the nature of high-profile cases where the military is actively involved in pushing the adversary out of their present position. These instances are likely to involve both active military maneuvers and conversations at the highest levels to prevent the conflict from escalating. Omitting rollback or diplomacy out of the model and running logit by comparing containment to each strategy separately does not yield a significant difference on the results.

renders ordered logit as the appropriate statistical technique. The results of this logit model are presented in Table 3. Only containment has a significant effect on crisis outcomes. The effect is positive, indicating that higher levels of containment are associated with higher probability of success. The coefficients for rollback and for diplomacy both failed to meet the 0.05 level of statistical significance.

The strength of the effect of containment is most easily seen when the predicted probabilities for each outcome are considered. As Figure 2 indicates, at the lowest level of containment, the probability of failure is 0.6 and the probability of success is only about 0.24. Once the containment level reaches 6, success is as likely as failure. At the highest level of containment, success has a probability of 0.75 and failure a probability of 0.2. These results show a very substantial and substantive change in the probability of success and failure as a result of level of containment.

Robustness checks for variations on the weighting scheme were conducted, and the results reported here are quite stable across variations in the weighting of types of containment. Omitting the weights entirely also does not lead to a material change in the results. Only rollback and diplomacy correlate with each other at a significant level. No strategy is significantly correlated with containment. Omitting rollback or diplomacy out of the model and running logit by comparing containment to each strategy separately does not yield a significant difference on the results.

Implications and Further Research

The effectiveness of various diplomatic strategies has been debated in both academic literature and in the policymaking community. This study sought to examine the effectiveness of one such strategy: the immediate containment strategy. Specifically, the hypothesis of this paper stated that elements of immediate containment strategy, namely: (1) military commitment to issues of high strategic importance, (2) clear communication of such commitment, (3) diplomatic nonengagement on the specific issue, and (4) selective engagement on other issues of lesser strategic importance, will yield higher rates of success for the democratic regime (the implementer of containment) vis-a-vis an authoritarian regime (the implementee of containment) as opposed to high-level negotiations.

The theoretical reasoning behind this hypothesis is as follows. Authoritarian regimes have a basic need to self-perpetuate (De Mesquita 2005; Walt 1989; Waltz 1959, 2010); regime perpetuation being an essential task, authoritarian regimes will deploy a plethora of tools at securing their survival (De Mesquita 2005; Frantz and Ezrow 2011; Schedler 2009). Authoritarian regimes do not achieve the perpetuation of the status quo through purely repressive techniques. Regimes supplement repression by striving to acquire the good will of their populations by creating an ideological framework of a common enemy (Gent 2009; Levy 1988;

Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities in Ordered Logit¹³

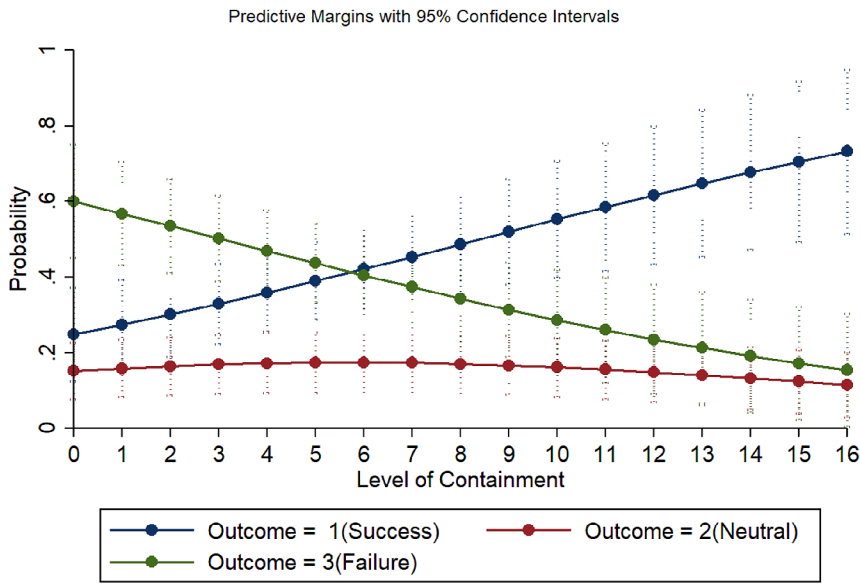


Table 3. Ordered Logit Model Estimates

Independent Variable	beta Coefficients	Standard Errors	t Statistic
Containment [+]	.1320***	.0486	2.72
Rollback [+]	.1036	.3372	0.31
Diplomatic Action [-]	-.0011	.1641	-0.01
Number of Observations	93		
Probability > chi-Squared	0.0434		
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0428		

Notes:

- a. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.
- b. *** indicates $p < .01$ ** indicates $p < .05$
- c. For robustness purposes, a separate model was estimated using unweighted values for independent variables. For the sake of brevity, the results of that model are not provided but are consistent with the findings in this model.

Levy and Vakili 2014; Miller 1995; Smith 1996). Moreover, authoritarian regimes cannot win all confrontations, especially against an equally powerful enemy. To redress this, authoritarian regimes will disentangle themselves from conflicts that they are not likely to win and instead focus attention on cases where the likelihood of losing is low or zero. In addition, negotiations create noise and distort the sig-

13 The model holds other variables at their means.

nalizing of possibility of a win for the authoritarian regime and by doing so make it more attractive for the regime to entangle itself in conflict. Finally, authoritarian regimes are better dealt with through hard-line military commitment to issues of strategic importance as long as this approach does not choke off all venues for potential contention and the ingredients of containment are best suited for the execution of such an approach. Taking the above theory into account and by running regression analysis on 93 crises between the United States and the Soviet Union, this paper found that implementing the strategy of immediate containment has a positive effect on the rate of success of crises outcomes.

The findings have implications for both the discipline of political science and the real world of international relations. For the discipline of political science, these findings suggest that authoritarian regimes are driven by domestic regime justification in their interactions with the outside world. Further, these findings suggest that in search for “cheap wins” in international conflicts, authoritarian regimes are capable of foregoing issues of real strategic importance when specific diplomatic strategies are enacted by rival democratic regimes. Specifically, this study illustrates the effectiveness of immediate containment as potentially one such strategy. For the real world of international relations, these findings would prove to be a helpful guide for a wide range of foreign policy practitioners, including top-level diplomats, military establishment leaders, and legislators when dealing with authoritarian regimes at times of crisis and contention. Further exploration to expound upon this hypothesis is required. For example, future research could apply this framework to other regimes and potentially distinguish the effectiveness of containment as applied to various types of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

APPENDIX A

The measure of the use of diplomatic, containment, and rollback strategies was constructed from ICPSR dataset 7702, “U.S. AND U.S.S.R. CRISES DATA” compiled by CACI, Inc.-Federal. The measure of containment is an additive index summing the total number of containment strategies used. Strategies were weighted with a 1, 2, or 3 depending on the intensity of the containment strategy.

Measure of Containment Strategies

Containment strategies weighted 1:

- Commit support services (land)
- Commit support services (sea)
- Commit support services (air)
- Redeploy peacekeeping forces
- Military forces used in search and rescue operation
- Military maneuvers or training exercises
- Improve, maintain force readiness
- Airlift personnel and/or supplies and equipment
- Provide military advisory assistance
- Provide military training for combat troops
- Provide other military training
- Drawdown military equipment from U.S. units
- Provide supplies from U.S. depots
- Provide military maintenance assistance
- Provide other military logistics assistance

Containment strategies weighted 2:

- Reposition land forces
- Reposition sea forces
- Reposition air forces
- Threaten nonnuclear forces as a deterrent
- Redeploy nonnuclear forces as a deterrent
- Change alert status of nonnuclear forces
- Show of military force
- Military blockade or quarantine

Containment strategies weighted 3:

Threaten nuclear forces as a deterrent

Redeploy nuclear forces as a deterrent

Change alert status of nuclear forces as a deterrent

For example, when the East Germans precipitated a crisis by closing the Berlin border in 1961, the United States responded by containment strategy “Improve, maintain force readiness” (weighted 1) and strategies “Reposition land forces,” “Redeploy nonnuclear forces as a deterrent,” and “Show of military force” (weighted 2) for a total containment score of $1 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 7$.

Measure of Diplomatic Strategies

All weighted equally:

Reaffirm existing political/military commitment

Lodge protest(s)

Make pol/eco commitment implying new mil mission

Advocate/support peacekeeping efforts

Modify an existing defense treaty

Modify an existing base rights treaty

Modify an existing status of forces agreement

Seek assistance in decision making

Take no military action

Employ diplomacy

Mediate a dispute

Measure of Rollback Strategies

Rollback strategies weighted 1:

Covert military operation

Military intervention between combatants

Rollback strategies weighted 2:

Commit land forces to combat

Commit sea forces to combat

Commit air forces to combat

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